

SHARING YOUR FAITH, PART 1

And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?" (Mark 4:13, NASB)

SOMETIMES I JUST STARE AT A PUTT that went a direction I was not expecting. I am confused, bewildered, mystified. I am like one who has heard a parable of Jesus.

Not long ago, I read an article that challenged the notion that Christian teachers should use the Jesus method, employing stories more often in their teaching. The writer wondered if this also meant that these teachers should leave their listeners in the dark as to just what those stories meant. Jesus often did.

In Mark 4, Jesus presented another simple-to-hear but hard-to-understand parable. When the disciples asked him about the meaning behind it, he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?" In other words, this one shouldn't have been so hard to grasp.

Fortunately, for the disciples, Jesus went on to explain this parable of the sower and the seeds, which will spend the next several Fridays unpacking, with the help of Jeffrey Cranford and Tracy Hanson on the accompanying videos. But before we do that, we have to come face to face with the realization that there is a connection between the cluelessness of the disciples and our own hesitation to share what we know about Jesus. And it starts here: we're not always comfortable with what we know.

In this way, we are right: our knowledge of the infinite God and the glory of his work through his Son Jesus is limited. We see through a glass dimly, Paul told the Corinthians, awaiting the day when, on the other side of the eternal timeline, things will be crystal clear.

Because we like to appear smart—or at least competent—sometimes we hold back in walking others through the Word of God, unfolding the Gospel story so they may see Jesus in his saving work. *Are we equipped to speak up like that? Don't we need training?*

The answer lies much in Jesus' words after telling the parable of the sower. He said, "To you (insiders) has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God" (Mark 4:11). By the revelatory Spirit of God, we know more than we think we know. We can, and should, begin to tell the old, old story as often as we can.

Opening questions What do you do when you are trying to work out a mystifying problem with your golf game? • How about when you encounter something in Scripture that you don't understand?

READING 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Knowledge of God (1 Corinthians)

How does this passage instill confidence that God will give you the understanding that you need?

What was the main emphasis of Paul's teaching? How would such simple focus help us as we share Christ with others?

The mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2)

How is the wisdom we are given from God different than the wisdom of the world?

What would you say it means to have the mind of Christ?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2016 Links Players International. You will find an introductory video for this study at <https://youtu.be/EXFIZmamo8A>.