

JULY 23, 2020
Thursday of the 16th Week in OT
Matthew 13: 10-17

“LISTEN WITH REVERENCE AND FAITH.”

Most of the time, preachers used stories or anecdotes to emphasize a certain point in preaching or teaching. It helps the listeners to understand more deeply the message of the readings, especially the gospels. This is what Jesus used during His time – speaking in parables. He used parables, a type of ‘comparison’, can be a story, a metaphor, or a simile drawn from ordinary human life or nature to make a religious point. This often starts with “The Kingdom of heaven is like...” and “To what shall I compare...” Jesus Christ begins with something familiar and leads us into a deeper spiritual truth. “The prophet Isaiah had warned that some would hear God's word, but not believe, some would see God's actions and miracles, and remain unconvinced. Ironically, some of the greatest skeptics of Jesus' teaching and miracles were the learned scribes and Pharisees who prided themselves on their knowledge of Scripture, especially on the law of Moses. They heard Jesus' parables and saw the great signs and miracles which He performed, but they refused to accept both Jesus and His message. How could they "hear and never understand" and "see but never perceive"? They were spiritually blind and deaf because their hearts were closed, and their minds were blocked by pride and prejudice.”¹

My brothers and sisters, Jesus in our gospel is reminding us again that to comprehend His message, our hearts and minds must be open and receptive, must cooperate with God's grace because we cannot understand His message by our own effort alone. If we are indifferent, uncertain, and doubtful, we are like what Jesus is telling His disciples quoting the Prophet Isaiah: "You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive.”² So, my brothers and sisters, the Lord is telling us, we must be ready to believe, submit ourselves to Him, and listen with God's word with reverence and faith.

¹ www.dailyscripture.net

² Matthew 10: 14 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA