



The Parables Of Jesus



**Insight Into The Mysteries
Of The Kingdom Of Heaven**

MARK A. COPELAND

The Parables Of Jesus

Table Of Contents

Introduction To The Parables (Mt 13:1-3,10-17)	3
Defining The Kingdom Of Heaven (Mt 13:11)	7
The Sower [The Four Soils] (Mt 13:3-9,18-23)	10
The Wheat And The Tares (Mt 13:24-30,36-43)	14
The Mustard Seed (Mt 13:31-32)	19
The Leaven (Mt 13:33)	23
The Hidden Treasure (Mt 13:44)	26
The Pearl Of Great Price (Mt 13:45-46)	29
The Dragnet (Mt 13:47-50)	32
The Householder (Mt 13:51-52)	36
The Unmerciful Servant (Mt 18:21-35)	39
The Laborers In The Vineyard (Mt 20:1-16)	42
The Two Sons (Mt 21:28-32)	46
The Wicked Vinedressers (Mt 21:33-46)	49
The Wedding Feast (Mt 22:1-14)	52
The Wise And Foolish Virgins (Mt 25:1-13)	55
The Talents (Mt 25:14-30)	58
The Growing Seed (Mk 4:26-29)	61
The Two Debtors (Lk 7:41-43)	64
The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37)	67
The Friend At Midnight (Lk 11:1-13)	71
The Rich Fool (Lk 12:13-21)	74
The Barren Fig Tree (Lk 13:6-9)	77
Taking The Lowest Place (Lk 14:7-11)	80
The Great Supper (Lk 14:15-24)	83
The Lost Sheep (Lk 15:1-7)	86
The Lost Coin (Lk 15:8-10)	89
The Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32)	92
The Unjust Steward (Lk 16:1-15)	96
The Rich Man And Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31)	100
The Unprofitable Servants (Lk 17:7-10)	104
The Persistent Widow (Lk 18:1-8)	107
The Pharisee And The Tax Collector (Lk 18:9-14)	110
The Minas (Lk 19:11-27)	113

This material is from ExecutableOutlines.com, a web site containing sermon outlines and Bible studies by Mark A. Copeland. Visit the web site to browse or download additional material for church or personal use.

The outlines were developed in the course of my ministry as a preacher of the gospel. Feel free to use them as they are, or adapt them to suit your own personal style. To God be the glory!

Executable Outlines, Copyright © Mark A. Copeland, 2001
MarkCopeland@aol.com

The Parables Of Jesus

Introduction To The Parables (Mt 13:1-3,10-17)

INTRODUCTION

1. During His earthly ministry, as Jesus went about preaching and teaching, He frequently used parables - cf. **Mt 13:1-3, 13:34-35**
 - a. It has been estimated that at least **one-third** of Jesus' recorded teaching is found in the parables (Wiersbe, "Windows On The Parables", p. 15)
 - b. Certainly many of the most often remembered sayings of Jesus are His parables
2. It is therefore proper for disciples today to ask such questions as:
 - a. What is a "parable"?
 - b. Why did Jesus teach in parables?
 - c. What are they about?
 - d. How should we interpret them?
3. With this lesson, we begin a study on **"The Parables Of Jesus"**...
 - a. This first lesson will serve as an introduction to the parables in general
 - b. Succeeding lessons will examine the parables in particular

[Let's begin this **"Introduction To The Parables"** by noticing...]

I. THE DEFINITION OF "PARABLE"

A. THE WORD "PARABLE"...

1. Is a transliteration of the Greek word **"parabole"** (para-bow-LAY)
2. Means **"to place beside, to cast alongside"**
3. As defined by Vine's Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words, it **"signifies a placing of one thing beside another with a view to comparison"**
4. Wiersbe's description of a parable...
 - a. As **"a story that places one thing beside another for the purpose of teaching"**
 - b. **"It puts the known next to the unknown so that we may learn"**
5. A parable can usually be identified by the use of the word "like" - cf. **Mt 13:31,33**

B. AS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, A PARABLE...

1. Is usually a story or narrative drawn from nature or human circumstances
2. From which spiritual lessons can be made by comparison
- A common definition of a parable is **"an earthly story with a heavenly meaning"**

[The next question often raised is **"Why did Jesus teach in parables?"** In other words, why did he not simply speak straightforward when He was teaching? To understand why, consider...]

