



## **Sermon Notes: “Why Parables”**

**Matthew 13:11-17**

7.12.26

### **The Dividing Line:**

- Jesus tells stories to reveal who’s really listening.
- You can’t crack the “kingdom code” — it has to be unlocked for you.

### **Willful Blindness:**

- A hard heart isn’t something God does to us. It’s something we’ve done to ourselves.
- You can have perfect eyesight and a sharp mind and still be blind in the only place that counts.

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## **So What?**

Seeing Jesus clearly isn’t your achievement — it’s your privilege.

How's my posture toward God right now?

## For Study, Reflection, Discussion During the Week:

**Life Group ICEBREAKER:** Has there ever been a moment — in church, reading Scripture, or in a conversation about faith — where everyone around you seemed to be tracking and something in you quietly wondered, "Am I getting what they're getting?" What was that like, and what did you do with that feeling?

**REVIEW:** Review the sermon notes from Sunday. Was there a particular point that stuck with you? What was it and why did it resonate with you?

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### READ: Matthew 13:10-11

- The sermon pointed out that two people can sit through the exact same message — same room, same words, same thirty-five minutes — and one walks out changed while the other is already thinking about lunch. The sermon said the difference isn't intelligence; it's posture. Think about your own history with church and Scripture. Can you identify a season when you were leaning in — and a season when you were just attending? What was different about you in those two seasons?
  - Jesus says in verse 11, "You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom" — and the sermon unpacked that the word "permitted" in the Greek is *dedotai*: given. A gift handed over by God, still in your hands. It's not a code to crack. It's a door someone opens and says, "come in." How does it change the way you approach faith — prayer, Scripture, this series — when you treat understanding as something you receive rather than something you achieve?
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### READ: Matthew 13:12-15

- Verse 12 describes a use-it-or-lose-it reality: the muscle you work grows, the one you ignore wastes away. The sermon used the image of the distracted kid in class — not slow, not dumb, just somewhere else. His problem wasn't ability; it was attention. Where in your spiritual life right now do you recognize that kind of drift — not a crisis of belief, just an attention that's wandered somewhere else? What's been pulling your focus away from the things of God?
  - The sermon made a pointed claim: a hard heart isn't something God does to you — it's something you do to yourself. Matthew 13:15 says "they have closed their eyes" — they did that, not God. And the saddest line in the passage is the last one: "and let me heal them." The healing was right there, on offer the whole time. The door was never locked from the outside. For anyone who has felt on the outside of faith — kept at arm's length from God — how does it land that the door has never been bolted from His side? What has been keeping it from opening?
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### DEPLOY:

- **Take the Posture Inventory.** *The sermon's invitation wasn't "try harder" it was "check your posture." This week, honestly ask yourself: How am I leaning toward God right now? Toward His Word — am I opening it hungry, or has it gone stale on the shelf? Toward this church — am I engaged or just attending? Toward the things of the Kingdom — leaning in or drifted? Write down one honest answer, and share it with someone in your group. Then name one small, specific thing you can do this week to lean back in.*
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### Don't Forget:

- Consider Signing up to help at Chief Joseph Days. Adults and Youth Needed. Sign-up sheet at the Welcome Desk
  - Operation Christmas Child – Christmas in July is now happening! Take a look at the tree on the Welcome Desk
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### Prayer:

*Father, we come in the only posture this passage asks for — not pretending we've been leaning in perfectly, but honest enough to take inventory and hungry enough to want more. We confess the distractions. The reputation we've been protecting. The control we've been gripping. The being right we've valued more than being close to You. We confess the seasons we were in the room and missed You completely. And for anyone in this group who has felt on the outside looking in — who has wondered if the door was locked against them — remind them tonight that it was never locked from Your side. The healing has been on offer the whole time. Open our eyes. Not because we've earned it, not because we've finally gotten clever enough — but because You are generous, and You give understanding to the ones who come hungry and lean in close. We don't have to have it all together. We just have to lean close to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.*