

Week 31 March 8, 2026: Luke 13:18-35 The Kingdom's Narrow Path

Luke 13:18-19 The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32) Warning of evil workers in the kingdom

Luk 13:18 Then He(Jesus) said, "**What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it (or what does it resemble)?**"

Parable: King James Dictionary says An Utterance That Involves a Comparison.

A Parable is a short, earthly story used to illustrate a deep spiritual or moral lesson. The word comes from the Greek parabolē, which literally means "to throw alongside." Think of it as placing a common, everyday truth alongside a heavenly truth so the listener can understand the unknown by looking at the known. There is always a literal meaning (the story itself) and a spiritual meaning (look for the central point, hidden spiritual lesson, truth, and then the application).

In the study of parables, the principle of Expository Constancy suggests that God uses symbols consistently throughout Scripture to provide a reliable "code" for interpretation. Here is a simple chart of Scriptural Symbols & Consistent Biblical Meanings

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Consistent Meaning</u>	<u>Scripture References</u>
Birds / Fowls	Workers of Evil (Snatch Seed)	Mat 13:4, 19; Rev 18:2 (Unclean birds); Dan 4:20-22
Leaven Sin	False Doctrine, Corruption	Mat 16:11 (Pharisees doctrine); 1Cor 5:6 (Purge); Gal 5:9
Brass / Bronze	Judgment	Num 21:9 (Bronze serpent); Rev 1:15 (Feet brass); Deu 28:23
Silver	Redemption / Ransom	Exo 30:11 (Atonement); Zech 11:12; Mat 26:15 (30 pieces)
Rock / Stone	Christ / Foundation	1Cor 10:4 (Rock was Christ); Psalm 118:22; Mat 21:42
Field	The World	Mat 13:38 (The field is the world)
Seed	The Word of God	Luke 8:11 (Seed is the word); 1Pet 1:23 (Incorruptible Seed)
Sea / Waters	Gentile Nations / Masses	Rev 17:15 (Peoples, nations & tongues); Isa 57:20; Dan 7:2
Trees	Human Leaders / Nations	Dan 4:22 (Tree is you King Neb.); Judges 9:8-15; Mark 8:24
Grapes / Vine	Israel (Religious life)	Isa 5:1-7; Psalm 80:8; John 15:1 (Vine, vinedresser, fruit)
Fig Tree	Israel (National life)	Luke 13:6-9; Mat 24:32; Jer 24:1-10 (Bad figs Jerusalem ...)
Thorns	Cares of the World / Sin	Gen 3:18; Mat 13:22 (Choke & become unfruitful); Heb 6:8
Lamp, Lampstand	Witness / Church	Rev 1:20; Psalm 119:105; Mat 5:14-16 (Let your Light shine)
Gold	Deity / Divine Nature	Rev 21:18 (Street of gold); Exo 25 (Ark of Covenant)
Oil	Holy Spirit	1Sam 16:13 (Anointing); Mat 25 (Oil in lamps), Acts 10:38
Water	Word, Washing	Eph 5:26 (Washing of water by the Word); John 15:3 (Clean)
Fruit	Repentance / Character	Matt 3:8; Luke 13:9; Gal 5:22 (Fruit of the Spirit is love)

Luk 13:19 "**It is like a mustard seed (labeled as an herb, grows 4'-12' tall bush, in Israel), which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree (abnormal or miraculous), and the birds of the air (sky) nested (found shelter, made nest) in its branches."**

In ancient Israel the mustard seed was the smallest known seed, and in rabbinic teaching the mustard seed was used as an example of something very small.

Parallel passage in Mark's gospel gives us some added insights:

Mar 4:30 Then He(Jesus) said, "**To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it?**"

Mar 4:31 "It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth;

Mar 4:32 "but when it is sown (planted), it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade."

Mar 4:33 And with many such parables He(Jesus) spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it.

Mar 4:34 But without a parable, He did not speak to them. And when they (disciples & Jesus) were alone, He(Jesus) explained all things to His disciples.

Prophecy and the Parables:

Mat 13:34 All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them,

Mat 13:35 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world (Psalm 78:2)."

