**Did Jesus Really Say That?**

Matt 13:13-15

*Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull.* *Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.' NKJV*

This statement of Jesus is pointed at people who won’t believe what He says. Jesus was particularly stating this about His use of parables. The plain idea is that there are many people who don’t understand what He says because they don’t want to believe what He says. It is also true that people don’t believe the things that He teaches without parables. We will see this particularly when it comes to things related to money and material things. Let us look at some of these.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus discusses attitudes about wealth*. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.* ***For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*** Jesus isn’t mysterious. The crucial evidence of what we value is where our treasure is. Grasp that Jesus is not saying that having stuff is the problem. The problem is having stuff as our treasure.

Jesus also talks about being worried about life’s necessities. His assurance is that believers are more important that other elements of nature and will be taken care of by our Father. *"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.* ***But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*.**

The above teachings are found in Matthew 6:10-34. The summary of these in words easy to understand is: If we value our stuff more that we value heavenly things, we have made a bad mistake. If we put the kingdom of God behind our work for stuff we think is necessary for our life, we don’t trust God. People say, “Yah, Yah, I got it,” and then keep on the same destructive materialistic path they have been on. They don’t really see or understand because they don’t really want to.

In Mark 10 there is a story about a young man who came to Jesus seeking advice on how to be saved. Jesus told him to keep God’s commands. The young man replied that he was already doing those, but understood he had something to fix. Jesus said this to him*: "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." (vs. 21).* How did the young man respond? *But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions(vs. 22).* What is the problem? He didn’t want the solution Jesus gave him. How many of us when it comes to money and stuff are caught in the same trap? Do we lie to ourselves?

***Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You."*** *So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time — houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions — and in the age to come, eternal life.* (Mark 10:28-30) Jesus added to his teaching that putting Him first even included the willingness to forsake family. This is not an idea that people really understand or accept. They are blind to it. What is surprising is that Jesus promised that putting Him first materially and in family would result in a return of one hundredfold now and in the age to come, eternal life. Jesus did say we can expect persecution when we make this decision. Don’t believe it? Just see what happens when you tell your mother or your wife or you children that they take second place to Jesus.

In Luke 12:15-21 we find that Jesus connected his teaching about wealth with a story about a rich fool who saved a lot of stuff and then died before he could use any of it. Effectively, the man had wasted his life and had NO eternal riches. *And He said to them,* ***"Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses****." (Read the story in vss. 16-20).* ***"So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."***

Further in this same chapter, Jesus tells a story about a steward who always understood that he was not the owner of what he possessed and made sure he was always ready for his master to come. A second steward, mistaking his owner’s absence to be the normal thing, began to use all that he supervised for himself. Then the master showed up and the servant suffered a great deal. Jesus concludes this story by saying, *For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required*. The idea is simple, the more God places in our hands, the more he expects us to use for His work.(Luke 12:42-48)

Jesus also taught about being sure we count the cost before we begin a project. He ended with this comment: ***So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple*.** The message, before you say you are going to follow Jesus, understand it will cost you everything you have (Luke 14:28-33).

How did the early Christians understand these teachings of Jesus. Paul tells us that the Galatian Christians had suffered many things. He even asks them if they thought there suffering was in vain (Galatians 3:4). To the Philippians he says *“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;”* He says he did this to attain the resurrection from the dead in Christ.*(Philippians 3:7-11)*

In 1 Thessalonians 2:14-15 he tells of the losses that came on the Christians of Thessalonica. To the Hebrews he says, *For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons* (Hebrews 12:3-5). Take a lesson from James 5:11,12--*Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord — that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.* AMEN! I Timothy 6:12-- *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.*