

# Have You Understood All This? (Matthew 13:51-58)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 30 January 2022

Preacher: William HC

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Cool. And so I will read the Bible verse for today. So let's get our Bibles out. Inflict to Matthew chapter 13. And today's the last sermon, I believe, that will be on the parables.
- So let us read this together. So since our versions might be different, I'll just read it out loud, but follow along in your heads. My version is NLT. So here we go.
- Do you understand all these things? Yes, they said, we do. Then he added, Every teacher of religious law who becomes a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like a homeowner who brings from his storeroom new gems of truth as well as old.
- When Jesus had finished telling these stories and illustrations, he left that part of the country. He returned to Nazareth, his hometown. When he taught there in the synagogue, everyone was amazed and said, where does he get this wisdom and power to do miracles?
- Then they scoffed. He's just a carpenter's son. And we know Mary, his mother and his brothers, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. All his sisters live right here among us.
- [ 1 : 0 6 ] Where did he learn all these things? And they were deeply offended and refused to believe in him. Then Jesus told them, A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his own family.
- And so he did only a few miracles there because of their unbelief. And so can we all give a round of applause to encourage William because he's been preaching for three sermons already yesterday and this morning.
- So let's encourage him for today. Go, William! Thanks so much, Fran.
- Super encouraging as usual. All kinds of activities, hey? Who knew that you would come here and learn stuff too? Yeah, so if you'd like to keep your Bibles open, we will be looking at this last part of Matthew chapter 13.
- Yeah, do forgive me if I do cough. It's not COVID. I tested negative on Friday morning. It's just, yeah, just a lot of talking this weekend, which has been lovely. Yeah.
- [ 2 : 1 5 ] But yeah, I've got my water here as well. Let me pray and let us hear from God's word. Pray with me. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Father in heaven, your kingdom is priceless.
- It is beyond anything we could ever imagine here on earth. And yet this past week has caused us to doubt whether it's because it's been hard, busy, distracting, whether we've lost sight of Jesus.
- Help us today. Help us truly understand heaven's kingdom again. And help us be real about what it would look like to be a part of it. Would you be with us and speak to us through your word today?
- In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Did you understand me? Did you understand me? Or perhaps in Cantonese it would be, I've been in all the other services, so I've been practicing, you see.
- It's a phrase that we love to hate from our parents, right? Or our grandparents. Maybe you've just been trying to sit there, do your own thing, and they tell you off, and then they say, Did you understand me?

[ 3 : 31 ] And of course sometimes, you know, our grumbling is a bit valid. As a parent, sometimes I have said things like that harshly. Or maybe just said it without really explaining myself.

So of course no one understands you. You're not even speaking my language. But look, as one of the parents here, right, a question like, do you understand me, sometimes is important, isn't it?

How else will you know if you know what kind of cereal to buy at the grocery store? How will we know what time to pick you up from school? Or how will we know what you're trying to do for the rest of your life?

Sometimes we do need to ask, did you understand me? And here in our passage, that's exactly how Jesus, like a loving parent, starts, right? He pauses and he asks his disciples, verse 51, have you understood all these things?

And I love how they reply. It's almost like they're a bunch of hyenas, right? Mm-hmm. Yeah, I understood them. All right. Yes, they replied. But remember though, here is, right, Peter, James, John, and all the rest of the 12 disciples.

[ 4 : 34 ] They're actually still puzzling over Jesus' parables, aren't they? And I think what we'll see later on, all right, in Matthew's gospel is that actually they understand and yet they still don't quite get it.

All right? They're going to do some really stupid things later on in the gospels if you keep reading on. And that's okay. God was patient with us too, was he not? God. And if some of you, I know some of you have been away through this holidays or if this is your first time joining us, I want to encourage you, if you have time, to rewind and catch up on the rest of this mini-series through Matthew 13, right?

Through these kingdom parables because, you know, do you understand comes after a whole bunch of parables that we've explored. So you can catch it on YouTube or Spotify. You can listen through to the series that myself and Isaac would preach through.

But what we have discovered so far, right, from these summer parables is what the kingdom of heaven is like. Jesus' kingdom, it's priceless, right?

Whether you've searched all your life or whether you've just stumbled upon it randomly. His kingdom can sometimes look small and hidden, but it brings renewal and blessing everywhere.

