

GOODNEWS LETTER

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BUT, IF THE PUNCHLINE HAS TO BE EXPLAINED...

"And the disciples came, and said unto Him, 'Why speakest thou unto them in parables?' He answered and said unto them, 'Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given,'"

Matthew 13:10-11.

Jesus was always explaining the punchline. The multitudes did not get it. And, His disciples always had a lot of questions to ask about the message. Clearly, the impact just was not strong nor did the parables have an immediate impression on them.

Since Bible times, Jesus continues to explain the punchline through the written word. While, it is available to everyone, few understand it.

We think that the words of Jesus, in Matthew 13:10-11, equates **discipleship** and **the kingdom message**, as one in the same. They go together.

But, when talking to others on the **Second Coming** of Jesus Christ; along, with the other disciplines (church, ordinances, perpetuity, etc.), it's like having to explain the punchline of a joke, all over again.

They have read this before! Thus, His word has little impact upon the hearers. And, when it comes to a lasting impression upon their hearts, forgetaboutit!

However, many say they are interested in God's plan. Yet, we don't see a present elation in the punchline that Jesus gives to those who ask questions; no lasting impact, at all.

What occurs, we think, is that the **flesh** steps up and denies the truth because of its **pride**. It says, '**because I didn't think of it on mine own or, did not understand it from the first, I'm walking.**'

That's not the kind of reaction that a disciple should have. If the heart isn't excited about the final analysis of God's word - His kingdom message, then, how can the Holy Spirit lead into all truth?

In Christianity, the supreme punchline is the **Second Coming** of Jesus Christ, certainly. On this all important subject, it seems that everyone has their own private interpretation of what the punchline is.

That's not just my reasoning or, just my idea. The same analysis came to Peter and Paul, the Apostles. Peter explained the reception of the **Second**

Coming was one of mockery. "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation," 2 Peter 3:4.

They questioned, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' That's what we hear today. There's no difference, it seems, because they have heard the message so many times that they don't see it as an exciting time, any more. There is no continual impact on their hearts.

Well, mockers will do that. So, Peter explains the punchline, once again. "But the day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night" (3:10). While, mockers want to know the 'WHERE' of the promise of His coming, Peter was telling them HOW its going to take place; how He is coming! In other words, HE IS COMING. Keep looking excitedly, and be on the alert.

But, explaining the punchline isn't easy. Once we start to explain, along comes the flesh, rises up to stand up for itself, as explained, earlier. But, once the defense fails, a fleshly (carnal) dullness comes over the once-excited heart.

At the beginning, the heart had meaningful questions. Now, all that remains is a hollow, dead response to the written word. They have heard the punchline too many times.

If anyone knows how hard it is to explain a punchline, it's Paul. He writes, "Concerning Him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing," Hebrews 5:11. Paul knew that spiritual matters require hearts that are strong from use of meaty truths; not, merely milky ingestations.

In Hebrews, it like hearing a joke more than once. After the first time, the punchline loses its intensity. The Hebrew heart heard the punchline so many times that they "have become dull" to the "first principles of the oracles of God" (5:12).

In the Greek, "having become dull," means that they were 'hard to move.' They were zealous, but the heart was set in legality. **Having become dull** means that the mouth no longer "spews" out its contents over the place. The punchline isn't exciting anymore. The message has become stale.

But, Paul knows his calling. He really gets hard on the Hebrews. "Milk users," he says, are "unskillful in the word." They are "babies" (v 13). "Strong meat," on the other hand, "belongs to those who are of full age" (V14a).

Then, Paul delivers the punchline - the remedy, to their dullness. **Strong aged believers** are "those who, by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (5:14b).

Earlier, we advanced the thought that a disciple is one who knows the kingdom message that Jesus encased within His parables. Of course, knowing is exactly the same as having the senses exercised to discernment of Scriptures.

But, notice the words set forth in Matthew 13:13, "Therefore I speak to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."

Thus, Peter, Paul and Jesus made the punchline crystal clear in their explanations. And, through the ages, the message has not changed. It's the same one that has been explained over and over. Where's the excitement of sudden impact causing the mouth to spew its contents all over the place?

I still get excited over any portion of God's word; not, just the parables. But, in the teachings of Jesus; especially, His parables, I find that, all of what moves me now, will be centered within Jesus and His coming Kingdom, then.

It is my prayer that all who read and hear the message of Christ will get happy about the coming day of the Lord. That they, through listening to His word, will become strong, meaty eaters.

But, if you have heard the message before, may be the punchline needs to be explained...one more time.