



Matthew 13

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Tape #8012
By Chuck Smith

Behold, a sower went forth to sow; (13:3)

And when he had sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: (13:4)

Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and immediately they sprung up, but because they had no deepness of earth: (13:5)

when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. (13:6)

And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: (13:7)

But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. (13:8)

He who hath ears to hear, let him hear. (13:9)

These are familiar words, of course, this final “He who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” You remember when Jesus addressed the churches in the book of Revelation, over and over He was exhorting those who had an ear to hear, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. As Jesus gives them this parable, it’s sort of a challenge to understand it. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” It does follow that not everyone has an ear to hear. There are many who, though they hear, they do not understand, they do not comprehend. Paul the apostle tells us that “the natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit: and neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14) Yet he who is spiritual understands all things, yet he is not understood. It is difficult to explain the things of the Spirit to the natural man. He lacks the faculties by which they are comprehended. You can, in the same logic, say the blind man does not enjoy the beauty of the sunset. The deaf man could not have enjoyed the music that we heard tonight, lacking the faculties by which these things are appreciated and understood. So the natural man lacking the faculty of the Spirit does not understand the things of the Spirit, but Jesus is calling, “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.”

So the disciples came, and said unto him, Why are you speaking in parables? (13:10)

And He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,

So this series of parables here in chapter thirteen are dealing with the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,

but to them it is not given. (13:11)

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. (13:12)

Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. (13:13)

And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: (13:14)

For this people's heart is waxed gross, their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. (13:15)

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. (13:16)

Jesus now is questioned by His disciples why He has reverted to parables. And basically, His answer is that parables are understood by those who have the ear of the Spirit, not understood by others, because the prophecy of Isaiah, “Hearing they shall hear, but not understand; seeing, they shall see, but not perceive. Because their hearts are waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing.” I think that there is a danger many times of people hearing without hearing, without really understanding the Word of God.

In fact, oftentimes I wonder, are people really hearing what I say? I hear reports of couples living together and they say, "Well, we go to Calvary Chapel." A few years ago as they were interviewing Miss Nude World, she said, "Well, I go to Calvary Chapel." Oh, no! Don't they hear what I'm saying? And I realize that as we give forth the Word of God, there are different types of soil upon which the seed falls. And these are the various types of people who receive or who hear the Word of God. Not always does it take root. Not always does it bring forth fruit. In fact, according to the parable here, only about one-fourth of it actually produced fruit.

Many times, we hear the Billy Graham Crusades criticized because so many people go forward and then they say, but where are they after the Crusade is over, we never see them in church. And there is criticism because it would seem that with all of the people that have gone forward, surely there should be more evidence of these people becoming involved in the church. And they will give percentages of a year later, surveys, how many are still following the Lord and how many have fallen away. Well, to be sort of, in keeping with Jesus, if one-fourth of them are still going on, that's about what the average is. Jesus, to His disciples, said, "Blessed are your ears for they hear; your eyes because they see."

For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and they have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them. (13:17)

Jesus is now unfolding to them parables to give them an understanding of the mystery of the kingdom of heaven. The prophets in the Old Testament did not fully understand this. They desired it, they wrote about it, and Peter tells us that there was a rather interesting situation concerning the prophets of the Old Testament. As they wrote about the salvation that God was going to provide through Jesus Christ, in 1 Peter 1:10, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you." They were prophesying, they didn't understand what they were prophesying, "of the grace of God that is going to come to you: and they were searching what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (1 Peter 1:10,11) It would appear that the prophecies concerning Jesus Christ were contradictory. It spoke of the glory of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven that was going to come on earth. And yet, in speaking of the Messiah, they prophesied, "He would be despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows acquainted with grief, wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, numbered with the transgressors in His death." (Isaiah 53:3-5) And they wrote these things, but they couldn't figure them out. What is God saying, they diligently searched trying to understand just what the Spirit of God was saying because it spoke of the sufferings, but yet it also spoke of the glory that should follow. So Jesus now is unveiling to the disciples the truth of the mysteries of the kingdom.

Peter goes on to say in verse twelve, "Unto whom it was revealed, [that is, the prophets,] that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things even the angels desired to look into." (1 Peter 1:12) The mysteries of God's love, the mysteries of the abiding of the Holy Spirit within our lives, the mysteries of salvation, even the angels could not comprehend. They desired to look into it. I imagine that the angels are quite puzzled about you and about me. I think that oftentimes in our foolhardiness and in our ignorance, when we think that we are so strong and can take on anything, and we go out to challenge the devil, I think the angels just sort of say, Oh, no, can't look, oh! And I think they say, Watch this one, watch, watch, this is going to be good. But the mystery of God's love.

