

The Parables of Jesus



“Jesus...said nothing to them without a parable.” (Matthew 13:34)

A Self-Study Guide

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Introduction

The parables were used as Jesus' method of communication to the multitudes (Matt 13:34). In these parables He spoke to the crowds about the true nature of God's kingdom. He also taught the people through parables practical ways to live godly lives. As you go through these lessons, there are important keys to keep in mind to have the proper interpretation of the parable: (1) who is the audience who is hearing the parable, (2) what is the key theme or message described (e.g. "the kingdom of heaven is like"), and (3) what is the primary message for the audience to learn from the parable. Once these are understood, only then can we make proper application to ourselves.

The Tares

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the kingdom of heaven? Is it heaven? How can we know from the descriptions in this passage?
- 2 What is the main point of the parable?
- 3 Who do the tares and wheat seem to represent in this parable?
- 4 The stated time frame of the parable is "at the end of the age." When is this? Look for other New and Old Testament references concerning "the end of the age."
- 5 Why are the tares not gathered up immediately? What does this mean today?
- 6 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

- (24) Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.
(25) "But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away.
(26) "But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also.
(27) "The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'
(28) "And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves *said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?'
(29) "But he *said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them.
(30) 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'""
(36) Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."
(37) And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,
(38) and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one;
(39) and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.
(40) "So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.
(41) "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,
(42) and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
(43) "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

The Kingdom of Heaven Parables

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 From each of the parables, what do we learn about the kingdom of heaven:
 - mustard seed

 - leaven

 - hidden treasure

 - pearl of great value

 - the net

- 2 One of the parables states the time frame of its fulfillment. Which parable sets a time marker, what is the time marker, and explain the time marker?

- 3 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 13:31-33; 44-50

- (31) He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field.
- (32) It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."
- (33) He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."
- (44) The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
- (45) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls,
- (46) who, on finding one pearl of great value, ywent and sold all that he had and bought it.
- (47) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.
- (48) When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad.
- (49) So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous
- (50) and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The Unforgiving Servant

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of this parable?
- 2 The monetary value in this story is lost on us, but is necessary to understand the impact of the parable. Using the following information, give a rough estimate of the value of what each servant owed.
1 denarius = 1 day's wage; 1 talent = 6000 denarii;
(use your own day's wage for the calculation)
- 3 What godly characteristics did the master show? How can we adopt these traits?
- 4 What evil characteristics did the wicked slave show? How can we avoid acting this way?
- 5 Explain verse 35.

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 18:21-35

- (21) Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how many times could my brother sin against me and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"
- (22) "I tell you, not as many as seven," Jesus said to him, "but 70 times seven.
- (23) For this reason, the kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves.
- (24) When he began to settle accounts, one who owed 10,000 talents was brought before him.
- (25) Since he had no way to pay it back, his master commanded that he, his wife, his children, and everything he had be sold to pay the debt.
- (26) "At this, the slave fell facedown before him and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you everything!'
- (27) Then the master of that slave had compassion, released him, and forgave him the loan.
- (28) "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him 100 denarii. He grabbed him, started choking him, and said, 'Pay what you owe!'
- (29) "At this, his fellow slave fell down and began begging him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'
- (30) But he wasn't willing. On the contrary, he went and threw him into prison until he could pay what was owed.
- (31) When the other slaves saw what had taken place, they were deeply distressed and went and reported to their master everything that had happened.
- (32) "Then, after he had summoned him, his master said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.
- (33) Shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?'
- (34) And his master got angry and handed him over to the jailers until he could pay everything that was owed.
- (35) So My heavenly Father will also do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from his heart."

The Workers in the Vineyard

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of this parable?
- 2 Who do you think are the workers who were sent first into the vineyard? Who do you think are the later workers?
- 3 What is the problem? What is the resolution?
- 4 What are ways that we act like the workers sent first into the vineyard?
- 5 Explain verse 16.
- 6 Write any present day applications.

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 20:1-16

- (1) "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard.
- (2) After agreeing with the workers on one denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.
- (3) When he went out about nine in the morning, he saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing.
- (4) To those men he said, 'You also go to my vineyard, and I'll give you whatever is right.' So off they went.
- (5) About noon and at three, he went out again and did the same thing.
- (6) Then about five he went and found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here all day doing nothing?'
- (7) "'Because no one hired us,' they said to him. "'You also go to my vineyard,' he told them.
- (8) When evening came, the owner of the vineyard told his foreman, 'Call the workers and give them their pay, starting with the last and ending with the first.'
- (9) "When those who were hired about five came, they each received one denarius.
- (10) So when the first ones came, they assumed they would get more, but they also received a denarius each.
- (11) When they received it, they began to complain to the landowner:
- (12) 'These last men put in one hour, and you made them equal to us who bore the burden of the day and the burning heat!'
- (13) "He replied to one of them, 'Friend, I'm doing you no wrong. Didn't you agree with me on a denarius?'
- (14) Take what's yours and go. I want to give this last man the same as I gave you.
- (15) Don't I have the right to do what I want with my business? Are you jealous because I'm generous?'
- (16) "So the last will be first, and the first last."

