

DO YOU UNDERSTAND? Matthew 13:51-52

“Have you understood all these things?” They said to Him, “Yes.” And He said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old.” (Matthew 13:51-52)

HAVE YOU UNDERSTOOD ALL THESE THINGS?

The implication: Jesus’ disciples could have, and should have, understood Him.

He explained the major parables.

The smaller parables carry their own explanation.

Jesus’ disciples said they understood.

AN ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Jesus didn’t teach to hear Himself talk.

Jesus taught so that His disciples, then and now, would understand.

He didn’t anyone to be confused or unsure.

He wanted them and wants us to comprehend Him.

THE BIBLE IS NOT MAGIC

Just reading or hearing it does nothing.

An antibiotic will work whether or not we know what we are taking.

Truth doesn’t function that way; we must understand in order to benefit.

AN ESSENTIAL ANSWER

Earlier they asked Jesus why He taught in parables, and He told them.

Then they asked Him to explain the parable of the weeds, and He explained it.

His teaching has been sufficient, and His explanations have given them understanding.

WHAT’S NEXT?

Let’s talk about the importance of understanding God’s Word.

Then we’ll talk about the blessing of that understanding.

GOD’S WORD IS MEANT TO BE UNDERSTOOD

The Word is not a dark mystery that defies understanding.

The words of Scripture are clear and simple.

The Word of God is clear, plain, and transparent.

Want a \$10 word? Scripture is perspicuous, which ironically is an unclear, convoluted, and obscure word that means clear, plain, and transparent.

THINK ABOUT GENESIS 1:1.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

Almost the same exact words in every English translation.

The Hebrew text is very simple, just seven words.

It is very efficient language: just ten words in English.

You can't express these truths in fewer words.

THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES ARE CONCISE AND EXACT.

Primarily Hebrew and Greek, with a little Chaldean mixed in, and some loan words from other languages.

The Bible contains figurative speech, but the figures always point to reality.

The Bible contains metaphors, but the metaphors always point to reality.

WHAT'S MORE, THE DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE ARE CLEAR

Think about Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

The meaning is clear, plain, and transparent.

People don't reject Genesis 1:1 because it's impossible to understand.

They reject it because it is easy to understand, and they disagree.

Most embrace evolution = a futile human effort to explain the origins of things.

If we are just evolved animals, we wouldn't care about origins.

Being consumed with the origins of things would be a mental illness that interfered with living life, not a benefit to anyone.

Some reject Genesis 1:1 because they have made evolution their religion.

It must be taken on faith = time is the magic ingredient that makes everything happen.

Richard Dawkins said that even if every theory of evolution is wrong, he would believe it anyway; that makes it a religion.

Most people don't reject doctrines because they are confused, but because they are offended.

One of the most common objections to a doctrine like eternal punishment is not "the Bible doesn't teach eternal punishment" but "MY God would never punish someone for eternity."

It's very possible to have a discussion over what the Bible actually teaches.

It's virtually impossible to have a meaningful discussion about how we feel about something.

A sign of genuine conversion is the humble acceptance of the Bible.

Repentance is just as much a gift of the Holy Spirit as faith.

Faith in Christ and repentance from sin come with humility and a willingness to be corrected.

That is exactly what the Word does for us:

All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for **teaching**, for **reproof**, for **correction**, for **training in righteousness** ... (Second Timothy 3:16-17)

Paul goes on a few verses later:

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season; **reprove, rebuke, exhort,** with **great patience and teaching.** (Second Timothy 4:2)

We see that we need to be taught, reprovved, rebuked, corrected, trained, and exhorted. That's a process that requires great patience and a willingness to teach, because we are naturally reluctant, even as Christians, to yield ourselves to our God.

But, oh what blessing there is when we do!

WHY DO MANY NOT UNDERSTAND?

FOR SOME IT IS TRADITION AND PERSONAL BELIEFS

For instance, a large majority deny that most people are sinners; they want to think that everyone is basically good. That isn't what the Bible says, though. "There is NONE who does good, there is not even ONE," Romans 3:12 says.

A large majority also believe that everyone will be saved in the end. In the United States just about all someone has to do to go to heaven is die. That isn't what the Bible says. Jesus says that the wicked go into eternal punishment, and the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25:46).

And many believe that there are a lot of ways to heaven. That isn't what the Bible says. Jesus says in John 14, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through ME." (John 14:6). Jesus says there's just one way to eternal life, and He's it.

BUT ULTIMATELY, PEOPLE REJECT GOD'S WORD BECAUSE THEY REJECT GOD

Romans 1 says that every human being has a basic understanding of God's eternal nature and divine power, which are revealed through creation itself. As a result, no one has any excuse. No one can claim they didn't know or weren't told. The evidence of God's eternal nature and divine power is around us all the time.

But human rebellion is so deep that unbelievers suppress that truth and refuse to honor God as God. As a result, they live in pointless, worthless speculations. They abandon wisdom and embrace foolishness. They worship virtually everything but God.

How deep does this rebellion go? I'll demonstrate it to you. I'm about to utter a controversial sentence that would potentially get me thrown off of Twitter, Facebook, and every other social media platform. Are you ready? Here it is:

A husband is a man married to a woman. A wife is a woman married to a man. A man cannot be a husband to a man; a woman cannot be a wife to a woman. Men cannot be anything but men. Women cannot be anything but women. To believe otherwise makes all language nothing but nonsense.

These are not controversial words. Only those who are utterly blind to reality would think so.

But, if people can believe that a man is a woman just because he says he's a woman, then why would it surprise anyone that human beings reject the truth of God's Word?

God is a speaking God. He invented personal communication. There is a constant flow of fellowship and communication within the Trinity. He created us in His image. We are created to communicate: to listen to the words of others and speak words of our own. We do this all the time in every imaginable area. We don't consider it normal when a native English speaker can't understand or speak English. We consider it to be a tragic condition. We even have a name for it: aphasia. It's a condition where a person loses the ability to express and understand written and spoken language.

Because we are born naturally in sin and rebellion, we are born with a kind of spiritual aphasia. We are born unable to understand the simplest of truths as the Bible presents them. But when we are rightly related to our Creator, He opens our hearts and minds to understand.

“Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked His disciples.

They said to Him, “Yes.”

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO UNDERSTAND

We are born sinners.

We are under the judgment of God.

Once that judgment begins it will never end.

God sent His Son to die in the place of sinners.

Jesus saves because of grace alone, not because anyone deserves salvation.

Jesus Christ saves on the basis of faith alone, not any good works.