[ 5 : 54 ] It will influence everything. And even though in his kingdom there will be a mixed response to Jesus sometimes, like different seeds, different soils, even though in some people it will bear fruit and others it won't, one day it will all become clear.

And in his kingdom, eventually, some will be gathered into the Father's arms, some will be judged and destroyed. This is God's words, and these are the parables we've heard so far. And those who have ears to hear should hear these stories and take them to heart.

And now surely for a question like, have you understood all these things, if we were to kind of do another activity like we've been doing the last few weeks, maybe it wouldn't be a yes or this or that like Isaac did.

Maybe it wouldn't be show and tell. Maybe it would be an exam, right? Do you understand these things? Who's ready for an exam? Nobody. Okay, we're still on summer holidays, right? No one started classes and lectures.

No one uses quizzes anymore anyway, right? Maybe job interviews. It's part of that idea. No quiz today, friends. But Jesus does want us to understand these parables, does he not?

[ 7 : 03 ] And so maybe instead of a two-hour closed book exam, let's do two points from this passage today. All right? I want to share two simple points. Two things that Jesus really wants us to understand about the kingdom of heaven.

Two final thoughts. What will the kingdom of heaven look like? And they come from slightly different angles, you notice in the reading, right? Because actually there's a parable and then there's a story of what happens to Jesus.

So we're going to learn about the kingdom of heaven and we're going to see it lived out. And so my first point is this. Firstly, PCBC. We're going to need to understand, right, firstly, that those who understand heaven's kingdom will bring out old and new treasures from his word.

I'll say that again. If you understand heaven's kingdom, you will be bringing out old and new treasures from his word. Let me read verse 52 again.

This is the NIV. He said to them, So this is actually the final parable Jesus tells.

[ 8 : 17 ] But what exactly is he talking about? Let's unpick this parable a little bit. Who's the teachers of the law Jesus is talking about? What's something old and something new? All right? That's what it literally says in the text, right?

And actually there's been all kinds of speculation. Sometimes people will try to interpret it for you. Sometimes it's harmless. Sometimes it's deadly. But can I suggest, to try and understand this passage, we use one of our tried and true answers, right?

If it's not Jesus, it's context. All right? Try one of those two anytime you get stuck. If it's not Jesus, it's context. So let's have a think about the context.

What's happened before this part of Matthew's gospel? Why does Jesus mention a scribe? Can anyone remember the last time we heard about scribes? Yeah? Okay?

You might have to go back to last year, all right? To 2021. Seems like a while ago. Remember, so far, every time Matthew has mentioned scribes and religious rulers, it's usually been in a bad light, right?

[ 9 : 18 ] Do you remember Matthew chapter 12, verse 38? And some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, those scribes, they said to him, teacher, we want to see a sign from you.

Remember that confrontation between Jesus, the teacher, and all these established teachers who were very threatened. Remember how Jesus then, how did he respond? He scolded them, he rebuked them for trying to chase signs, all the while failing to see how, right here, in the flesh, God's word has been fulfilled.

All the signs point to him already. These were scribes and Pharisees, right? They were still looking for the greatest of all time, when the indisputable goat, right, the Messiah, was right here, standing before him, Jesus Christ.

That was chapter 12, if you remember. And so now we're in chapter 13, he's talking only to his disciples now. Remember, we've shrunk the audience a little bit. But I think here he's still deliberately throwing shade, right?

Scolding those scribes who have all this time been opposing him. And I think what he's trying to say in verse 52 is this. If you were really smart, if you truly knew your Bibles, well, you'd know your Old Testament.

[ 10 : 38 ] And you would know that who this person is, standing right in front of you, is who this Old Testament is pointing towards. You'd be as wise as a master of the house who brings out of his house, right, what's new and what's old and brings them out together.

Does that kind of make sense to everyone? I think that's the word picture that's being painted here. And we kind of got a glimpse of this, didn't we? I remember two weeks ago, Matthew, in the middle of this chapter, in verse 35, he talks about how Jesus spoke in parables to fulfill a particular part of the Old Testament.

Do you remember this? That in verse 35, where Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets. And then he quotes Psalm 78, okay, where this old song where the singer says he'll speak of what God's wonders in parables.

Let me quote from Craig Blomberg. He's the scholar that Isaac and I have been reading a lot this past month, our parables nerd. He puts it this way for us. He says, it seems like in this chapter, Matthew may be implying, right, that a new age of salvation history has arrived, okay?