The Two Sons

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of this parable?
- 2 Who are the two sons?
- 3 How are tax collectors and prostitutes entering the kingdom ahead of chief priests and elders (Mt 21:23)?
- 4 Write any present day applications and lessons.

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 21:28-32

(28) "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

(29) "I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

(30) "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

(31) "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.

(32) For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

The Wicked Tenants

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of this parable?
- 2 Who are the tenants?
- 3 Who are the sent slaves? Who is the son?
- 4 Explain why the tenants seized the slaves and the son.
- 5 What is the outcome for these wicked tenants?
- 6 Write any present day applications and lessons.

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 21:33-46

(33) "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country.

(34) When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce.

(35) But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

(36) Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way.

(37) Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son."

(38) But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance."

(39) So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

(40) Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

(41) They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."

(42) Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures:

"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

this was the Lord's doing,

and it is amazing in our eyes?"

(43) Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.

(44) The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

(45) When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them.

(46) They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

The Wedding Feast

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of this parable?
- 2 Who are the slaves first invited to the banquet?
- 3 What is the outcome for those first invited to the banquet but made light of it?
- 4 Explain why "both good and bad" are brought into the wedding banquet and its meaning.
- 5 What is the lesson of the wedding robe?
- 6 Write any present day applications and lessons.

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 22:1-14

- (1) Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying:
- (2) "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son.
- (3) He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come.
- (4) Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.'
- (5) But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business,
- (6) while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them.
- (7) The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.
- (8) Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy.
- (9) Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.'
- (10) Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.
- (11) "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe,
- (12) and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless.
- (13) Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'
- (14) For many are called, but few are chosen."

The Fig Tree

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of this parable?
- 2 When would all of these things be accomplished, according to the text?
- 3 Explain the example of Noah and lesson to be learned from Noah.
- 4 Most denominations believe this is referring to "the rapture" before the "great tribulation." What in the text and context forbids this interpretation?
- 5 If this is not referring to "the rapture," what are verses 40-41 describing?
- 6 Write any present day applications and lessons.

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 24:32-44

- (32) "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.
- (33) So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!
- (34) Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.
- (35) Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.
- (36) "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.
- (37) But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.
- (38) For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,
- (39) and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.
- (40) Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.
- (41) Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.
- (42) Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.
- (43) But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.
- (44) Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

The Talents and the Minas

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 Write down all the similarities of this parable to the parable of the minas.
- 2 Write down all the differences found in this parable compared to the parable of the minas.
- 3 Write any other present day applications and lessons.

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 25:14-30

- (14) "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.
- (15) To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.
- (16) He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.
- (17) So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.
- (18) But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.
- (19) Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.
- (20) And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.'
- (21) His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'
- (22) And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.'
- (23) His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'
- (24) He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,
- (25) so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'
- (26) But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed and gather where I scattered no seed?
- (27) Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.
- (28) So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.
- (29) For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.
- (30) And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Good Samaritan

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of the parable?
- 2 What is significant about the priest and the Levite passing by the beaten man?
- 3 What is impressive about the actions of the Samaritan?
- 4 Who is our neighbor?
- 5 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Luke 10:29-37

(29) But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

(30) Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.

(31) Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

(32) So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

(33) But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion.

(34) He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

(35) The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.'

(36) Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"

(37) He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

The Friend in Need

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of the parable?
- 2 Is God being portrayed as someone who is bothered by our repeated prayers? Explain the meaning.
- 3 How much more will God give to His children?
- 4 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Luke 11:5-13

- (5) He also said to them: "Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,
- (6) because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I don't have anything to offer him.'
- (7) Then he will answer from inside and say, 'Don't bother me! The door is already locked, and my children and I have gone to bed. I can't get up to give you anything.'
- (8) I tell you, even though he won't get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence, he will get up and give him as much as he needs.
- (9) "So I say to you, keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you.
- (10) For everyone who asks receives, and the one who searches finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.
- (11) What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead of a fish?
- (12) Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?
- (13) If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

The Rich Fool

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of the parable?
- 2 What is the problem with the question from the man in the crowd?
- 3 What was wrong about what the rich fool was thinking and doing?
- 4 How do we act like the rich fool?
- 5 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Luke 12:13-21

- (13) Someone from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."
- (14) "Friend," He said to him, "who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?"
- (15) He then told them, "Watch out and be on guard against all greed because one's life is not in the abundance of his possessions."
- (16) Then He told them a parable: "A rich man's land was very productive.
- (17) He thought to himself, 'What should I do, since I don't have anywhere to store my crops?
- (18) I will do this,' he said. 'I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods there.
- (19) Then I'll say to myself, "You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself."
- (20) "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared—whose will they be?'
- (21) "That's how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

*The Wise & Faithful Servant***QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS**

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of the parable?

- 2 How is Jesus' response an answer to Peter's question?

- 3 Who is the faithful and wise manager? What are his characteristics?