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

A. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE WAS TO “CONCEAL”...

1. Jesus began speaking in parables because of the hardness of many people’s hearts
- cf. **Mt 13:10-17**
 - a. The disciples’ attitude was such that they were blessed to learn “*the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*” - **Mt 13:10-12, 16-17**
 - b. But because of the hard hearts of many in the multitude, Jesus began speaking to them in parables - **Mt 13:13-15**; cf. **Mk 4:10-12**
 - c. He would then explain the parables in private to His disciples - **Mk 4:33-34**
2. By resorting to parables, Jesus effectively separated the truth seekers from the curiosity seekers!
 - a. Those seeking the truth would say “Explain to us the parable...” - **Mt 13:36**
 - b. Whereas the simply curious could easily be sent away
3. Indeed, Jesus used parables to carry out Divine judgment... - cf. **Mt 13:12**
 - a. “*For whoever has* (a good heart, listening ears), *to him more will be given, and he will have abundance* (by virtue of the parable being explained)”
 - b. “*But whoever does not have* (a good heart, listening ears), *even what he has will be taken away from him* (by virtue of being sent away with the multitude)”

B. BUT ANOTHER PURPOSE WAS TO “REVEAL”...

1. Even though the primary purpose in telling parables was to conceal the “*mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*” from the multitude!
 - a. For once the disciples understood the basic meaning of the parables...
 - b. ...the comparison of the “known” (earthly) truths with the “unknown” (heavenly) truths would shed further light on the unknown
2. Therefore, with the help of the Lord’s explanation of His parables we can learn more about “*the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*” - cf. **Mt 13:34-35**

[This leads us to the next question, “**What are the parables about?**” **Mt 13:11** certainly gives us a clue...]

III. THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

A. THE GENERAL THEME IS “THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN”...

1. As suggested by **Mt 13:11**
2. As illustrated with several parables, which all start with “*The kingdom of heaven is like...*” - **Mt 13:24,31,33,44,45,47**
3. Indeed, the “kingdom of heaven” was the theme of...
 - a. Jesus’ itinerant ministry - **Mt 4:17,23**
 - b. His sermon on the mount - **Mt 5:3,10,19-20; 6:10,33; 7:21**

B. THREE “SUB-THEMES” ARE STRESSED IN THE PARABLES...

1. **The character of the KINGDOM** - for example...
 - a. The Parable of the Mustard Seed
 - b. The Parable of the Leaven
 - c. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

- d. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price
2. **The character of the KING** - for example...
 - a. The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard
 - b. The Parable of the Lost Son
3. **The character of the KING'S SUBJECTS** - for example...
 - a. The Parable of the Good Samaritan
 - b. The Parable of the Persistent Widow

[Of course, the sub-themes often overlap in some parables, but they clearly demonstrate that the overall theme of the parables was “the kingdom of heaven.” Finally, a few thoughts in answer to the question, “**How do we interpret the parables?**”]

IV. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

A. THERE ARE TWO EXTREMES TO AVOID...

1. Seeking to find some spiritual truth in every little detail
2. Saying that there is only ONE spiritual truth in each parable

B. SOME GUIDELINES FOR PROPER INTERPRETATION...

1. Learn from the explanations Jesus gave in those parables He explained
 - a. Understanding the parable of the sower helps us to understand other parables - **Mk 4:13**
 - b. Jesus therefore went on to explain that parable...
2. Look for the CENTRAL truth of the parable, making sure that any other truths gleaned from the parable are in harmony with it
3. Consider carefully the CONTEXT of Jesus words...
 - a. Looking for an introduction or an application which may give insight
 - b. As supplied by either the Lord Himself, or His inspired writers
4. Don't use the parables to formulate new doctrine
 - a. Remember, parables were originally told to conceal, so they are not always that clear in their meaning
 - b. Therefore don't try to build a case for a doctrine based solely on a parable

CONCLUSION

1. Following these sensible guidelines to interpreting the Parables of Jesus, we can look forward to the joy of understanding more fully “the mysteries” or revealed truths of the kingdom of heaven
2. As we get into the parables themselves, I hope that we will appreciate how blessed we are to live in an age when people who have a desire to learn about the kingdom can do so:

“But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;

“for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” (Mt 13:16-17)

