

Let the Bible Be Weird Week 2

God Did Not Only Speak in Bullet Points

Matthew 13:10-23

Big Idea

Jesus often teaches in stories and images not to make truth less clear, but to reveal truth in a way that searches the heart and forms the listener.

Introduction: Why Doesn't God Just Say It Directly?

God could have given us a Bible made entirely of direct statements: doctrine listed, commands numbered, applications clearly marked. But that is not the Bible God gave us.

When God came among us in Jesus, He did not only teach in direct explanations. He told stories: seeds and soil, shepherds and sheep, fathers and sons, wheat and weeds, treasure in fields, and a Samaritan on the road.

Last week's reading question was:

1. What kind of thing is this?

This week we add:

2. What is this text doing?

Scripture does not only say things. Scripture does things. It comforts, confronts, warns, exposes, invites, slows us down, trains our imagination, reveals God, and reveals us.

Text Setup: Matthew 13

In Matthew 13, Jesus has been announcing the kingdom, healing, teaching, confronting religious leaders, and gathering disciples. Some respond with faith. Others resist. Some are curious but shallow. Some are amazed but unchanged.

Then Jesus begins teaching in parables.

After the Parable of the Sower, the disciples ask:

“Why do you speak to them in parables?”

Main Point 1: God’s Word Often Comes in Forms That Make Us Engage

Matthew 13:10

Parables are not merely simple illustrations. They are encounters.

They invite us in, but they also make us wrestle.

This is not only true of parables. Much of Scripture works this way:

- Psalms train our emotional life before God.
- Proverbs give wisdom, not guaranteed formulas.
- Prophetic images shake us awake.
- Narratives make us watch, notice, and discern.
- Apocalyptic literature unveils reality through symbols and images.

Key Truth

God’s Word often comes in forms that require engagement, not because God is unclear, but because God is forming hearers.

Main Point 2: God’s Word Does Not Only Reveal Truth; It Reveals the Hearer

Matthew 13:11-17

Jesus’ answer is uncomfortable. He says some hear but do not understand, and some see but do not perceive.

Jesus is not saying He teaches in parables because He does not want people to have a chance. He is showing that His teaching reveals the condition of the hearer.

Parables expose:

- who is leaning in and who is resisting
- who is hungry and who is bored
- who wants the kingdom and who wants religious entertainment
- who wants Jesus and who just wants Jesus to be useful

Key Question

When I open Scripture, I should not only ask:

“What do I think about this passage?”

I should also ask:

“What is this passage revealing about me?”

Confusion is not always the biggest danger in Bible reading. Sometimes the bigger danger is a heart that refuses to be searched.

Main Point 3: God’s Word Takes Root Differently Depending on the Soil

Matthew 13:18-22

Jesus explains that the seed is “the word of the kingdom.”

The seed is good.

The difference is the soil.

The Path: The Unreceptive Heart

The word is heard but not understood, and the evil one snatches it away.

The Rocky Soil: The Shallow Heart

The word is received with joy, but there is no root. Trouble exposes the lack of depth.

Immediate enthusiasm is not the same thing as deep formation.

The Thorny Soil: The Crowded Heart

The word is heard, but it is choked by the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches.

This may describe many ordinary church people: not rejecting Scripture, but too busy, anxious, distracted, entertained, overloaded, and overstimulated for the word to take root deeply.

Key Truth

Jesus is not telling this story so we can rank other people's soil.

He is telling it so we will examine our own.

In Matthew 13, the text is not merely explaining agriculture. It is exposing hearers.

It is asking:

What kind of soil are you?

Main Point 4: God's Word Is Meant to Bear Fruit, Not Just Make Sense

Matthew 13:23

Jesus describes the good soil as the one who:

- hears the word
- understands it
- bears fruit

The goal is not merely hearing as a Bible reader.

The goal is not even merely understanding as a Bible nerd.

The goal is fruitfulness as a faithful disciple.

Information vs. Formation

Bible information says:

“I know what this passage means.”

Bible formation says:

“This word is taking root in me.”

Bible formation changes how we speak, handle anxiety, spend money, respond when hurt, think about power, treat enemies, endure suffering, and follow Jesus when obedience costs us.

The goal is not simply to become more accurate readers.

The goal is to become more faithful disciples.

Applications

1. Ask not only, “What does this mean?” but, “What is this doing?”

Is this passage comforting, confronting, warning, inviting, training, exposing, giving words to pray, or showing Jesus?

2. Pay attention to what the text reveals in you.

When Scripture bothers you, ask why. Is it confusing because you need more background, or uncomfortable because it is touching something you would rather not surrender?

3. Do not confuse quick response with deep roots.

The rocky soil reminds us that excitement is not the same thing as maturity. Ask whether the word is taking root over time.

4. Watch what is choking the word.

Ask:

What is crowding out the word of God in my life?

It may be worry, busyness, money, entertainment, anger, fear, control, constant noise, or something else.

If the Word is being choked, the answer is not merely to try harder. Thorns have to be named, pulled, and cleared.

Make room for the Word before you demand fruit from the Word.

5. Stay with the word long enough for fruit.

Fruit does not grow instantly.

Slow down. Return to the text. Let it linger. Pray through it. Talk about it with other believers. Let the word take root.

Conclusion

God does not only speak in bullet points.

Not because He is unclear.

Not because He is trying to frustrate us.

God speaks in stories, images, poems, visions, warnings, songs, and parables because He is doing more than handing us information.

He is searching us.

He is slowing us down.

He is forming us.

He is planting the word of the kingdom like seed.

The question is not whether the seed is good.

The seed is good.

The question is whether we will become the kind of soil where the word can take root and bear fruit.