This age is the age where the kingdom has been kicked off, as it were. The beginning of a new age. It's exactly the time when one would expect God to disclose what was old and what was new.

[12:07] And so as this little parable of the scribe trained for the kingdom of heaven describes, a household master bringing both old and new things out of his treasury.

Brothers and sisters, it may sound scary to dive into a book like Genesis, but to be trained for the kingdom is to see the kingdom of Christ in the old and in the new.

And hasn't that been what Matthew's strategy been all this time, right? Remember the gospel account that he writes keeps saying this was to fulfill what happened. This was to fulfill what happened.

This was to fulfill. Every new thing Jesus has done has been echoed in the old, old stories from the Old Testament. Let me try and illustrate it like this.

The month before we left for Bible college, this was the end of 2016, all right? We're trying to pack up our house. We're trying to leave one part of our life behind and start a new chapter.

[13:08] So had a lot of stuff. You accumulate a lot of junk and good things, but mostly junk over the years. And so we hosted a garage sale, right? So this is our garage sale. This is people walking through.

It was a bit wet, but hey, you know, people got a bargain. It was pretty good. You know what? Afterwards, I was surprised what people bought. I thought they'd go for the new stuff, right?

The unopened camera, you know, or the brand new things. But the stuff that sold kind of surprised me. There was the unopened brand new stuff that got sold.

But then there was also the old vacuum cleaner or the secondhand unicycle. Don't ask. And then there was also the trinkets, right? Laid out that our girls laid out.

It was the dollar table, right? It was the top shelf stuff. You know, all these \$1 trinkets. And that sold like hotcakes. When it comes to running a successful garage sale, the old and the new matter, right?

[14:07] They sell. And when it comes to understanding God's kingdom, I want to say as well, the old and the new matter. If we want to understand heaven's kingdom, we're going to be bringing out old and new treasures from his word.

That is what the word says to us. And if that's true, PCBC, a practical question for those of you members, PCBC, if you want to truly understand the kingdom of heaven, then the question to ask is this, how well do you know you're old and you're new in the Bible?

Is Genesis for you just a bunch of Sunday school stories that just have a conflict of science? Or is there treasure in it about who we are, why we exist, why this world is broken, and how God plans to rescue and bless the nations through a chosen people?

What about the book of Leviticus, right? Is Leviticus a Bible reading plan death trap, right? You know, you start and it's like new year, new year. Oh, wait. Or is there treasure in it?

Even in Leviticus, a treasure, a window into God's holy heart to call out a kingdom of priests that are distinct from the nations. Is there treasure there too?

[ 15 : 26 ] Or do you hear the word revelation, right, and run a mile? Or are you going to be willing, PCBC, to look for treasure in there too, right?

Not treasure in and out of itself, but treasure that points to the kingdom of heaven and to the king of heaven, Jesus Christ, right? Certainly not what some cult like SCJ wants you to believe, but what the Bible wants you to believe, Jesus, the Lord, King of kings, the treasure, the lamb on the throne.

Do you see him there? Are you willing to go look? How well do you know you're old and you're new? And sure, none of us will ever be Bible experts like Craig Blomberg or Francis Chan or whoever else.

But if we really believe that fixing our eyes and turning our eyes on Jesus like we're saying is important, then I think Jesus is saying here, you'll at least want to know everything God has to say to us.

And you'll be hungry to find treasures in the old and the new from all of this precious God-breathed word. So I don't know, if you really want a new year, new you resolution, ask yourself, what will my Bible fitness plan look like?

[ 16 : 43 ] And who can help me? Who can I help along the way in this plan? And what kinds of tools or supports or helps is going to push me along, encourage me as I go treasure hunting this year?

Because those who understand heaven's kingdom will bring out old and new treasures from his word. Now, being able to see treasures in the text is one thing.

So important. But that's not where our chapter ends, is it? And so have a look at verse 53 to the end of the chapter. Let me read this again. Where I think we see Jesus teaches disciples one more thing.

And it's simply this. Those who live for heaven's kingdom will face rejection. It's walk of Jesus, verse 53. When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there.

Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. Where did this man get his wisdom and these miraculous powers, they asked. Isn't this the carpenter's son?

[ 17 : 52 ] Isn't his mother's name Mary? And aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things? And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor. And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

Now this passage will pull at us differently. Depending on your background, your culture, where you grew up, who's in your family.