The mystery of the provision through the death of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. God putting on Him the iniquities of us all. Him becoming the sacrifice for us. I'm certain that as it unfolded, all of a sudden the Old Testament was understood in a new and greater way than ever before, as they began to see all of the types being fulfilled in Jesus. And so Jesus is now explaining some of these mysteries. But it isn't given for the world to know, it's for His people. To them it is given to understand.

Hear ye therefore [He said it's given to you, so hear now] the parable of the sower. (13:18)

When any one hears the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. And this is he which received the seed by the way side.

(13:19)

So the sower went forth to sow, some of the seed fell by the way side. And the birds came and ate it. Nothing happened to it. It didn't do anything, it was devoured before anything came of it. They are those who hear the Word of the kingdom and just have no comprehension.

But he that received the seed [which is the Word of God] into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; (13:20)

There are those who have a joyful, immediate almost kind of reception to the message of Jesus Christ. And I think that these are many of those people who go forward in these crusades when Billy Graham presents the truths of Jesus Christ, or Greg Laurie gives the invitation. They see others going forward, the Spirit of God has convicted their heart and they are moved, they think, Oh, this is glorious! They are weighted down with the guilt of sin and they go forward. And you see the joy and the happiness upon their faces. But yet, there's no depth. Maybe it was just an emotional moment for them. And they were moved by the emotion of the moment. It was shallow.

Over in Israel, they have on the hillsides, rocky hillsides, but in the rocks there are these little bowls, so to speak, that are filled with earth, maybe an inch or two inches of depth. And just sort of a little bowl with a shallow dirt. After the rains, they are the first to bud forth with grass and with flowers. The flowers never grow very big because there isn't enough depth of earth in these shallow little holes in the rock. And they are not only the first to come up but they are the first to die away because of the lack of depth, and thus, without rain they soon dry. You see, the rock holds warmth and heat so the seeds germinate more rapidly in it after a rain. That which falls among the rocks, they receive the Word of God with joy,

And yet because it doesn't have root in himself, it only endures for a while: for when tribulation and persecution arises because of the word, by and by they're offended. (13:21)

No depth. And they may come for a little while, and sometimes they're the most enthusiastic. But then something comes along, and they're offended, no depth of relationship. The Word of God hasn't really had a chance to really penetrate and take root, and they're offended.

He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. (13:22)

I do not believe that it is one-fourth, one-fourth, one-fourth, one-fourth the whole picture. I believe that perhaps this third group, the seed that fell among the thorns, is representative of the majority of those within the church. They grow, they develop, but they never bring forth fruit, because with them grow the thorns that choke out the fruitfulness--the deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this world. And how many Christians' lives are unfruitful because they are so involved with the cares of this world, just trying to get along, and trying to get ahead, the deceitfulness of riches. And the Word of God is choked out in their lives and you cannot say that they are really fruitful Christians. I think this entails probably the vast majority within the church.

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, he understands it; and he bears fruit, some hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (13:23)

How good it is to see the Word of God bringing fruit in a person's life. Jesus said, "Now you are clean through the Word." (John 15:3) And in the fifteenth chapter of John, and you really need to tie this together with the fifteenth chapter of John, as Jesus tells of the Father's desire that you bring forth much fruit, and how that when you begin to bring forth fruit, then you are washed, that you may bring forth more fruit. And "herein is the Father glorified that you bring forth a hundredfold, you bring forth much fruit." (John 15:8) The whole purpose is to bring forth fruit.

Another parable he put forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: (13:24)

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. (13:25)

But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. (13:26)

So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? (13:27)

He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and

gather them up? (13:28)

But he said, No; lest while you gather up the tares, you root up the wheat also with them. (13:29)

Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, bind them into bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. (13:30)

Now we're going to get a series of parables that have to do with the church, mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. And these parables that have to do with the church are going to show how that there will be the good, growing together with the bad. And how that the bad within the church will actually have an influence permeating the church, a bad influence. We'll get to this parable when they came with Jesus into the house, the disciples were interested in the one parable, and that is the wheat and the tares. And so we'll get the explanation of that a little further down in the chapter, and so we won't explain that parable at this time but go on to the next parable concerning the mystery of the kingdom of heaven.

