

# Jesus' Parables: What Do They Mean for Us?

## What is a parable?

A simple story that illustrates a moral or religious principle

A figure of speech; an illustration; a short story teaches a principle

Jesus said (in Matthew 13:11-17 and Luke 8:9-10) that the **knowledge<sup>i</sup> of the secrets** of the kingdom of heaven have been given to his disciples. Parables are secrets of the kingdom of heaven of the simplest sort and almost anyone can understand them – that makes the parables very important.

## Parable Statistics in the Gospels<sup>ii</sup>:

There are 27 parables mentioned only once in the Gospels

There are 4 parables mentioned in only 2 Gospels and

Five parables are mentioned in only 3 of 4 Gospels

**We are going to start with the 5 mentioned in 3 of the 4 Gospels.** They are the parables of the:

1. **The Farmer** Matt 13:1-23 (Also in, Mark 4:1-23; Luke 8:1-15)<sup>iii</sup>
2. **New Cloth and New Wineskins** Luke 5:36-39 (Also in, Matt 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-21)<sup>iv</sup>
3. **The Fig Tree** Matt 24:30-35 (Also in, Mark 13:28-31; Luke 21:29-33)<sup>v</sup>
4. **The Mustard Seed** Matt 13:31-32 (Also in Mark 4:31-32; Luke 13:18-19)<sup>vi</sup>
5. **The Wicked Tenants** Matt 21:33-46 (Also in Mark 12:1-11; Luke 20:9-47)<sup>vii</sup>

**There are 4 parables found in 2 of the 4 Gospels.** They are the parables of the:

1. **House Built on a Rock** Luke 6:46-49. (Also in, Matthew 7:24-27)<sup>viii</sup>
2. **Yeast** Luke 13:20-21 (Also in, Matthew 13:33)<sup>ix</sup>
3. **Lost Sheep** Luke 15:1-7 (Also in, Matthew 18:12-14)<sup>x</sup>
4. **Wedding Banquet** Luke 14:15-24 (Also in, Matthew 22:1-14)

**There are a whopping 27 parables only found 1 time in the 4 Gospels.** They are the parables of the:

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|---|---|
| 1. <b>BARREN FIG TREE</b> Luke 13:1-9 <sup>xi</sup>                       | 16. <b>TALENTS</b> Matthew 25:14-27 <sup>xxvi</sup>             |
| 2. <b>WEEDS</b> Matthew 13:24-30 <sup>xii</sup>                           | 17. <b>THE RICH FOOL</b> Luke 12:13-25 (-36) <sup>xxvii</sup>   |
| 3. <b>NET</b> Matthew 13:47-51 <sup>xiii</sup>                            | 18. <b>RICH MAN AND LAZARUS</b> Luke 16:19-31 <sup>xxviii</sup> |
| 4. <b>HIDDEN TREASURE</b> Matthew 13:44 <sup>xiv</sup>                    | 19. <b>SHEEP AND GOATS</b> Matthew 25:31-46 <sup>xxix</sup>     |
| 5. <b>FINE PEARL</b> Matthew 13:45-46 <sup>xv</sup>                       | 20. <b>TEN VIRGINS</b> Matthew 25:1-13 <sup>xxx</sup>           |
| 6. <b>FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT</b> Luke 11:5-13 <sup>xvi</sup>                  | 21. <b>GROWING SEED</b> Mark 4:26-29 <sup>xxxi</sup>            |
| 7. <b>GOOD SAMARITAN</b> Luke 10:25-37 <sup>xvii</sup>                    | 22. <b>TWO DEBTORS</b> Luke 7:36-50 <sup>xxxii</sup>            |
| 8. <b>GOOD SHEPHERD</b> John 10:1-21 <sup>xviii</sup>                     | 23. <b>TWO SONS</b> Matthew 21:23-32 <sup>xxxiii</sup>          |
| 9. <b>GREAT BANQUET</b> Luke 14:7-24 <sup>xix</sup>                       | 24. <b>UNMERCIFUL SERVANT</b> Matthew 18:21-35 <sup>xxxiv</sup> |
| 10. <b>HOUSEHOLDER OR HOUSEKEEPER</b><br>Mark 13:32-37 <sup>xx</sup>      | 25. <b>SHREWD MANAGER</b> Luke 16:1-9 <sup>xxxv</sup>           |
| 11. <b>WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD</b> Matthew 20:1-16 <sup>xxi</sup>         | 26. <b>WISE SERVANT</b> Luke 12:27-48 <sup>xxxvi</sup>          |
| 12. <b>PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR</b><br>Luke 18:9-14 <sup>xxii</sup> | 27. <b>THE PERSISTENT WIDOW</b> Luke 18:1-8 <sup>xxxvii</sup>   |
| 13. <b>LOST COIN</b> Luke 15:8-11 <sup>xxiii</sup>                        |   |
| 14. <b>LOST SON</b> Luke 15:11-32 <sup>xxiv</sup>                         |   |
| 15. <b>TEN MINAS</b> Luke 19:11-27 <sup>xxv</sup>                         |   |

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<sup>i</sup> That is, to absolutely know the things which proceed from the Spirit regarding the secrets of the Kingdom of God (Strong's Concordance and Thayer's Lexicon).

<sup>ii</sup> Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

<sup>iii</sup> I question, what kind of soil am I?

1. Do I understand the word as I ought to? Do I give attendance to it? Or do I dismiss it?
2. What does persecution do to the word in me?
3. Do I allow the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word planted in me?
4. Or am I good soil bearing fruit?