For some of you, when you hear the word hometown, you're like, oh, my hometown's here, East Auckland. It's where I've been born and bred. And so actually, when you read Jesus went home, it doesn't matter so much.

Yeah, I go home every day. What's the deal? But I wonder, for some of you, right? Maybe some of you who have come from overseas or who have strong family connections elsewhere.

[ 18 : 54 ] Really, if you're a non-Western person, I think this passage immediately jumps out at us. You see, returning to your hometown is more than just stopping by for dinner, isn't it?

It's a pilgrimage. It's going back to your roots, where you come from. It's connecting to who you are, in a sense. When you go home or when you don't go home, it's because you are either connecting or disconnecting with your family, your identity.

And so firstly, when Jesus goes to his hometown, we need to recognize that he is actually honoring his family. Right? Firstly, we see the honor that Jesus is showing to his earthly family.

His heart is fixed on heaven's kingdom, his Father's will. Right? He has been preaching up a storm. He has been showing and telling the world about what his kingdom, the better kingdom, looks like.

But he goes home for Chinese New Year. He honors his family. And remember, his hometown, verse 54, is the town called Nazareth.

[ 20 : 05 ] And actually, it's all the way back in Matthew 2 that we heard briefly about this town of Nazareth. And I want you to imagine, okay, if you were a Nazarethite. Imagine you were maybe Jesus' relative, right?

Maybe it's a small town or a neighbor of his. And all these years, you watch the builder's kid grow up, you know, play along the streets and go to, you know, a Sabbath school or whatever.

And then one day he leaves home to chase a dream somewhere in Galilee. And then the stories start pouring in. Oh, some wise guy Jesus. Some miracle worker Jesus is out and about.

And you're thinking, really? No, not Jesus. Not little Jesus. Not the kid next door Jesus. Surely not. Right? And so when Jesus comes home, you can almost hear their scorn as they respond to Jesus coming up and teaching in the synagogue.

Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works, they say? Isn't this the builder's son? Isn't this mother called Mary?

[ 21 : 15 ] These are not kind words. They have heard clear evidence of God's promised king. His teaching, his miracles, everything.

And yet they cannot shake off the fact that he is Mary's kid. Or that he is James and Joseph's brother. And it says here, verse 57, they took offense at him.

Some of you know that I was born in Malaysia. Any other Malaysians here? Just me? All right. That's fine. I'm in the wrong church, perhaps. The last time I flew back to my hometown was in 2019.

I didn't ride Singapore Airlines. It was actually the plane behind it. \$400 on Scoot Air. You get a seat and that's it. And it was a midnight flight. So I had to spend a whole day bleary-eyed in transit in Singapore.

So I saw the Lion City, but I don't remember much of it. And then eventually landed in a place. And then eventually landed in a place, my birth town, called Kuching. It's called the city of cats.

[ 22 : 38 ] There's a lot of cats. There's a lot of food. It's funny. It's funny when Isaac talked about, you know, the sorting the fish. I was right there and I saw them sort the fish. Yeah.

So it's definitely a different world from Auckland, New Zealand. And when I went, when I was chatting with Cheryl and the kids, you know, hey, you know, I think I need to go back and see Dad and the family.

She didn't get it. I didn't get it either. And actually, part of me was torn. It hurt to leave my family behind. But the plan was to go see my family too.

Right? Back home, I have my dad, my sister, my stepmom. And you know what? At the airport, my dad said to me, welcome home. And God used that trip in lots of different ways.

Yes, we ate a lot of good food. Relationships were renewed and reconciled even. But being in my childhood home, where I grew up, was hard.

[ 23 : 41 ] Almost as soon as I landed, I was no longer a husband, a dad, you know, a capable adult. As soon as we sat down, I felt like the second kid in the family again. Fitting into the big family puzzle piece, whatever it was.

And you know, there was the endless round of, you know, dinners and lunches and meeting this relative, this auntie, this uncle, this grandpa, this granduncle. As I introduced myself again and again to each relative, I tried to introduce that I was a follower of Jesus.

It's hard to hide it when, you know, what are you doing? I'm at Bible college, so don't hide it. Just say it. There was the amazement. What? Oh.

There was disbelief. No. You're just studying your master's, surely. Yeah? Yeah. You're doing postgraduate study. That's what you're doing. And then there's the shake of the head.

I'm so sorry, William. I'm an atheist. Oh, yeah, that's good for you. But I just believe it all pan out. I'm a panist. And through the week, one of my goals was to, I wanted to stay till Sunday.