It is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: (13:31)

Which indeed is the least of all seeds: [it's a very small, little seed] but when it is grown, it's one of the greatest among the herbs,

They all had their little herb gardens and they would grow their anise and cumin and their various herbs, but the mustard seed was the biggest of the herb plants. But this one had even abnormal growth in that it.

became a tree,

Mustard herbs do not grow into trees, this is some kind of an abnormal growth.

so that the birds of the air came and lodged in the branches thereof. (13:32)

Jesus in this parable is going to speak of an abnormal growth of the church which would become a haven for all kinds of things to lodge within its branches. It is interesting to note the message of Jesus to the churches in Revelation chapters two and three, for at this early period of church history, before the end of the first century, the church had already, for the most part, become corrupt. He was threatening to remove His presence from it, He was threatening to spew it out of His mouth. He was calling on them to repent because of the various things that they had allowed within the church, the doctrines that they allowed within the church and He was rebuking them over and over, calling on them to repent. As we look at church history, we see that the real abnormal growth of the church began under Constantine when he joined the church and the state together and made a state religion and adopted all of the Pagan festivals, Christianized them, making them concurrent with certain Christian events, but picking up from Paganism and sort of making a combination of the whole thing. And the church grew in an abnormal way. But all kinds of birds were lodged in the branches, and such is true today.

In the Bible, the birds are always looked upon in an evil sense. You remember the seed that fell by the way side, it was the birds. And this is Satan, Jesus said, who comes and takes the seed before it can do anything, germinate or grow. It is interesting that during the period of church history where the church was greatly persecuted, where it really cost to be a Christian, that the church had real explosion as far as genuine conversion was concerned, reaching the world. But then when, in a sense, Satan compromised the church, its testimony became weak, watered down and the church had lost its influence in the world. There are those that just go along for the ride. When persecution arises, you'll see them no more. Some who are there, they remain but they never bear fruit. There are even birds that are lodged in the branches.

Another parable he spake unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. (13:33)

I might point out that these two particular parables are used many times to show that the kingdom of heaven is going to have a gradual influence in the world, until the whole world will be permeated by the influence of the church, spreading its influence over the world. And that, like leaven, the influence of the church will gradually permeate the whole loaf. The problem with that is, leaven, in a biblical sense, is never good. It actually is a rotting influence. The leaven multiplies by rotting, and Jesus later said to His disciples, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy." (Luke 12:1) Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, in his first epistle chapter five, speaking about their toleration of that evil condition of incest within the church, said, "Don't you know that a little leaven will leaven the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness..." (1 Corinthians 5:6-8) So hypocrisy, malice, wickedness--these are what leaven is in a spiritual sense. Now, the three measures of meal in which the leaven was hid.

Quite often, you can get an understanding of a figure of speech by going back to the first reference in the Bible. And the first reference in the Bible of three measures of meal come in Genesis chapter eighteen when Abraham was sitting under the oaks and these angelic visitors were coming by and he invited them over to rest for a while. And Sarah, there in the tent, took three measures of meal to prepare bread for them. As time went on, when Gideon had his encounter with the angel of the Lord, he prepared for him the meal; the grain, the bread. In the sacrifices, the meal offering was the peace offering which followed the burnt sacrifice offering. Now the burnt sacrifice offering was the offering of consecration where you are consecrating yourself to God. It was to be totally consumed. But the meal offering, after the burnt offering of consecration, was the meal offering which was the offering of communion and fellowship. Now with Abraham, the three measures of meal was the communion and fellowship that he had with the divine beings that were there. Under the law, the meal offerings, signifying our fellowship with God, part of it was to remain with the priest; the other, you took and you ate and the idea was eating with God, supping with Him, partaking with Him, becoming one with God, a very beautiful experience.

But, the meal offerings were always to be without leaven. Very strict in the law concerning no leaven because of it being a symbol of malice or wickedness or hypocrisy. And so, rather than this parable telling that the church is going to gradually have this influence of good that will ultimately permeate the whole world, it is declaring that there will be within the church that influence that will permeate throughout the church--compromise, hypocrisy. As we look at the condition of the church generally, we see that that is the case. We are not having a great influence for good in the world. We find that evil days are waxing worse and worse. We find that the influence of the church in the world is waning. We are not gradually permeating the whole lump, but the church is gradually being permeated by weakness, forces of weakness, rottenness.

One of the most rotten things are these men who are called "biblical scholars" who have the audacity to tamper with the Word of God and to declare that, Well, Jesus, (and of course, Jesus surely didn't say these things), but just tell you what Jesus said, and what He might have said, and what might have been taken from something He said, and then those things that surely He did not say which are attributed to Him. I cannot understand the blasphemy of such men. It just is something that I cannot comprehend, how men would dare to tamper with God's Holy Word. But it is that influence of leaven.

