



Links Players

Secrets Of The Kingdom

This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand." (Matthew 13:13)

Alignment in golf is tricky. Numerous times, I've stood over a ball, made my swing, and missed my target completely. Sometimes one of my playing partners would lay a club on the ground at my feet, exposing my poor alignment. After seeing where I was aimed, I always asked myself, "How could I not see that."

We often fail to see the obvious in golf and other areas of life. There are multiple reasons for this—skewed perception, distractions, laziness, carelessness, and indifference.

In Mathew 13, Jesus walks out of a house and into a large crowd. As the crowd gathers around him, he gets into a boat to create some distance from those on shore so he can tell them a parable.

After telling the parable to the crowd, the disciples ask Jesus what the parable means. Jesus explains:

When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no roots, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown."

The parable is both insightful and serves as a teaching tool. What is often lost on the contemporary reader is that the parable was not meant for the crowd but for the disciples. The parable serves to train the disciples and indict the crowd. Jesus is laying down a four iron at the feet of the crowd to expose their poor alignment so the disciples can see it.

Why would Jesus expose the crowd's blindness and share kingdom secrets with his disciples only? The answer is twofold.

First, Jesus aligns himself with the prophet Isaiah who, 800 years previously, recognized that hard-hearted people turn away from God. They have eyes and ears but refuse to see and hear from their Creator. More alarming, part of the judgment on those who reject God long enough is that they will

eventually lose their opportunity to believe. There is a point of no return when hardening the heart. (Exodus 9:12, Romans 1:24).

Second, while the message will fail with many, the disciples will not fail. Their efforts to spread the good news about Jesus will have an exponential impact reaching far into the future. As proof, you are reading this devotional about that same good news today!

While this parable indicted the crowds and encouraged the disciples, it also speaks to us in 2023. If you read Jesus' words above, he just laid down his four iron at your feet. Do you have eyes to see it?

If so, are you aligned? If you're aligned, then be encouraged! Your straight shots will be many, your heart soft and fertile, and your harvest bountiful! Rejoice; the secrets of the Kingdom of God are yours.

Prayer: Lord, soften my heart and give me eyes to see and ears to hear.

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Boo Arnold

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