

Chapter 6

KINGDOM OF GOD 2

KINGDOM PARABLES

Matthew 13

- I. What are parables? Parables are short stories that can have a double meaning. They make a comparison, “the Kingdom of God is like...” It is important to be careful not to make the mistake of saying “the Kingdom of God is...” A parable is an imaginary story, but one that could also have happened. Parables are used to illustrate and impress on the mind some higher spiritual truth. Parables are earthly stories with heavenly (spiritual) meaning. Almost all of the parables of Jesus were told to reveal some truth about the Kingdom of God.
 - A. How did Jesus use parables in His teaching ministry?
 1. The use of parables did not actually begin with Jesus’ ministry. Parables were also used in the Old Testament. (2 Samuel 12:1-4; Isaiah 5:1-6, Isaiah 28:24-28)
 2. Jesus did use parables more extensively and more effectively than any other person in the Bible, and He was the only teacher in the New Testament to use them.
 - B. In using parables to teach, Jesus had a purpose. Jesus did not begin to use parables until approximately the second year of his ministry. He first tried to win the nation of Israel as a whole, but the leaders and many of the people clung to their carnal Messianic ideas and ideals. Jesus then began to focus His instruction on his disciples and special friends and this in turn began to change His presentation. The purpose of the use of parables by Jesus was to reveal truth and to conceal truth.
 1. The Kingdom of God is a mystery (because it is not visible with natural eyesight), but when we begin to see it our mind-set and thinking is turned toward understanding. The things of God were made plainer and easy to those who were willing to be taught.
 2. Unbelievers with their carnal or logical thinking won’t or can’t accept the truths presented. The things of God were made more obscure and difficult to those who were willingly ignorant. (1 Corinthians 1:18, 21, 25)
 3. A parable is like the pillar of cloud and fire in the Old Testament, which turned a dark side towards the Egyptians and confounded them, but turned a light side towards the Israelites and brought comfort and direction to them.
- II. This is the list of the parables Jesus taught as listed in Matthew 13:
 - A. The parables that were given to the multitudes.
 1. Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-9)

Foundation for Christian Service – Term 3 – Chapter 6 – Kingdom of God 2

2. Parable of the Tares (Matthew 13:24-30)
 3. Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)
 4. Parable of the Leaven (Matthew 13:33)
- B. The parables that were given to the disciples.
1. Parable of Treasure (Matthew 13:44)
 2. Parable of the Pearl (Matthew 13:45-46)
 3. Parable of the Net (Matthew 13:47-50)
 4. Parable of the House owner (Matthew 13:51-52)
- III. Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:1-8, 13-20; Luke 8:4-15)
- A. The parable of the sower illustrates for us the point of beginning; how the Kingdom of God is accepted in individual lives and the varying levels of acceptance.
- B. The sower of the seed or the farmer in this parable is Jesus. The seed is the Word of God or the truth and the soil is the hearts of those that hear the Word.
- C. In this parable Jesus shows us that there are different types of ground or soil, referring to conditions of the human heart, on which the seed of the Word may fall.
1. The first place that the parable tells us the seed fell was along the path or the pavement. We know that if we try to plant seed on the pavement, there will be no chance of it taking root before the birds snatch it away. Jesus said this is like those people that have no understanding or have no intention of listening or paying attention.
 2. Rocky places or stony ground where there is little soil is the second place that Jesus tells us the seed fell. This indicates to us that there are those who will receive the seed (the Word) quickly and joyfully. Many hear the Word, but do not profit from hearing. They tend to get excited, but then go away and do nothing about it. Remember, *"It's not what you know, it's what you do with what you know."* Because there is so little soil in rocky or stony places, there will not be the chance to put down roots and without roots there is no stability. The first storms or difficulties that come they will be uprooted or the sun (heat) will burn them up.
 3. The third place that the seed that is sown might fall is among thorns or thorny ground (weeds). In this case the seed will have a chance to take root. Perhaps more of the truth or the Word was received or more of it was understood. But then the worries of this life or the deceitfulness of wealth are like the thorns that choked out the truth that was received.
 4. And finally, Jesus tells about the seed that falls on good soil or good ground. This is like the person that is able to hear and to understand the truth that is presented

Foundation for Christian Service – Term 3 – Chapter 6 – Kingdom of God 2

and to use it to produce fruit. It does not mean that the soil is totally without the thorns or stones, etc., but that the soil is rich enough to overcome. Notice that Jesus says there will be different levels of fruitfulness.

IV. Parable of the Tares or Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30)

- A. In this parable the sower is again Jesus. The field where the seed is sown is the world. The good seed are the sons of the Kingdom; those that have believed. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, Satan. The harvest is the end of the age, and the angels are the harvesters.
- B. There is always a difference between good seed and weeds. Good seed is carefully planted, watered, cared for, watched over. This is intentional sowing. The good seeds will produce a usable crop. Weeds are wild and come up whenever and wherever. We never really know where they come from. They may be brought by the wind, by birds, by being carried back from contact at some other place. This is unintentional sowing. We must always be aware and keep alert. Too many weeds will choke out the good seed. Weeds produce nothing of value.

V. Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32)

In this parable the mustard seed, the smallest of seeds, is the Kingdom of God; either individually or collectively. This parable tells us that we all start at the same place. We all have a beginning that is small. The end is great. This seed grows into a plant that is able to give support, to give rest, shade, food, help for others. (Psalm 92:12-15; Jeremiah 17:8; Revelation 22:1-2)

VI. Parable of the Leaven (Matthew 13:33)

The leaven in this parable can either be seen as the Word and the dough as the heart or the leaven can be seen as the Kingdom of God and the dough as the whole of society. In either case, the leaven increases the dough, making it pliable, soft. The amount of leaven that is needed is small compared to the work it can and does do. The leaven works quickly at the beginning and then continues its work gradually.

VII. Parable of Treasure (Matthew 13:44)

The parable of the Treasure tells us that Jesus is the true treasure. The field in this parable is the gospel. A treasure is not always easy to find. Sometimes maps and directions are necessary to aid in the discovery of the treasure. Those who discern this treasure in the field, and value it for what it is will never be at rest until they have made it their own at any cost. (Matthew 6:33)

VIII. Parable of the Pearl (Matthew 13:45-46)

Most people are looking for something of value. For some it is security, for some it is family, for some it is wealth, or for some it is a name. There are many good and valuable things that we can seek and put in our lives, but none as important or as essential as Jesus. Jesus is the Pearl of great price and worth all that we have and are. Some things may cost us too much, but never Jesus.

IX. Parable of the Net (Matthew 13:47-50)

Jesus is telling us in this parable that we need to be careful in judging others. The world, or

those that need to hear the gospel, is the sea in this parable. The letting down of the net is the preaching of the gospel to the world. We are not always able to see what is being caught in the net or to judge. There will be both good fish and bad caught in the net.

X. Parable of the House owner (Matthew 13:51-52)

Finally in this parable, Jesus was commending his disciples for hearing and for learning. He was also instructing them to keep the things they had learned as treasures and to add to them as they received more truths and understood these truths and then began to teach others.

Additional Scriptures: Mark 4:26-29 (Parable of the Seed Growing Gradually). The Word of God sown in men's hearts always produces fruit; sometimes slowly but always surely.

PARABLES OF THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT

Parable	References
Of Balaam	Numbers 23:7; 18; 24:3, 15, 20-23
The trees	Judges 9:7-15
Ewe lamb	2 Samuel 12:1-4
Two sons	2 Samuel 14:1-24
Wounded prophet	1 Kings 20:35-43
Thistle and the cedar	2 Kings 14:8-14
The vineyard	Isaiah 5:1-7
Almond tree and boiling pot	Jeremiah 1:11-19
Linen belt	Jeremiah 13:1-11
Wineskins	Jeremiah 13:12-14
Potter and the clay	Jeremiah 18:1-10
Two baskets of figs	Jeremiah 24:1-10
Cup of God's wrath	Jeremiah 25:15-38
Useless vine	Ezekiel 15:1-8
Cooking pot	Ezekiel 24:1-4
Valley of dry bones	Ezekiel 37:1-14
Rising waters	Ezekiel 47:1-12
Measuring line	Zechariah 2:1-13
Golden lampstand & two olive trees	Zechariah 4:1-14
Flying scroll	Zechariah 5:1-4

NEW TESTAMENT

Parable

Wise and foolish builders
New wine in old wineskins
Sower and the seed

Weeds
Mustard seed
Yeast (leaven)
Hidden treasure
Pearl of great price (hidden treasure)
Dragnet (net)
Householder
The lost sheep
Unmerciful servant
Workers in the vineyard
Two sons
Tenants (wicked landowner)
Wedding banquet
Fig tree
Wise and wicked servants
Ten virgins
Talents
Sheep and goats
Growing seed
Watchful servant
Two debtors
Good Samaritan
Friend at midnight
The rich fool
Watchful servants
Barren fig tree
Lowest seat at the feast
The great supper
The lost coin
The lost son
Shrewd manager (dishonest steward)
Rich man and Lazarus
Unworthy servants
Persistent widow (unjust judge)
Pharisee and tax collector
Ten minas

References

Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:47, 49
Matthew 9:16-17; Mark 2:21-22; Luke 5:36
Matthew 13:1-8,18-23; Mark 4:3-8,14-20; Luke 8:5-8,11-15
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
Matthew 13:31-31; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19
Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20-21
Matthew 13:44
Matthew 13:45-46
Matthew 13:47-50
Matthew 13:52
Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7
Matthew 18:23-25
Matthew 20:1-6
Matthew 21:28-30
Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-18
Matthew 22:1-4
Matthew 24:32-35; Mark 13:28; Luke 21:29
Matthew 24:45-51
Matthew 25: 1-13
Matthew 25:14-30
Matthew 25:31-46
Mark 25:26-29
Mark 13:34-37
Luke 7:41-43
Luke 10:30-37
Luke 11:5-8
Luke 12:16-21
Luke 12:35-48
Luke 13:6-9
Luke 14:7-11
Luke 14:15-24
Luke 15:8-10
Luke 15:11-32
Luke 16:1-10
Luke 16:19-32
Luke 17:7-10
Luke 18:1-8
Luke 18:9-14
Luke 19:11-27

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 6 Kingdom of God 3: Kingdom Parables

1. Jesus' purpose for using parables in his teaching ministry was two-fold; to reveal and to conceal. Do you believe that the truths in these parables can still be revealed to us today; perhaps even more fully? In what ways?
2. The challenge in the Parable of the Mustard Seed is to allow the Kingdom of God (the rule of God in our hearts) to grow and to become useful and helpful to those around us. How can you see this happening?