These things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable he did not speak unto them: (13:34)

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. (13:35)

Prophecy concerning Jesus, Psalm 78.

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and he went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, and they said, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. (13:36)

That was the one they were interested in. How that the good man had sown the good seed into the field, how the enemy came and sowed the darnel, the tares, when the harvest time came... Now the interesting thing about the darnel and about the wheat is that as they are growing together, you really can't tell the difference. They look alike. It is not until it comes time for harvest that then it's quite obvious, the darnel from the wheat. And so when it came time to harvest, the servants came and said, Lord, someone has sown the darnel among the wheat. Shall we go out and reap it out? And he said, No, wait until the harvest, the end of the world.

So the Lord is saying that these things, He's going to allow them to grow together. Don't want to take up the darnel now lest when uprooting it, you destroy some of the wheat. Let them grow, in the final harvest it will be revealed. And then the darnel will be taken down and cast into the fire, while the wheat will be gathered into the barn. So Lord, tell us about this one.

And He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; (13:37)

[I'm the one who has sown the good seed.]

And the field is the world; and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; (13:38)

[So Jesus is explaining to you now: the good seed, the children of the kingdom. He is the One, Jesus is the One, who has sown us in the world.]

but the tares [or the darnel] are the children of the wicked one;

And the enemy that sowed them is the devil; and the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. (13:39)

In the explanation you see then the meaning of the parable. And within the church, there are those who are worldly that grow together with those who are true children of the kingdom. You remember Jesus said that many will come in that day saying, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name? Do marvelous miracles? Cast out devils? He'll say I never knew you. The Bible tells us that we should "make our calling and election sure." (2 Peter 1:10) I think that it is important that all of us take a careful examination of our own lives. Paul said, "Therefore, let a man examine himself for if we will judge ourselves, we will not be judged of God." And I think it's important that we look at our lives honestly and evaluate, Is my life really bringing forth fruit? Am I just taking up space? Or is my life really producing fruit? So at the end of the age,

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all of the things that offend, and them which do iniquity; (13:41)

Now Paul the apostle gives to us a long list in Galatians 5 of the works of the flesh. And then he gives to us a very solemn warning. "And they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven." (Galatians 5:21) Read over that list. The works of the flesh. "Don't be deceived; God isn't mocked: whatever a man sows, that shall be also reap. And if you sow to the flesh, then of your flesh you're going to reap corruption." (Galatians 6:7-8) "And they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven." So Jesus said that the angels will go forth and gather out of His kingdom all of those things that offend, and those which do iniquity,

And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (13:42)

Jesus, don't you know that isn't politically correct? That might offend someone who is living in sin and iniquity.

But then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. (13:43)

Beautiful. The day will come, the Lord will separate. We're not to separate, the Lord will separate. The angels of God, I tell you again, how important that we really examine ourselves.

Again, the kingdom of heaven

[and these, of course, now are to the disciples; those others were to the people, He explained a couple of them to the disciples. Now these are just given to the disciples. He's in the house with them.]

is like unto a treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buys that field.

Kingdom of heaven, likened to a treasure hid in the field. The field is the world, Jesus said, when a man is found, he hides in for joy thereof, goes and sells everything he has, and buys the field. Jesus is the One who gave all to purchase the world, the field. He came for the purpose of redeeming the world back to God. He paid the price to redeem the world to God. It is interesting that when Jesus first came, when He first began His public ministry, Satan took Him to a high mountain and showed Him all of the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and offered them to Jesus if He would compromise and just bow down and worship him because Satan knew His mission, and Satan was saying, You can circumvent the cross. He had been saying that all the way along.

When Jesus, as we get to chapter sixteen, was with His disciples at Caesarea, Philippi, and when they recognized that He is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, He began to tell them how that He was going to suffer at the hands of man, be crucified, and when He said that, Peter began to rebuke Him and said, "Lord, be that far from Thee," and Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: you offend me: because you don't know the things that are of God, and things that are of men." (Matthew 16:22,23) But Jesus recognized this, Escape the cross, is a suggestion from hell. Now Jesus calls us to take up our cross, to deny ourselves, to deny the flesh life, take up our cross; and Satan says, Spare thyself! You don't want the cross. You don't

want to deny yourself, spare thyself. But Jesus did not go Satan's route but continued on the path that the Father had set for Him. And by His blood, He ransomed His church which is the treasure. So the kingdom of heaven, like a man who discovers a treasure in the field and for the joy of it, sells everything that he might obtain the treasure. And Hebrews tells us, "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." (Hebrews 12:2) A similar and yet a little different,

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: (13:45)

Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (13:46)

Again, that merchant man seeking goodly pearls would be Jesus; the goodly pearls, the children of the kingdom; and how again, He sold all in order to purchase us.