[ 24 : 52 ] Because one of my goals, I wanted the opportunity to bring my family to church. You know what? I was so overjoyed when they accepted, right?

And we went. We went to BEM Kuching. I was so overwhelmed with joy when we sang together, Behold Our God. But in my hometown, I thought, how could this have ever happened?

But then when the preacher opened up God's word, I looked across. Total ignorance and apathy. And I was crushed.

And I had to remember, those who live for heaven's kingdom will sometimes be rejected. Maybe your family situation is different to mine.

Or maybe it's similar. If it is, please know that Jesus has been there too. It is like our Lord's situation.

[ 25 : 55 ] And his rejection account here, maybe it can help you and me. And other new Christians you might come across in your lives. Right?

And so I just want to leave four thoughts. Right? If you here are a first generation Christian. Or maybe you know and care for others who are first generation Christians.

Or maybe you just want to reach someone and they have no Christian connection. And you know this is coming for them. Here are four thoughts. About how to deal with living for heaven's kingdom.

And being rejected. Okay? Because firstly, even though living for heaven's kingdom brings rejection. Firstly, remember, Jesus is with you. Jesus is with you.

We see this in verse 57. Right? They took offense at him too. So Jesus knows how you feel. Jesus knows what it's like to be told.

[ 26 : 52 ] Mkonga. When you try to bring up your faith. Maybe he too had to sit down at the New Year banquet. And face the barrage of questions. When are you going to get a real job, man?

Or hey, you know your cousin's cousin. You've already got three kids. Why are you so serious about church stuff? What about your family? Jesus knows. Look at the text.

Friends, we are not alone. Our Lord was despised and rejected too.

And so remember that. If ever you are rejected for the kingdom of heaven, Jesus is with you. Always. Secondly, remember that actually others are with you too.

Because I wonder how Peter and John and the others around Jesus felt. Right? They were watching their disciple that they're following.

[ 27 : 54 ] Right? They're watching their teacher, their rabbi. They'd just seen him in huge crowds and big success stories. And now he gets ditched and rejected and treated like dirt.

Why? What would you say if you were Peter after Jesus gets rejected? Cheer up, mate. It'll be alright. But maybe Jesus was teaching them something too.

Maybe he was a living parable right then and there for them. Because these are his final words, right? In our chapter. Jesus said to them, verse 57, Only in his hometown and his own house is a prophet without honour.

In other words, Peter, James, John, Bartholomew, Philip, everyone else. It'll happen to you too.

You'll be rejected too. And actually remember guys, I told you earlier, right? You think of some of Jesus' previous teachings. He says in Matthew 10, 37, Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

[ 29 : 02 ] Anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it.

And whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. And you know what? If we follow Jesus and we face rejection, we're just following in a long line of people who have faced and felt the same.

Whether it's these first disciples like Peter, He goes on to start the early church, He follows His saviour to be crucified. Whether it's John, He's exiled into an island, He's kept in prison until He dies.

Whether it's modern day brothers and sisters, right? Friends from house churches in illegal, places where it's illegal to meet. Whether it's our brothers and sisters in churches around East Auckland or beyond.

Remember, if you're rejected, take heart. You're not alone. Others are suffering with you. And I mean, that's one of the reasons we come together, right?

[ 30 : 10 ] We gather physically. So that we don't just run away. We hang around in groups. We share our wounds, our hurts, our rejections.

And when someone in your group is hurt, you can say, yeah, me too. And yeah, him too. And maybe that will be enough for that person to keep going for another week.

When you're rejected for heaven's kingdom, Jesus is with you. Others are with you. But remember this too. Thirdly, there is still joy. There is still joy despite the shame.

I mean, we're finishing our series here, right? But if you keep reading Matthew's gospel, you're going to see Jesus' rejection gets worse and worse. His fame grows and his opposition grows too.

And at the climax of the story, our Lord is dragged to a cross, falsely accused, and he dies for sinners. But not before every one of his closest friends abandons him.

[ 31 : 18 ] He's rejected. But do you know where in another place of the Bible it talks about what Jesus felt at that point? It's the book of Hebrews in chapter 12.

Yes, there was sorrow for Jesus. Great sorrow, right? As he sat in the Garden of Gethsemane, as he looked out and was being crucified. But actually, Hebrews chapter 2, verse 1, 12, verse 1, reminds us that the author says, Jesus was the author and pioneer of our faith, who for the joy set before him, hang on, we'll say it again, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, scorned its shame, sat down at the right hand of God.