Mat 13:36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

Quote from Chuck Smith (Luke 13, Tape #8057)

In biblical interpretation, they have what they call the law of expositional constancy. But what they are saying is there is a constancy in the symbols that are used. If brass is a symbol of judgment, each time brass is mentioned in a symbolic form, it's symbolic of judgment. Silver is symbolic of redemption. And thus, in this expositional constancy, if birds are interpreted in one parable as an evil force, then in all of the parables where birds are used, they are used in an evil sense, never in a good sense. We do have the parable that was explained by Jesus of how that the seed was sown and it fell on various types of soil. And some of the seed fell on the wayside and the birds of the air came and ate it before it had a chance to root. And so Jesus said, the birds are the enemy, Satan, who comes and plucks the word that it doesn't have a chance to bear fruit in a person's life. It doesn't have a chance to root and to grow. So birds in a symbolic sense are evil.

What Jesus is then saying is that there will be an abnormal growth of the church. But it will also tolerate and there will be evil allowed in it.

Quote from David Guzik

a. **What is the kingdom of God like?** The traditional and often more familiar explanation of this parable is that it describes the growth and spreading influence of the church. Yet in light of both the parable itself and the context of the parables both before and after, this should be regarded as another description of corruption in the kingdom community.

b. **It grew and became a large tree:** Many or even most regard this as a beautiful picture of the church growing so large that it provides refuge for all of the world. But this mustard seed plant grew unnaturally large, and it harbored birds — which, in some previous parables, were emissaries of Satan (Matthew 13:4, 13:19).

- i. **Became a large tree**: The mustard plant customarily never grows beyond what one would call a bush, and at its normal size be an unlikely place for bird's nests. The **large tree**-like growth from this **mustard seed** describes something unnatural.
- ii. Additionally, trees are sometimes used in the Bible to describe human governments, and evil governments at that. In fact, this tree reminds us of the one Nebuchadnezzar saw in his vision ([Daniel 4:10-16](#)).
- iii. "Close study of birds as symbols in the Old Testament and especially in the literature of later Judaism shows that birds regularly symbolize evil and even demons or Satan (cf. [Sanhedrin](#), 107a; cf. [Revelation 18:2](#))." (Carson)
- iv. This parable accurately describes what the kingdom community became in the decades and centuries after the Christianization of the Roman Empire. In those centuries the church grew abnormally large in influence and dominion, and was a nest for much corruption. "Birds lodging in the branches most probably refers to elements of corruption which take refuge in the very shadow of Christianity." (Morgan)

Why This Matters for Luke 13

When you look at the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Luke 13:18–19) through this lens, the interpretation shifts:

If "Trees" represent earthly power and "Birds" represent evil, this parable warns that the Kingdom (the mustard plant) will grow into an unnaturally abnormal large "tree" (worldly church, and or an earthly institution, or organization) that attracts and harbors corruption and evil.

Luke 13:20-21 The Parable of the Leaven (Matt. 13:33)

Luk 13:20 And again He(Jesus) said, "**To what shall I liken (or compare) the kingdom of God?**

Luk 13:21 "**It is like leaven (yeast), which a woman took and hid (mixed) in three measures of meal (unusually large amount of meal or flour, about sixty pounds could feed about 100 people), until it was all leavened (the leaven permeated every part).**

Parallel passage in Matthew

Mat 13:33 Another parable He(Jesus) spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

Quote from Guzik on BLB website

- a. **It is like leaven**: Jesus used a surprising picture here. Many, if not most (commentators), regard this as a beautiful picture of the kingdom of God working its way (for the better) through the whole world. Yet **leaven** is consistently used as a picture of sin and corruption (especially in the Passover narrative of [Exodus 12:8](#), [12:15-20](#)). Both

the content and the context point towards this being a description of corruption in the kingdom community.

When you look at the Parable of the Leaven (Luke 13:20–21) through this lens, the interpretation shifts for example: If leaven is sin, the woman hiding it in the meal represents the introduction of false doctrine (not spiritual growth) into the "bread" of the Gospel and the kingdom community.

Quote from Chuck Smith, Verse by Verse Study on Luke 12-13 (C2000), Blue Letter Bible website

So that the leaven inserted into the three measures of meal is an evil thing. But yet, that evil will permeate until it has an effect upon the whole lump. And unfortunately, this has been again the experience of the church. And as we look at the condition of the church today, we see that it is far from what Jesus said it should be. There is leaven and it has affected the whole church, and the witness of the church is sadly hindered by the leaven within it.

We are unleavened because Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

1Cor 5:6 Your glorying (your boasting in how great, how spiritual your church is) is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven (little sin) leavens the whole lump (sin corrupts the person and effects the church body)?