Now again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: (13:47)

Of course, He's there at the Galilee, they would understand this perfectly. You cast out the net and you draw it in and you got everything, some edible fish, some fish that are not edible, and all kinds of things can be drawn up in the net.

Which, when it was full, [that is, the net that was cast into the sea] they drew it to shore, and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. (13:48)

Again, the separation that will take place when the net is finally drawn in, the separation of the good and the bad.

So shall it be at the end of the age: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, (13:49)

[the binding of the tares]

And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (13:50)

[At this point,] *Jesus said, Have you understood these things? They said unto him, Oh yes, Lord. (13:51)*

And yet how little they really did understand at that moment. There are some times when we think we have comprehension of certain things, and then later we discover that our understanding was wrong. And as time went on, you see, they really didn't understand Jesus giving everything... they didn't understand the cross, they didn't understand the price that was to be paid for their redemption, it was not until later, after the resurrection that these pieces of the puzzle really began to fit together in their minds. But at this point, they thought they did, they said, Oh yes, Lord.

Then he said unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and things old. (13:52)

The sharing of the things of the kingdom, a man rich in the things of the Lord bringing forth out of his resources, out of his treasure the things good, the things old, things new.

And so it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed from there (13:53)

[That is, the sea of Galilee.]

And when he was come into his own country,

[that is, He had gone back to Nazareth where He grew up.]

he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and they said, Where did this man get this wisdom, and these mighty works? (13:54)

Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brothers, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? (13:55)

And his sisters, are they not all with us?

Now contrary to the teaching of the Catholic church, Mary did not remain a virgin. The perpetual virginity of Mary is just a concept adopted by the Catholic church and as a part of their continued tradition, became ultimately dogma. And so the Catholic dogma is determined by how long it has been traditional within the church. And their dogma is then held on an equal par with the scripture, becomes as scripture. This, of course, is a real problem for them that they never really explained, but Jesus had brothers, James, Joses, Simon, Judas; sisters, which are not named. So their question was,

Where did he get all of these things? (13:56)

We know Him, He's Joseph and Mary's boy. His brothers, younger brothers and sisters are... we know Him, where did He get all of these?

And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. (13:57)

Or among his own family. Prophets are honored, but not in his own city, not among those of his own family. And thus, we are told that...

he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief. (13:58)

Which shows that Jesus did not do miracles just to prove to people, though they did, but because of their unbelief He was not going to perform miracles in order to establish faith. Later on, when Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it will suffice us. He said, Have I been so long a time, have you not seen me? he that has seen me has seen the Father; how sayest then, Show us the Father? Believest thou that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the works' sake." (John 14:8,9,11) In other words, better to just believe, I'm telling you this, I have told you this. Best to just believe it there. Now these people did not, they were offended. And He didn't do many works there, He didn't really manifest Himself there because of their unbelief. There is a certain unbelief that will not believe even though given evidence. Their hearts are set against Him. You've met them, I've met them. People who have just set their hearts against the Lord.

So now we come to a new dimension in the ministry of Christ; teaching by parables, dividing of those that understand and those that don't understand, those who it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, and those to who it is not given to know though they may hear, they won't understand or perceive. And a definite division now taking place as a result of the ministry of Christ. So next week, we'll move on into chapter fourteen.

Father, we thank You again for the Word, a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. Father, we pray that it will be a light shining in the inner recesses of our hearts, revealing to us what is there. Lord, we do not want to be deceived as far as our relationship with You. We don't want to wait until the harvest to find out. Lord, we pray that You'll help us that our lives might truly become fruitful. May we bring forth fruit for the glory of Your kingdom. Jesus, our hearts long to please You. We thank You Lord for Your love for us, and all that You went through to make fellowship possible. Thank You Lord, for the way You treasure us, so much so that You purchased the world to take us out of it. Lord, help us to grow, help us to come to an understanding. May we not be as the disciples who pretended to know something they probably really didn't at that moment. But Lord, we pray that You'll give us to understand and to know the mysteries of the kingdom, and Lord we pray that Your kingdom will come, and that Your will will be done here on this earth very soon. We look at the world Lord and we realize that that time of harvest is upon us, Your coming is very near. May we be found faithful. In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.