3. What we are about to study in these parables concern things which Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and many others looked forward to, but did not fully understand in their lifetime!
4. Yet these *“mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”* (Mt 13:11), containing *“things kept secret from the foundation of the world”* (Mt 13:35), are now being made known through the preaching of the gospel of Christ:

“Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began”

“but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith;” (Ro 16:25-26)

Dear friend, have you yet rendered obedience to the faith by responding to the call of the gospel of Christ? - cf. **Mk 16:15-16**

The Parables Of Jesus

Defining The Kingdom Of Heaven (Mt 13:11)

INTRODUCTION

1. In our introductory lesson, we observed that the general “theme” of Jesus’ parables was “the kingdom of heaven”
 - a. Many of the parables start with *“The kingdom of heaven is like...”* - **Mt 13:24,31,33,44, 45, 47**
 - b. In explaining why He spoke in parables, Jesus made reference to *“the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”* - **Mt 13:11**
2. We also noted that “the kingdom of heaven” was the theme of...
 - a. Jesus’ itinerant ministry - **Mt 4:17,23**
 - b. His sermon on the mount - **Mt 5:3,10,19-20; 6:10,33; 7:21**
3. Because “the kingdom of heaven” is such a prominent subject in the parables of Jesus (as well as His overall preaching)...
 - a. I thought it might serve a good purpose to preface our study of the parables with a careful look at what “the kingdom of heaven” means
 - b. With a proper definition of “the kingdom of heaven” fresh in our minds, we are more likely to benefit from our Lord’s teaching on this wonderful subject!

[Let’s begin our effort to define “the kingdom of heaven” by comparing it with “the kingdom of God”...]

I. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN vs. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A. IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

1. Some try to make a distinction (e.g., Scofield Reference Bible)
2. But a quick comparison of the gospels indicate that the terms refer to the same thing
 - a. Cf. **Mt 4:17** with **Mk 1:14-15**
 - b. Cf. **Mt 5:3** with **Lk 6:20**
 - c. Cf. **Mt 13:31** with **Mk 4:30-31**

B. WHY THE DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS?

1. We find that Matthew used the expression “kingdom of heaven” almost exclusively, while the other gospel writers used the phrase “kingdom of God”
2. It may be that since Matthew wrote his gospel to the Jews, he chose to use the phrase “kingdom of heaven”...
 - a. Because of the Jews’ reluctance to use the name of God (out of reverence)
 - b. Because of the Jews’ misconception of the coming kingdom
 - 1) Many anticipated a physical kingdom
 - 2) The expression “heaven” (literally, “heavens”) would emphasize a spiritual kingdom

[So our first observation is that any effort to distinguish between the “kingdom of heaven” and the “kingdom of God” is really without warrant.

Let’s now consider what Jesus meant when He spoke of the “kingdom of heaven”...]

II. IT INVOLVES FOUR INTERRELATED CONCEPTS

A. THE REIGN OF GOD...

1. The term “kingdom” as used by the Jews often stressed the abstract idea of “reign” or “dominion”, not some geographical area surrounded by physical boundaries
 - a. Possibly used this way by Jesus in **Lk 17:21**
 - b. It is used this way by Jesus in **Mt 6:10** (“Thy kingdom come; thy will be done”)
2. Thus, the “kingdom of heaven” (or “kingdom of God”) is wherever the REIGN or DOMINION of God (who is in heaven) is manifested
 - a. In one sense, the kingdom of God has always existed - cf. **Ps 47:2; 103:19**
 - b. But in a special way was the rule or reign of God to be manifested with the coming of Christ
 - 1) As foretold in the time of Daniel (ca. 500 B.C.) - **Dan 2:44-45**
 - 2) As proclaimed by John the Baptist - **Mt 3:1-3**
 - 3) As preached by Jesus - **Mt 4:17; Mk 1:14-15**
3. Indeed, it is in the Person of Jesus Christ that the “reign of God” is being expressly manifest today - cf. **1 Co 15:23-26; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pe 3:22; Re 1:5**

B. SPIRITUAL IN NATURE...

1. The kingdom (or reign of God) would not be found in the form of a physical kingdom - **Jn 18:36**
2. It would manifest itself in spiritual ways - **Ro 14:17**

