

Week of January 15-21

## **HIDE & SEEK**

**Scripture Reading:** Read Matthew chapter 13

Tag. Dodge Ball. Simon Says. Hide & Seek. Some games need no introduction. They have been played by generations of children the world over. My childhood home in Webster, NY was a wonderful place to play Hide & Seek. It was an old 3-story house with large walk-in closets, connecting passageways and plenty of great hiding places where a person could hide for hours and never be found.

In today's chapter reading, Matthew informs us that Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, that is, stories that illustrate a point he was seeking to make. In verse 10, the disciples quizzed Jesus as to why he did this. His response in verses 11-12, on the surface, is quite confusing. The problem is further aggravated by the quotation from Isaiah 6:9-10 which Jesus quotes in verses 14-15. From these passages, it almost seems as if Jesus wanted some of his audience to miss his message and that he only wanted a few special people to get in on the secrets of the kingdom. Yet, this flies in the face of what Paul teaches in I Timothy 2:4 about God wanting all to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

What's up? At this point in Jesus' ministry, opposition is beginning to build to his message. For a year or so, he has been preaching and teaching and revealing God's kingdom, and what does he have to show for it? The fickle crowds just want miracles, healings and food but not repentance. The Pharisees and teachers of the law want him dead because he violates their traditions. His own family thinks he's nuts and want to take him away. To keep speaking openly about the kingdom to those who don't want it would be like casting pearls before swine and this Jesus won't do. He does, however, want his disciples to get the point of the kingdom as well as continue to provide an opportunity for those in the crowd who might still be genuinely interested to come in.

So, how does Jesus solve the problem? It's simple. He plays Hide & Seek! He hides the truth in parables and encourages people to seek it out. This is similar to what the Lord spoke through the prophet Jeremiah (*Jeremiah 31:13-14*): "*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,*" declares the LORD. Unlike the way we played the game as kids, however, the Lord wants to be found by us. He wants us to seek out his truth. Only those who are truly interested will press in and find the answers. Those who don't, those who find the game boring, will take a pass. In so doing, they will harden their hearts to any further truth and tragically miss out on what could have been theirs if they had been looking for where truth was hiding.

Anyone up for a game of Hide & Seek? You're it. He's waiting! Start looking.

**Action Step:** If you are reading this today as a family, go play a game of Hide & Seek.

**Prayer Focus:** That today we would pursue God and His truth

**Take-a-way:** *When God invites you to a game of Hide & Seek, say yes!*