1Cor 5:7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

1Cor 5:8 Therefore let us, keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Communion is the New Covenant fulfillment of the Passover, in Christ
While the Passover looked forward to a coming Redeemer, Communion looks back at the finished work of Jesus Christ.

The Sacrifice: In the Old Covenant, a literal lamb was slain. In the New Covenant, Christ is our Passover Lamb (1Cor 5:7). His death fulfilled the requirement for the shedding of blood.

The Bread: During the Last Supper, Jesus took the unleavened bread of the Passover and gave it new meaning: "This is My body which is given for you" (Luke 22:19).

The Cup: Jesus took the "cup after supper" (traditionally the Cup of Redemption in the Seder) and declared it the "New Covenant in My blood" (Luke 22:20).

Luke 13:22-33 The Narrow Way (Matt. 7:13-14)

Luk 13:22 And He(Jesus) went (walked) through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

Luk 13:23 Then one said to Him(Jesus), "Lord, are there few who are saved (from the penalties of sin and the last judgment)?" And He(Jesus) said to them,

Many Jews assumed they were saved simply by being descendants of Abraham. They had a strong emphasis on national identity rather than individual faith. Many taught Gentiles were seen as excluded unless they converted to Judaism. Jesus was preaching about a "narrow door" and "repentance" (Luke 13:3, 5), the questioner was likely confused? He were asking, "If following You is this difficult, then does that mean, the large number of Jews we thought were saved are actually not?" Jesus was making it very clear salvation (**being saved**) requires a deliberate personal response, not just being part of a group.

Scripture teaches

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

Rom 4:3b Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Rom 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Luk 13:24 "**Strive (agonize, struggle, make every effort) to enter through the narrow gate (force aside any false belief systems, any unbelief and any attractions to sin for there is only one way John 14:6), for many, I say to you, will seek (try) to enter (by their own works and ways) and will not be able.**

We have many obstacles in our way. The world is an obstacle. The devil is an obstacle. Probably the worst obstacle is our own flesh.

Jesus made it very clear, there is only one way, not many ways.

Jhn 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Parallel passage in Matthew

Mat 7:13 "**Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.**

Mat 7:14 "**Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.**

Luk 13:25 "**When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door (again and again), saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from (the Master of the house is saying you do not have a relationship with Me),'**

The "door" here is used as a Metaphor. A physical household event or object which represents a spiritual reality.

If He is Lord of your life, you will do His will, obey His Word

Mat 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Mat 7:22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

Mat 7:23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness (you who do not obey my Word)!'

For many will seek to enter and will not be able, illustrated by being on the outside knocking trying to get in. The opportunity to trust in Christ will not stay open forever, it will be taken away or the door will be closed. There will come a time when it is too late to enter; that is why one must have an urgency to enter now.

Jesus Said You Will Know Them by Their Fruits

Mat 7:16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? No

Mat 7:19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Mat 7:20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Luk 13:26 "then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' (Psalm 118:26)

Listening to Jesus and fellowship with believers are not by themselves a guarantee of eternal life. It is not just head knowledge or your association that saves you. Jesus said you must be born again Jn 3:3. Eternal life comes only through personal faith (trust) in Christ, Jesus.

Mar 1:15 Jesus saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Jhn 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Luk 13:27 "But He(Jesus) will say, 'I tell you, I do not know you, where you are from (we don't have a relationship). Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity (evil workers of unrighteousness).'

Luk 13:28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (sorrow, pain, grinding of teeth), when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God

(representing all those Israelites who believe, Heb 11), and yourselves thrust out (being cast out and separated from God because of your unbelief).

Luk 13:29 "They (believers) will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down (recline at the banquet table) in the kingdom of God.

Jesus was saying many will be saved from all over the world and will be together with God in His kingdom. This was a shock to the many Jewish people of His day, they had been taught that salvation was only for the Jews.

A Multitude will be Saved in the Great Tribulation

Rev 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

Rev 7:10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Luk 24:47 "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Act 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Luk 13:30 "And indeed there are (some) last who will be first, and there are (some) first who will be last."

Condition of Israel, still today

Rom 9:30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;

Rom 9:31 but Israel (**Nationally**), pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.

Rom 9:32 Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

Rom 9:33 As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him (**Jesus, Christ**) will not be put to shame."