C. VISIBLY MANIFESTED TODAY IN THE LORD’S CHURCH...

1. What is the Lord’s church?
 - a. It is a community of souls
 - b. In whose hearts God is recognized as Sovereign
 - Thus the church can properly be referred to as the kingdom of God today
2. That the terms “church” and “kingdom” can be used interchangeably, consider:
 - a. How “church” and “kingdom” were used by Jesus - **Mt 16:18**
 - b. Comments made to those who were in the church - **Co 1:13; 1 Th 2:12**
 - c. The description of those in the churches of Asia - **Re 1:4,6,9**

D. BOTH PRESENT AND FUTURE...

1. The “kingdom of heaven” has a future element as well as a present one
2. Its future aspect is spoken of by:
 - a. Jesus in **Mt 25:34**
 - b. Paul in **1 Co 15:50; 2 Ti 4:18**
 - c. Peter in **2 Pe 1:10-11**
3. Peter described the coming of its future state in **2 Pe 3:10-13**
 - Therefore the kingdom of heaven involves the “new heavens and new earth”

[These four concepts or elements must be kept in mind whenever we think of the “kingdom of heaven”. Failure to remember all four can easily lead to misconceptions about the nature of the kingdom.

In an effort to clarify this subject even further, consider...]

III. A SUMMARY DEFINITION OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

A. IN THE “PRESENT” SENSE...

1. It is found wherever the SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD is accepted in the hearts of men
2. It is a SPIRITUAL KINGDOM, for God rules in the hearts of men
3. Its outward manifestation today is the LORD’S CHURCH
4. The kingdom was “INAUGURATED” on the Day of Pentecost in **Acts 2**

B. IN THE “FUTURE” SENSE...

1. The kingdom will be “CULMINATED” with the coming of the Lord
 - a. When Jesus “delivers the kingdom to God the Father” - **1 Co 15:24**
 - b. “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” - **Mt 13:43**
2. It will be that “NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH” described by Peter and John
 - a. “In which righteousness dwells” - **2 Pe 3:13**
 - b. In which “the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.” - **Re 21:3**
3. It will be experienced only by those in the church who are submitting to God’s will
 - a. Those who do “the will of My Father in heaven” - **Mt 7:21-23**
 - b. Those who are “diligent to be found by Him in peace” - **2 Pe 3:13-15a**

CONCLUSION

1. As we get into the parables, there will be many references to the “kingdom of heaven”
 - a. Sometimes it appears Jesus refers to the “present” aspect of the kingdom
 - b. But then, at other times He has reference to the “future” aspect of the kingdom
2. Hopefully, this effort to define the “kingdom of heaven” will help us appreciate more what Jesus has to say concerning “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”!

One principle concerning entering kingdom that was a mystery to Nicodemus at first was the need to be born again (**Jn 3:3-4**). But then Jesus explained that the new birth was one of water and the Spirit (**Jn 3:5**). Is that still a mystery to you? Then consider **Acts 2:38** and **Titus 3:5**...

The Parables Of Jesus

The Sower [The Four Soils] (Mt 13:3-9,18-23)

INTRODUCTION

1. As Jesus went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom of heaven (cf. **Mt 4:17,23**), He did not always find a receptive audience...
 - a. Even where He did mighty works, some did not repent - **Mt 11:20-24**
 - b. Some sought to trick Him, so they might have reason to accuse Him - **Mt 12:9-14**
 - It was for this very reason that Jesus began teaching publicly in “parables” - **Mt 13:10-13**
2. The problem Jesus faced was that many people, though they had ears to hear, their ears had become “hard of hearing” - **Mt 13:14-15**
3. To illustrate this problem, Jesus told a parable that has come to be known as “**The Parable Of The Sower**”
 - a. It can also be properly called “**The Parable Of The Four Soils**”
 - b. Or “**The Parable Of The Seed**”
 - It was told by Jesus to illustrate different reactions to the gospel message
4. The parable itself is recorded in **Mt 13:3-9** (also **Mk 4:3-9; Lk 8:4-8**) - PLEASE READ
 - a. It is one of the few parables in which we actually have Jesus’ own interpretation of the parable
 - b. The significance of this particular parable is enhanced by the words of Jesus recorded in **Mk 4:13...**

“Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all parables?”

[The value of this parable becomes clearer in the light of Jesus’ explanation, for by it we can see ourselves as we really are in regards to how we have received the Word into our lives...]

I. EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLE

A. “THE SOWER”

1. Not specifically mentioned, but compare **Mt 13:37**
 - a. This is in explanation of “**The Parable Of The Wheat And The Tares**”
 - b. In which Jesus explains “*He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man*”
2. So it is likely that the “sower” in this parable had immediate reference to Jesus
3. But it is a fair use of the parable to apply it today to anyone who faithfully proclaims the message of the Son of Man

B. “THE SEED”

1. The seed is “**the word of the kingdom**” - **Mt 13:19a**
2. I.e., the gospel of the kingdom, which was the theme of Jesus’ preaching - **Mt 4:23**
3. It was also an important element of apostolic preaching - cf. **Ac 8:12; 28:30-31**

C. “THE WAYSIDE” (The First Soil)

1. This soil represents one who “hears....and does not understand” - **Mt 13:19a**
2. Most likely, these are those who have hardened their hearts prior to hearing the Word - cf. **Mt 13:15**
3. The “**birds**” represent “**the wicked one**” (called “the devil” in **Lk 8:12**)
 - a. Who snatches away the Word from those whose hearts are hardened
 - b. Their condition therefore is one of being “blinded” by Satan to the gospel - cf. **2 Co 4:3-4**
4. While Satan contributes to their blindness, it is precipitated by their own hardness of heart!

D. “THE STONY PLACES” (The Second Soil)

1. This soil represents the one who...
 - a. “hears the word and immediately receives it with joy” - **Mt 13:20**
 - b. “yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while” - **Mt 13:21a**
 - c. “when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles” - **Mt 13:21b**
2. Some hear the Word and receive it with great joy...
 - a. But with no root, they are not grounded in the Word
 - b. So that when troubles arise, there is no endurance and stumbling occurs
3. Here we learn that an emotional reception without a strong foundation based upon the Word will not enable one to stand against tribulation and persecution

E. “AMONG THE THORNS” (The Third Soil)

1. This soil represents the one who...
 - a. “hears the word” - **Mt 13:22a**
 - b. But whose ability to bear fruit is choked by:
 - 1) “the cares of this world” - **Mt 13:22b**
 - 2) “the deceitfulness of riches” - **Mt 13:22c**
 - 3) “pleasures of life” (added in **Lk 8:14**)
2. How these three “thorns” can cause us to be unfruitful is explained in other portions of God’s Word...
 - a. ***The cares of this world***
 - 1) Can cause us to be unprepared - cf. **Lk 21:34-36**
 - 2) The evil in cares and anxieties is that they can detract our minds from what is truly important - cf. **Lk 12:29-32**
 - b. ***The deceitfulness of riches***
 - 1) The danger is described in **1 Ti 6:9-10**
 - 2) Again, the evil in riches lay in diverting our attention away from God, and feeling self-sufficient - **1 Ti 6:17**
 - c. ***Pleasures of life***
 - 1) Those involving the flesh in particular divert our minds from the things of the Spirit - cf. **Ga 5:17**
 - 2) Sowing to the flesh make it impossible to reap of the Spirit! - **Ga 6:7-9**

F. “THE GOOD GROUND” (The Fourth Soil)

1. This soil represents the one who...
 - a. “hears the word and understands it” - **Mt 13:23a**
 - b. “indeed bears fruit and produces” - **Mt 13:23b**
 - b. Luke adds that he hears “the word with a noble and good heart”, and then “keeps it and bears fruit with patience” - **Lk 8:15**
2. Those with “a noble and good heart”, then, are the ones...
 - a. Who will understand the Word
 - b. Who will keep it, and with patience produce fruit in their lives!
3. They will be like the Bereans, who were commended for being “fair-minded”, as manifested in the way they:
 - a. “received the word with all readiness”
 - b. “searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” - **Ac 17:11**
4. Note the importance of “understanding” in relation to “bearing fruit”...
 - a. Jesus made the connection between the two in this parable - **Mt 13:23**
 - b. Paul connects the two when he writes of the gospel producing fruit among the Colossians “since the day they heard (NASV says “understood”) the grace of God in truth” - **Co 1:5-6**

-- When one “understands”, they will more likely “bear fruit”; but the key to understanding is having a “good and noble heart” that is willing to listen and learn!
5. And what kind of “fruit” will one bear? There are different kinds...
 - a. The fruit of winning souls to Christ - **Ro 1:13**
 - b. The fruit of practical holiness - **Ro 6:22**
 - c. The fruit of sharing material things - **Ro 15:27**
 - d. The fruit of the Spirit (i.e., a Christ-like character) - **Ga 5:22-23**
 - e. The fruit of good works - **Co 1:10**
 - f. The fruit of praise & thanksgiving - **He 13:15**
6. An important observation is that not all will bear the same amount...
 - a. “some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” - **Mt 13:23**
 - b. As illustrated in The Parable of the Talents, some may be given more according to their ability to use what God has given them - **Mt 25:14-15**
 - c. Whatever our ability, we should exercise it accordingly - cf. **1 Pe 4:10-11**

[With the explanation provided by Jesus Himself, we should have little problem understanding The Parable of The Sower and the spiritual truths Jesus was teaching.

