Date written: November 17, 1945

Scripture: Matthe2 13:10-17

Text: Mark 4:33 13:14b-15 & Mark 4:33

Theme: Spiritual truth in everyday things.

Proposition: There is spiritual truth in everyday things.

Sources:
King James Bible, AV
Lowell Thomas, broadcast, p.m. Nov. 16, 1945
Master Book of Humorous Ill., p. 145
Walker, Hist. of Chr. Church, p. 177
Macartney's Illustrations, p. 401

Places preached:

Epworth - 11-18-1945
Pawhuskan, Rocky oak, Salem - 9-22-46
Huntington, Ark., Dec-7, 1947 (evening)
Cranston, Wyo., Nov. 5, 1958

Scripture: Matthe2 13:10-17

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

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.

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

And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall se and shall not perceive;

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and 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.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

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

Text: Mark 4:33

And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.

Introduction:

1. The scripture, Matthew 13:10-17, and the text, Mark 4:33, both deal with the same thing.

a. In each, these passages follow the telling of the story of the sower, or, more properly perhaps, the parable of the soils.

b. In each, the passage deals with Jesus' reason for speaking in parables.

2. The text, however, brings out more forcibly the answer that Jesus gave to the question in Matthew: "Why speakest thou to them in parables?

3. Jesus spake in parables to simplify the message, to present his message in terms that his listeners could understand: "as they were able to hear it."

4. Many could not understand the message in the parables, but merely listened to them as interesting stories. Of these, Jesus said "they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."

5. By parables, and by our scripture and text Jesus brings home the truth that, although many cannot recognize it, there is spiritual truth in everyday things.

I. There is material truth in every day things which many cannot recognize.

2. <u>In everyday human life this is illustrated.</u>

The evening of November 16, I heard Lowell Thomas, broadcasting a news commentary over the radio, give this story.

He said that he called the FBI in Washington to task that they give him some story of remarkable achievements of the Bureau in breaking up enemy expionage during the war. He said that the Bureau turned him down flat on that request, but that they did give him an anecdote, which he thought was a rather good one.

During the early days of the war, particularly, the bureau had to enlarge its code deciphering department immensely. Prior to the war FBI had only a few code experts, who specialized in codes of the types that criminals often use. When war broke out, the department had to be enlarged so much to take care of all the intercepted code messages from the enemy. Because of the manpower shortage, women had to be trained in this work, and soon proved themselves more useful in decoding than men. Before long, the decoding department's staff was largely composed of women, he said.

Large numbers of leads and clues were sent in by patriotic citizens who thought they had found coded spy messages. Most of these turned out to be false leads, but because some actually were real clues, they all had to be worked on.

One day a patriotic citizen in one of the country's larger cities found a small, pocket notebook, full of strange characters which neither he nor his friends could understand.

Suspecting a spy code book, he sent the pocket notebook to FBI in Washington, which immediately turned it over to its decoding department. After much time spent in labor over it, most of the experts were still mystified. Finally they let a new clerk in the department look at it and try it. She looked at it a minute, then laughed, and told what it was. The figures were merely knitting instructions for knitting a pair of socks. Using the instructions, she knitted a pair of socks for J. Edgar Hoover, chief of the bureau.

The simple truth, or instructions, about knitting socks was there all along for anyone who could read abbreviated and symbolic knitting instructions. Yet to most, because they saw, but could not see, it was merely paper with unintelligible marks or code.

II. <u>What spiritual truth is</u>.

1. Truth is fact, reality, things as they are.

The editor of a paper in Indiana grew tired of being called a liar and announced that he would tell the truth in the future. His next issue contained the following items:

"John Benin, the laziest merchant in town, made a trip to Beeville on Monday.

"John Coyle, our groceryman, is doing poor business. His store is dirty and musty. How can he expect to do much?

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"Dave Conkey died at his home here Tuesday. The doctor gave it out as heart failure. Whiskey killed him.

"Married -- Miss Sylvia Rhoades and James Smith, by the Reverend Collins last Saturday at the parsonage. The bride is a very ordinary girl who doesn't know any more about cooking than a jackrabbit and never helped her mother three days in her life. She is not a beauty by any means and has a gait like a duck. The groom is an up-to-date loafer. He has been living off his old folks at home all his life and not worth shucks. It will be a hard life."

That editor may have gotten himself in trouble by telling the truth as he saw it, but at least he was giving facts, reality.

2. A thing that is spiritual is a thing that is of God but relates to man.

3. Therefore, spiritual truth is fact, reality about God that is given man to know, ~~and that, therefore relates to man.~~

~~a. Anything that man knows relates to him and concerns him.~~

b. Knowledge of God is spiritual knowledge, but it relates to man.

c. This spiritual knowledge, or truth, is obtained by the experience of men. The sum total of men's experience of God have shown that certain things are so about God. Therefore, these things constitute spiritual truth.

III. <u>There is much in the common experiences of men that will reveal God, give spiritual knowledge.</u>

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1. Jesus thought so, for he taught, according to our text, largely in parables. Parables were stories of everyday life in which there was spiritual truth -- truth about God and soul -- to be discerned. Many of his hearers, however, failed to see the truth, and merely thought he was giving entertaining stories.

a. The story of the prodigal son, revealing a life-like situation with God as a father of mercy and love and forgiveness. Also, revealin the necessity of repentance for sins committed.

b. The story or parable of the talents, revealing that God holds man accountable for proper use of his talents.

2. History has shown it.

a. Augustine, one of the greatest Christian writers and thinkers of all Christian history, through degrading and shaming fleshly experience found the highest spiritual truth.

At 32 years of age he was, though a scholar and philosopher and noblex in the Rome of 386 A.D., living in deepest immorality through yielding to fleshly lust. One day an acquaintance made a remark that made him ashamed that he could not seem to control his desires -- an experience many of us have. He rushed into a garden, and while thinking there, heard the voice of a child say "Take and read." He reached for a copy of the book of Romans, that he had been reading, and his eyes fell upon the words: "Not in rioting and drunkeness, not in chambering and wantoness, not in strife and envying;

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but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."
From that moment he had the peace of mind and the sense of divine power to overcome his sins which he had thu far sought in vain. A sense of sin and shame brought about for him the recognition of the spiritual truth that through Christ is the power to follow the moral commandments of God.

b. Many other everydaay, common experiences of historic characters brings out the same truth.

3. <u>Everyday life now shows that common experiences will give spiritual knowledge.</u>

Macarbee

a. Off the coast of California in some rocks on the cliffs, are cedars of lebanon growing out of the rocks. At some time small, tiny seeds have been blown into cracks deep in the heart of the rock. Once placed and beginning to germinate the rock that could crush those seed could not prevent them from growing, and the cedars even split the rocks in growing out, and became well-established in the rock cliffs of the coast. Nothing can stop the controlling power of the universe, God, from carrying forth his purpose.

b. In the heartbreak of war, we find that human hands and hearts and mouths can't help. Only the actual experience of a real, comforting, reassuring God can satisfy man's longing for the explanation.

c. When a car runs out of gas, it ceases to run, unless it is coasting and thus pulled by gravity.

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Man can make use of the car, and of the gas and gravity to run it, but he is not responsible for any of those materials being there. The God that is responsible for them reveals through those things that he, too, is responsible for man and the things that makes him go. Without a connection somewhere with the supplier of fuel or repair parts, the car can't go. Without a connection with God, man can't go at a limited is only an animal.

Conclusion: There is spiritual truth in everyday things.

1. Jesus shows it.
2. History shows it.
3. Everyday experience shows it.

But man must be able to recognize it.

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Matthew 13:10-17