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“To anyone who has, more will be given” (Matt 13:12).

Jer 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13; Matt 13:10-17

Today's Gospel again addresses the question of why Jesus taught in parables. The scriptures reveal language filled with imagery and analogy, storytelling and nuance. Hebrew amplified meaning by repetition. Aramaic, Jesus' native tongue, had a relatively small vocabulary, but enriched it with multiple possible meanings, word play and unspoken intent. It is like Yiddish compared to German or Black dialect to formal English, which allowed speakers to load speech with coded humor hidden from hearers. You either got it or you didn't.

Jesus was well versed in the rich tradition of biblical imagery. He surely knew Jeremiah's description of false prophets who ignored the living waters of God's truth while relying on cisterns, stored, brackish water, and broken ones at that with no water at all. He was the source of thirst-quenching, fresh and flowing water springing up from within. Using imagery instead of logic was also a sign that the Bible was more Eastern than Western, why its sayings are often paradoxical, and enigmatic: "Those who have will get more; those who have not will lose what they have."

Parables acted as filters. Some people only heard simple stories, while others got the deeper meaning. Think of audiences as concentric circles; those at the edges heard but did not understand, others got the basic lesson, while insiders heard the meaning, and the inner circle knew the secrets. The parable of the treasure was a great get-rich tale about a poor laborer finding wealth. It was also about the cost of discipleship, while for some it was a call to commit to Jesus, the real treasure God was offering.

Jesus quotes Isaiah, who prophesied in parables that only those with faith understood. No one can give another an insight if they lack inner sight, which comes from having a committed relationship with the source of truth. Religion by pretense or only for appearance may fool some for a time, but it is shallow and not connected to the source. "Blessed is the one who is like a tree firmly planted near streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers" (Psalm 1:3).

When the Scriptures speak of the heart, they are referring to the human imagination, the real portal through which we pass when we let our thoughts and feelings play with meaning, make new connections, dream beyond the limits of the material world. The Parables of Jesus are examples of how to access the spiritual dimensions of our physical experience, to seek meaning beneath the surface of things. What we cannot imagine will never happen for us. The heart moves out ahead of the mind to ask what stories await us if only first imagine them, then

explore how to make them happen.

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