However, it is one thing to understand it, quite another to make application of it. Seeking to make application in a thought-provoking way, let me ask “**What kind of soil are you?**”]

II. APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE

A. ARE YOU LIKE “THE WAYSIDE”?

1. If you have heard the gospel of Christ and His kingdom, but are not yet a Christian...
2. You may be in the process of hardening your heart the longer you wait!
3. You are susceptible to Satan’s deception in some form, to blind you and not allow the Word of God to have its intended effect!

B. ARE YOU LIKE “THE STONY PLACES”?

1. If you responded to the gospel at one time, but are not being grounded in the faith...
2. You will likely fall away when persecution or temptation comes your way!

C. ARE YOU LIKE THE SOIL “AMONG THE THORNS”?

1. If you responded to the gospel at one time, but are becoming too preoccupied with the cares, riches, and pleasures of this world...
2. You will not be able to bear much fruit!
- And remember what Jesus said about branches that don't bear fruit! - **Jn 15:1-6**

D. ARE YOU LIKE “THE GOOD SOIL”?

1. If you have responded to the gospel, and are bearing fruit...
2. Then you have demonstrated several important things:
 - a. You have a good and noble heart!
 - b. You have come to understand the Word!
 - c. You have been keeping it with patience!
3. And so the Word of God has been able to produce its intended effect in you!

CONCLUSION

1. When Jesus finished telling His parable of the Sower, He cried out:

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” - Mt 13:9

2. Clearly from the explanation of Jesus Himself, we learn that not all those who have ears to hear, really listen!
3. It is important that we listen well when God's Word is being proclaimed, for that is how faith is obtained - **Ro 10:17**
4. How well have YOU listened to this parable of Jesus and His explanation?
 - a. If you are anything other than that like “the good soil”, you need to repent today!
 - b. For in the next study, we learn what Jesus will do when He comes to gather His kingdom!
- cf. **Mt 13:24-30,36-43**

Dear friends and brethren, may you truly have a good and noble heart...hear, examine, understand, and accept the gospel of Christ and the gospel of His kingdom!

The Parables Of Jesus

The Wheat And The Tares (Mt 13:24-30,36-43)

INTRODUCTION

1. In **“The Parable Of The Sower”**, we learned that not all people react to the Word of the kingdom in the same way
 - a. Some with hard hearts and dull ears would not even allow the Word time to germinate in their hearts
 - b. Others would receive the Word, but either persecution or things in this life would render them fruitless
 - c. Only those with good and noble hearts, who receive the Word with patience, and keep it, will bear the intended fruit in their lives

-- Thus the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” will be received only by some, and not all
2. This truth was illustrated further when Jesus taught **“The Parable Of The Wheat And Tares”**...
 - a. Recorded only by Matthew, the parable itself is found in **Mt 13:24-30 (READ)**
 - b. Jesus’ purpose is clearly to teach principles related to “the kingdom of heaven”
 - 1) For he begins with **“*The kingdom of heaven is like...*”**
 - 2) Therefore Jesus intends to reveal principles related to the “rule of God” as it would soon be manifested in the Person of His Son
3. Like **“The Parable Of The Sower”**, this parable is one of the few in which we have Jesus’ own explanation...
 - a. The explanation was given in response to the disciples’ inquiry - **Mt 13:36**
 - b. And the explanation is found in **Mt 13:37-43 (READ)**

[In this study, we shall focus on Jesus’ explanation of the parable, and then draw some truths from it...]