- 4 What is the temptation to do when it seems the master is a long time in returning?

- 5 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Luke 12:35-48

(35) "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning,

(36) like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.

(37) It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.

(38) It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night.

(39) But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.

(40) You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

(41) Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?"

(42) The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?

(43) It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns.

(44) I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

(45) But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk.

(46) The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

(47) "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows.

(48) But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

The Great Supper

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of the parable?
- 2 Describe the nature of these excuses.
- 3 What would be 21st century comparisons to these excuses?
- 4 What is the outcome of those who made these excuses?
- 5 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Luke 14:15-24

- (15) When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will eat at bread in the kingdom of God."
- (16) Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many,
- (17) and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, "Come, for all things are now ready.'
- (18) But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'
- (19) And another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.'
- (20) Still another said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'
- (21) So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.'
- (22) And the servant said, "Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.'
- (23) Then the master said to the servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.
- (24) For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' "

The Tower and the King

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of the parable?
- 2 How do these parables fit in with the point Jesus is making in verses 26-27?
- 3 What does Jesus' words about salt in verses 34-35 have to do with the main point Jesus is making to the large crowds?
- 4 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Luke 14:15-24

- (25) Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said:
- (26) "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple.
- (27) And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.
- (28) "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?
- (29) For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him,
- (30) saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'
- (31) "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?
- (32) If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace.
- (33) In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.
- (34) "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?
- (35) It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

The Lost Things

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of the parable? Consider that though there are three stories, there is one parable and therefore the same theme or point being made with each story.

- 2 What other lessons are learned from the lost sheep?

- 3 What other lessons are learned from the lost coin?

- 4 What other lessons are learned from the lost son?

KEY TEXTS

Luke 15:1-32

- (1) Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him.
- (2) But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”
- (3) Then Jesus told them this parable:
- (4) “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?
- (5) And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders
- (6) and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’
- (7) I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.
- (8) “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?
- (9) And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’
- (10) In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”
- (11) Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons.
- (12) The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.
- (13) “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.
- (14) After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.
- (15) So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.
- (16) He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him

The Unjust Manager

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of the parable?
- 2 Is Jesus glorifying this unjust manager's actions? Explain what we are to understand.
- 3 What does Jesus mean when he says, "Make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth?"
- 4 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Luke 16:1-13

- (1) Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property.
- (2) So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.'
- (3) Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg.
- (4) I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.'
- (5) So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'
- (6) He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.'
- (7) Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.'
- (8) And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.
- (9) And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.
- (10) "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.
- (11) If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?
- (12) And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own?
- (13) No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

The Rich Man and Lazarus

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of the parable? Consider that Jesus is not just wanting to inform people about the afterlife.

- 2 Do we learn anything about what the afterlife is like? Or is this simply a story with no factual basis? If this does describe the afterlife, what do we learn?

- 3 What is Hades?

- 4 What were the sole things on the rich man's mind in Hades?

- 4 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Luke 16:19-31

- (19) "There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen, feasting lavishly every day.
- (20) But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, was left at his gate.
- (21) He longed to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table, but instead the dogs would come and lick his sores.
- (22) One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.
- (23) And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side.
- (24) 'Father Abraham!' he called out, 'Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame!'
- (25) "'Son,' Abraham said, 'remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony.'
- (26) Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.'
- (27) "'Father,' he said, 'then I beg you to send him to my father's house—
- (28) because I have five brothers—to warn them, so they won't also come to this place of torment.'
- (29) "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.'
- (30) "'No, father Abraham,' he said. 'But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'
- (31) "But he told him, 'If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'"

The Unprofitable Servants

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of the parable?
- 2 What do we learn about being a cause of temptation?
How can we avoid becoming a cause of temptation?
- 3 How does faith (verses 5-6) work itself into the parable of the unprofitable servants?
- 4 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Luke 17:1-10

- (1) And he said to his disciples, "Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come!
- (2) It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.
- (3) Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him,
- (4) and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."
- (5) The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"
- (6) And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.
- (7) "Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'?
- (8) Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'?
- (9) Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded?
- (10) So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are worthless servants; we have only done what was our duty.' "

The Persistent Widow

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of the parable?
- 2 Is Jesus saying that God is like the unjust judge who gets tired of hearing our prayers?
- 3 What do we learn from the widow?
- 4 In verse 8, Jesus refers to the Son of Man coming. Which coming is this? How do you know?
- 5 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Luke 18:1-8

- (1) Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart.
- (2) He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people.
- (3) In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.'
- (4) For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone,
- (5) yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'"
- (6) And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says.
- (7) And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them?
- (8) I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

The Pharisee & the Tax Collector

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- 1 What is the main point and purpose of the parable?
- 2 How do we act like the Pharisee?
- 3 How can we act like the tax collector?
- 4 Write down present day applications to your life from this parable:

KEY TEXTS

Luke 18:9-14

- (9) He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt:
- (10) "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.
- (11) The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.
- (12) I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.'
- (13) But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'
- (14) I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