He endured such opposition for the sinners so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Do you see? Do you see, friends? Even if you and I are rejected because we live for heaven's kingdom, whether by our family, our loved ones, there is still joy.



Because for Jesus, there was still joy. He went to the cross and he thought, there is joy in this, in this struggle because God is saving a people for himself through this suffering.

So I don't know what it is for you. Whether you need to realize we have a better forever family among here in Jesus Christ. Not perfect, but it is better.

[ 32 : 48 ] Whether it's the thrill of seeing the Holy Spirit, okay, bit by bit transform people's lives around us. That's a buzz, isn't it? Whether it's seeing friends and strangers find their joy in Jesus.

Whatever rejection we feel from our family, all these things can give us joy set before us to keep going, can it not? So don't forget that.

Don't forget that. And finally, friends, finally, you may be rejected by your closest ones, but there is still time.

There is still time. What do I mean by this? I mean this. One of the hidden gems, I think, in this little section is that actually this is the one place we actually hear who is in Jesus' family, right?

If you're trying to do a family tree for Jesus, you're like, yes, we get a big one from Matthew, right? And then we know that there's Joseph, his dad, and Mother Mary. But who else is in Jesus' family? Thank you, Lord.

[ 33 : 51 ] In verse 55, we see some brother's name, right? Isn't his mother's name Mary? And aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? And look, Matthew may not have known it at the time when he wrote this account.

But now, with the benefit of time, we know not all of these family members reject Jesus forever. Did you know that? Can we think who, at least?

Is there a book of the Bible that's named after one of these people? Yeah. The book of James. Of course, you know, blessed Mary, she was loyal to her son to the cross. She knew her boy would be crowned king.

But it's actually only much later that James, Jesus' half-brother, finally gets it and believes it too. And when he writes his letter to the church, he calls his half-brother the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isn't that amazing? Who knows how long it took? Who knows how many years Mary prayed for her son, James, to get this about Jesus?

[ 34 : 56 ] I think sometimes the best thing we can do if you have unbelieving family, loved ones who don't know Jesus, is to be patient.

Be patient and as you wait, be prayerful for them. Pray that you'll live wisely and honorably before your loved ones.

Pray for opportunities to share, yes, but pray that God will bring other Christians into their lives too, right? And they can show them that Jesus is the better way. I pray this for my non-Christian siblings often because, I mean, they've heard all kinds of Jesus stories and appeals from me.

They have ignored all kinds of links and books and articles from me, I'm sure. But, I can still pray and I can pray that God will send other Christian friends that can keep showing them that following Jesus is not a crazy brother thing.

It's something that lots of people do. Something that they're invited to do as well. So keep praying, friends. Keep praying, keep sowing into your unsaved family.

[ 36 : 09 ] There will be rejection. Yes, we know this, we should expect this. But thank God that there is still time. Until Jesus returns, until every last breath, his patience means salvation for more and more people.

Look, our borders may be shut, but the gates to heaven's kingdom is wide open. Jesus can lead you there, he can lead them there too. So pray, keep praying, and keep loving them.

Well, that's the end of our series, really. And I think we've learned so much and gathered so much. And I know I said no activity, but I don't know.

Part of me does want to just reflect one last time before we leave this series behind. So I don't know about you, but if something from this series, these parables, has spoken to you, I want you to, I want to invite you to write your own parable or story right now.

Write it down. Write down what you think, what you've learned the kingdom of heaven is like. So I'd love to spend a few minutes just to do this. You can do it on your phone, just bring out your note app and do that.

[ 37 : 29 ] Or you can come up right now and grab some paper and some pencils as well. Maybe Angel, you can hand it out or you can just come up and grab it. Please, I invite you, let's spend some time to reflect.

You can borrow Jesus' stories as we write down and try and answer this question. Imitation is flattery or you can make up your own one. And please try this way.

It's not a letter, it's not an exam, right? This is a chance to write a letter, maybe to yourself, maybe to a loved one who you'd like to know this answer. So I want to just leave us, I'll pray and then leave us a couple of minutes, maybe some light music and then the worship team will come up after a few minutes and respond and end the service.

So what would you say to yourself or to your friend? Hey friend, Jesus once said, the kingdom of heaven is like, let's have a go.