I. THE PARABLE EXPLAINED

A. IN ANSWER TO THE DISCIPLES’ REQUEST, JESUS IDENTIFIES...

1. **THE SOWER - “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man”**
 - a. I.e., Christ, who in His preaching when about proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom - cf. **Mt 4:23**
 - b. Who is identified in Daniel’s vision as one who received a kingdom - **Dan 7:13-14**
 - c. Who after His ascension claimed to have received such authority - **Re 2:26-27; 3:21**
2. **THE FIELD - “The field is the world”**
 - a. Into which the Son of Man came to sow the seed
 - b. Over which the Son of Man now exercises His authority, i.e., His kingship - cf. **Mt 28:18; 1 Pe 3:22; Re 1:5**
3. **THE GOOD SEED (WHEAT) - “The good seeds are the sons of the kingdom”**
 - a. Those who gladly own Jesus as their Lord and King, submitting to Him freely
 - b. I.e., His disciples, who observe all that He commands - cf. **Mt 28:19-20**

- c. When we compare this with “The Parable Of The Sower”, we come up with slightly mixed metaphors...
 - 1) The disciples are those who constitute the “good soil”, in which the seed has been sown (The Parable Of The Sower)
 - 2) But in The Parable Of The Wheat And Tares, the disciples are the “good seed” themselves
- d. Thus, when one receives the “seed” of the kingdom (the Word of God), they become “good seed” (a son of the kingdom)
- 4. **THE TARES - “The tares are the sons of the wicked one”**
 - a. Those later defined as they that..
 - 1) Offend
 - 2) Practice lawlessness - cf. **Mt 13:41**
 - b. Though within the realm of the Lord’s reign (for the Lord will later gather them out of His kingdom), they clearly are not submitting to the Lord’s authority!
 - c. Their actions reveal that they are really “sons of the wicked one”!
- 5. **THE ENEMY - “The enemy who sowed them is the devil”**
 - a. Who tried to tempt Christ and failed - cf. **Mt 4:1-11**
 - b. Who now tries to destroy the efforts of Christ to save souls and enlarge the influence of His kingly rule
- 6. **THE HARVEST - “The harvest is the end of the age”**
 - a. That “age” in which...
 - 1) The gospel of the kingdom is being preached
 - 2) People who receive the gospel can become the “sons of the kingdom”
 - I.e., the present gospel dispensation - cf. **Co 1:13; Re 1:9**
 - b. An “age” that will end with a great “harvest”, identified elsewhere as the glorious coming and appearance of our Lord - cf. **Mt 26:31-32; 1 Ti 6:14-15**
- 7. **THE REAPERS - “The reapers are the angels”**
 - a. Angels will accompany Christ when He comes again - **2 Th 1:7-9**
 - b. They will separate the wicked from among the just - cf. **Mt 13:49**

[Having identified the various elements of the parable...]

B. JESUS STRESSES THE MAIN POINTS OF THE PARABLE...

- 1. In **verse 40...**
 - a. The problem of the “tares” will not be fully addressed until the “harvest”
 - b. This is done out of consideration for the “good seed” (cf. **Mt 13:29**)
- 2. In **verse 41...**
 - a. It is at the end of the age that the Son of Man will finally resolve this problem
 - b. With His angels He will “gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness” (i.e., the sons of the wicked one)
- 3. In **verse 42...**
 - a. Those so gathered out of His kingdom will properly dealt with!
 - b. Cast into “the furnace of fire”, where there will be “wailing and gnashing of teeth!”
- 4. In **verse 43...**
 - a. The blessedness of the “righteous” (the good seed, the sons of the kingdom) is described

- b. After the harvest they will “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”!

[Jesus ends His explanation of the parable with the same admonition that followed the telling of **The Parable Of The Sower**:

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” - Mt 13:9

Do we therefore hear what Jesus is saying? Or are we dull of hearing and hard of heart? For those willing to listen, there are several truths to be gleaned from this parable as it relates to the kingdom of heaven, the church, and to our personal lives...]

II. TRUTHS GLEANED FROM THE PARABLE

A. CHRIST IS LONG-SUFFERING, SO YOU CAN GROW!

1. Why does Christ suffer so long with the wicked around us?
2. Why does He not come in judgment against the “sons of the wicked one?”
3. Perhaps to give “you” (a son of the kingdom) a time to grow!
 - a. In the parable, it was out of concern for the “wheat” that the “tares” were allowed to remain - **Mt 13:29**
 - b. As Peter indicated, it is the Lord’s longsuffering that prompts any seemingly delay in His coming - cf. **2 Pe 3:9**
- So while Christ is certainly desirous that “all” men come to repentance, He has a special interest in those “sons of the kingdom” who are still growing!