Luk 13:31 On that very day (that very hour**) some Pharisees came, saying to Him(**Jesus**), "Get out (**leave**) and depart from here, for Herod (**Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea**) wants to kill You."**

Luk 13:32 And He(Jesus**) said to them, "**Go, tell that fox (metaphor for deceitful and cunning), 'Behold (Listen carefully), I cast out demons and perform cures (heal many people) today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected (It is the same root****

word Jesus used on the cross when He cried, "It is finished" (Tetelestai). He was signifying that the work of providing a perfect sacrifice for sin was now complete. He conquered sin and destroyed the works of the devil by paying the debt of sin that held humanity captive).'

Jesus was telling Herod ("that fox") that He was on a divine timetable. No earthly threat could stop Him, until His mission was perfected in Jerusalem on God's appointed day.

Jhn 17:3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Jhn 17:4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

Jhn 17:5 "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Heb 5:7 (Jesus) who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,

Heb 5:8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Heb 5:9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

Luk 13:33 "Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem (nothing will stop Gods plan, Jesus appears to be using an irony, Jerusalem was the most dangerous place for a true prophet of God).

Jhn 4:34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

Mat 20:18 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death,

Luke 13:34-35 Jesus Laments over Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37–39) (Luke 19:41)

Luk 13:34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those (messengers) who are sent to her (by God)! How often I wanted to gather your children together (to Me), as a hen gathers her brood (chicks, young ones) under her wings (to care for them), but you were not willing!

Luk 12:56 "Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?

Psa 91:4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler (protective wall).

Luk 13:35 "See (Behold, Listen carefully)! Your house is left to you desolate (forsaken, abandoned by God and destitute); and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He, who comes in the name of the LORD!' "(Quote from Psa 118:26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.)

Parallel passage from Matthew's Gospel

Mat 23:25 (Jesus said) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.

Mat 23:28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Mat 23:31 "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

Mat 23:33 "Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

Mat 23:34 "Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,

Mat 23:35 "that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

Mat 23:36 "Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

End

Extra Scriptures:

Simple Biblical Chart for Christian to Stay Away From

<u>Category</u>	<u>Warning</u>	<u>Key Verse</u>
Die Self: Exalting Self	Self-life enslaves-practices sin, die to self	Luke 9:23
Sexual Immorality	Stay pure; no sex outside marriage	1Cor 6:18
Lust / Pornography	Guard your eyes & thoughts	Matt 5:28
Drunkenness	Is sinful, reduces reason, stay out of bars,	Eph 5:18
Sorcery, Drugs	Say no to mind altering drugs like pot ...	Deut 18:10–12
Idolatry	Don't put anything above God	1John 5:21
Love of Money	Don't chase riches or material things	1Tim 6:10
Greed	Be content, not grasping for world things	Heb 13:5
Unforgiveness	Forgive quickly	Matt 6:14–15
Bitterness	Don't let resentment & negativity grow	Heb 12:15
Gossip / Slander	Watch your words	Eph 4:29
Anger Outbursts	Control your temper	Prov 29:11

Pride	Not willing to repent when sinning	James 4:6
Lying / Deception	Speak truth, don't lie, be untrustworthy	Eph 4:25
Bad Company	Bad friends tend to corrupt good morals	1Cor 15:33
Laziness, wasting time	Be diligent, work hard, be faithful	Prov 6:9–11

Simple Chart to Keep You Close, Abiding in Jesus & His Word

<u>Positive Habit</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Key Verse</u>
Love God	Put God first & obey His Word,	Matt 22:37
Love Others	Treat others with Gods love & kindness	John 13:34–35
God First, Die to Self	Walk in new nature, crucify old nature	Luke 9:23
Pray Daily	Talk to God continually	1Thess 5:17
Read the Word	Feed your spirit & soul	Josh 1:8
Obey God	Do what Scripture says	James 1:22
Walk in Faith	Trust God, not fear	Heb 11:6
Be Humble	Think less of self, ask God for wisdom	Phil 2:3
Forgive Quickly	Release offenses have a forgiving heart	Eph 4:32
Give Generously	Have a generous heart, share with others	2Cor 9:7
Serve Others	Be helpful and kind	Mark 10:45
Be Thankful	Practice gratitude, be thankful	1Thess 5:18
Confess Sin	Willingness to repent, keep a clean heart	1John 1:9
Stay Pure	Keep your mind and body clean	1Tim 5:22
Be Diligent	Work hard for the Lord	Col 3:23
Walk in the Spirit	Live by the Spirit's power	Gal 5:22–23