

THE GREAT WENCHOSTER BIBLE

Proper 10

Matthew 13: 1-9, (10-17), 18-23

1. The same day (that is, the same day as when the events happened of which ye have just read) went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And lo, it turned out quite nice again, and the waves did lap serenely on the shore, and it was hot, yea even of a temperature when an iced beverage such as the Romans had would have been welcome. Or even a nice XCIX from one of their beach vendors.
2. And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him, and they were sweaty and did smell a bit, and on account of that whiff He went into an ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore with the wind blowing away from Him, and the disciples did follow and laid themselves down on blankets and palliasses to listen to His teaching.
3. And He spake many things unto them in parables, about sheep and goats and about a lost coin and that widow's might, or might not, and then He declared, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;
4. And the farmers in the crowd did prick up their ears at this, for here was an illustration they did comprehend. And He continued, And when this sower sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up, and there were a multitude of seagulls swooping down so much so that the sower did cover his head.
5. And some of the seed fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth, and did look healthy and bountiful:
6. But when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some of the farmers did nod sagely at this, for they knew the truth of His telling. Yet one muttered that it wouldn't matter with radishes.
7. And Jesus said, And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: and some of the farmers did mutter amongst themselves saying that they had wives that were much akin to the thorns. Some more than others. And they did nudge exceedingly.
8. But, said Jesus, Some of the seed fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold, and was grown organically so that it fetched a premium price at market. Every Friday. Oh yes.
9. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear and go and do thou likewise. Verily.

(This section of verses 10-17 may be omitted, depending on the expectation of freshly-baked cakes in the parish hall after the service.)

10. And the disciples did get up from their mattresses and palliasses and came, and said unto Him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables, for thou surely knowest that their minds are but simple and their imaginations limited? And was it any particular seed because some of us are having problems with nasturtiums this year?
11. 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. Stop rolling your eyes heavenwards as this isn't John.
12. 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. Have I made that clear? And Judas (yes, that one) did scowl and furrow his brow, for he did not understand the wisdom of this. Neither did the others for that matter.

13. So Jesus said, Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. They think that they think, but I think that they don't. And I wish to veil my words so that in times to come many hours will be spent in studying and exegesis, and many books will be written. Yes, Matthew, you may take notes.
14. And in such work is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. Got it?
15. For this people's heart is waxed gross – no, Thaddeus, nothing to do with candles - and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, and limbs wearied; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and count on their fingers, and should see the mysteries clearly, and walk in my ways with an understanding heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Well, that's the theory anyway.
16. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear, and your limbs be strong and sturdy so that ye may walk upon the mountains of the Lord with super-manly stride. Oh yes.
17. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have 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, and see your legs, but they are hidden from them. And thank your heavenly father.

(And here the Gospel author doth scribe an explanation of the parable for those who have failed to grasp the teaching. Some preachers may repeat and develop these accounts to justify and pad out their sermon.)

18. And Jesus saith unto them, Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. Yea, verily, gather round.
19. Now. When any one heareth 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 place it in his rough hessian sack which will be conveyed to the place where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of any teeth he or she may have left. This is he or she which received seed by the way side.
20. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, and doth write many choruses and sing Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah;
21. Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth and clappeth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended and doth cease from praise and liturgical dance. (Just between us, that's actually a blessing from above.)
22. He also that received seed among the thorns, and stinging nettles, and large creepers – stop it, Thaddeus - is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful and doth spend his time in the fleshpots of the dockside, the alleyways of Jericho, and in the offices of finance in the city where they ascertain whether the widows might. Or not.
23. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it, and doth water it with the wine of righteousness which is poured out as a libation. Bit of a waste of good vintage, I know, but remember it's just a figure of speech. And which seed therefore beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. And yea, Peter, even nasturtiums.