<sup>iv</sup> This is a big deal to me now, the result of mixing the Old Covenant with the New Covenant – not a good thing. The Law is the old wine. Grace is the New Wine!

<sup>v</sup> The end times being upon us should not surprise but encourage us.

<sup>vi</sup> The smallness of a seed does not correlate with how big a tree grows.

<sup>vii</sup> This is an obvious lesson about disobedient Jewish leaders – the text says so. The not so obvious lesson is how this compares to what the Lord has placed in leaders hands today. The Lord wants us to produce fruit so others grow and that we grow also.

<sup>viii</sup> Being built on a proper foundation allows us to weather the storms of life. An improperly built foundation is disastrous when inevitable problems come.

<sup>ix</sup> The woman work the flour until the yeast was throughout the dough.

<sup>x</sup> Even when it comes only to one person, being found is very important.

<sup>xi</sup> This teaches in general, that people who experience disasters are not necessarily worst that anyone else. Not the first time this idea mentioned in scripture. Jesus uses this example to express that repentance is a universal need and that evidently no one needs to repent anymore that anyone else.

<sup>xii</sup> The weeds in this parable are people that are simply religious. They have a love for things that don't really help one grow and actually may be an evangelist of it. If uprooted that one who harms the wheat with this kind of error can and will affect those around them.

<sup>xiii</sup> At the end of the age, the angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

<sup>xiv</sup> The hidden treasure and the fine pearl: My response to the Gospel or the Kingdom of Heaven. Are these things important? Are they a hidden treasure or fine pearls? How badly do I want to make the kingdom of heaven mine? Giving up what I consider precious to gain what is truly valuable. This is not a casual response.

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<sup>xvi</sup> Here the parable speaks of the boldness of a friend that has a need and his friend that has compassion because he is friend, a bold friend. This illustrates about boldness in approaching our Father – but also how our Father will never give us anything that will hurt us. Verse 9 & 10 are very bold and direct and verse 13 – however - is the qualifier – Our father only gives us good gifts!

<sup>xvii</sup> Who is my neighbor? Anyone who is in need is my neighbor.

<sup>xviii</sup> Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He is the Gate. I need to know his voice.

<sup>xix</sup> Instructions to the Host: Invite everyone. Instructions to the invited: Be humble.

<sup>xx</sup> In the grand scheme of things we are the Lord's servants. The Lord has put us in charge that should mean that we live to fulfill what the Lord has assigned us to do – to do his will. This has to do the concept of we being part of the Body of Christ – where every part of the body has a specific function that is crucial to the proper functioning of the body. The one who keeps a lookout at the door (the place that for the most part everything enters) is at actually the weakest spot - the door – this speaks to leaders. But it is not just the leader's responsibility to watch it is everyone's responsibility.

For instance, in the body our 5 senses:

1. Eyes
2. Ears

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3. Smell
4. Touch and
5. Taste

Each of these has a tremendous importance depending on the individual situation.

<sup>xxi</sup> This passage has always given me pause, something to think about, because since I am one who in the past and also not for the most works for an hourly wage I thoroughly understand the grumbling of these workers who worked all day for the same amount as those who only worked one hour. However, there is a higher principle here and which is very hard to understand in the natural but easier to understand in the spiritual.

The spiritual: 1st there were no special people, then from the Gentiles Abraham Israel the Church. The Church is truly first to receive the spiritual benefits.

<sup>xxii</sup> I don't want to be guilty of praying about myself. I want to come to God in the way he will welcome me!

What did the Pharisee do wrong?

He prayed comparing himself to others!

Also never do the opposite; never pray comparing yourself to God

What did the tax collector do right or wrong?

He realized at least one of God's benefits – MERCY! This is pre-New Covenant.

<sup>xxiii</sup> The woman w/ 10 coins and loses one! The one coin is needs to be found – *if possible, has to be found*. She does everything she can to find the coin.

<sup>xxiv</sup> The Lost Son came to his senses. He went back to his Father humble, but the FATHER saw the son coming was:

- Filled with compassion
- Ran to his son
- Kissed him and
- Had a party

The older brother very typical

- Very concerned about all this happiness on the son who had squandered the Father's property
- Not realizing that the brother that was dead was alive again – lost but now found

The Father pleaded with him too!

- Reminds him of his inheritance – sometimes this doesn't matter.

<sup>xxv</sup> Put what the Lord has given you to work! Be honest

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<sup>xxvii</sup> Don't be a fool. Do not be presumptuous about tomorrow.

<sup>xxviii</sup> If one do not listen (give audience; understand; yield; - this even has to do with...) to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." We need to give audience; understand; yield to what the Lord reveals to us.

<sup>xxix</sup> Those who are related to Jesus: Those who cannot fend for themselves.

<sup>xxx</sup> Be prepared!

<sup>xxxi</sup> The seed is the word of God or word of the Kingdom. We just need to be futile soil.

<sup>xxxii</sup> My conclusion for the most part was, "Most of us have no problem in knowing or reasoning why the Lord doesn't like us much. Our perception is that he hasn't done as much for us, but this isn't so. From our hearts we need to ask him to open our hearts and our minds that we would understand his love for us better." So we will love him more.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> The first son

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Father forgive as we forgive those who trespass against us

<sup>xxxv</sup> Prepare for the future!

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Stewardship and accountability; I look at my responsibilities and husband, father, pastor, friend, Christian

<sup>xxxvii</sup> We should always pray and not give up!