B. THIS PARABLE DOES NOT PRECLUDE CHURCH DISCIPLINE...

1. Some have sought to use this parable to say that church discipline should not be carried out
2. Yet that would go contrary to the teachings of Jesus Himself, and that of His apostles
 - a. Jesus taught there would be times for church discipline - **Mt 18:15-17**
 - b. Paul instructed the churches in Corinth and Thessalonica concerning the need and methodology of church discipline - **1 Co 5:1-13; 2 Th 3:6-15**
3. The point of this parable is that Jesus Himself will not do anything visible until the end of the age when He comes with His angels
4. Those in the church, however, have a personal responsibility to withdraw from those brethren who refuse to repent of sin

C. THE KINGDOM IS BOTH PRESENT AND FUTURE!

1. In **verse 41**, the Son of Man will “gather out of His kingdom”, so the kingdom is in existence prior to the end of the age when the Son of Man comes with His angels
2. In **verse 43**, it is after the harvest that the righteous “will shine forth in the kingdom of their Father”
3. As taught by Paul, Christ rules now and will turn the kingdom over to His Father when He comes again - cf. **1 Co 15:23-26**
 - a. He is not coming to establish a kingdom (contra the premillennialist)
 - b. He is coming to deliver a kingdom back to His Father!

D. ONE MAY BE IN THE KINGDOM NOW, BUT NOT IN THE FUTURE!

1. Note that the angels will gather certain ones “out of His kingdom - **Mt 13:41**
2. Those ones who were “in the kingdom” are then “cast into the furnace” - **Mt 13:42**
3. Who would these be?
 - a. Those who “offend” (cause others to stumble)
 - 1) Against which Jesus warned His disciples - **Mt 18:6-7**
 - 2) Against which Paul warned the Christians at Corinth and Rome - **1 Co 8:11-13; 10:31-11:1; Ro 16:17-18** (cf. **14:13, 19-21**)
 - b. Those who “practice lawlessness” (do things without authority)
 - 1) Remember the warnings of Jesus and John - **Mt 7:21-23; 2 Jn 9**
 - 2) The way to avoid lawlessness is given in **Co 3:17**
4. Because of the very real danger of not “entering our heavenly rest”, we find warnings to persevere - cf. **He 3:12-14; 4:1-2, 11**

E. A PLACE OF PUNISHMENT IS THE REWARD OF THE WICKED!

1. We saw where those “that offend” and who “practice lawlessness” would...
 - a. Be cast into the “furnace of fire”
 - b. Experience “wailing and gnashing of teeth”
2. This punishment of the wicked is a recurring theme in several of the parables...
 - a. The Parable Of The Dragnet - cf. **Mt 13:49-50**
 - b. The Parable Of The Unforgiving Servant - cf. **Mt 18:34-35**
3. And as described in the Judgment Scene, Jesus talks of a place prepared for the wicked - cf. **Mt 25:41, 45-46**
4. Thus a proper proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom must of necessity include a warning to those who do not receive the kingdom!

CONCLUSION

1. Indeed, this very parable is a warning to all not to allow themselves to be influenced by the wicked one!
 - a. As Peter wrote, our adversary is very much seeking to destroy us! - **1 Pe 5:8**
 - b. But if we can allow the word of God to abide in us, we can overcome the wicked one - cf. **1 Jn 2:14**
2. We learn from this parable, then, that the kingdom of heaven...
 - a. Will spread as people become “sons of the kingdom” (by heeding the Son of Man)
 - b. Will not preclude the efforts and influence of the devil (so expect to see some “tares”)
 - c. Though **inaugurated** with the Son of Man’s first coming (especially with His ascension to the right hand of God and the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost - Acts 2), the kingdom of heaven will not be fully **culminated** until...
 - 1) The Son of Man returns with His angels
 - 2) He gathers all things out of His kingdom that offend and practice lawlessness
 - 3) And delivers the kingdom to God (cf. **1 Co 15:24**)
3. At that time...
 - a. We will have an abundant entrance “*into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” - cf. **2 Pe 1:11**

- b. ***“Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” - Mt 13:43***

Dear friend, is not that your desire? Then remember what Jesus said...

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” - Jn 3:5

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

The Parables Of Jesus

The Mustard Seed (Mt 13:31-32)

INTRODUCTION

1. From the first two parables that Jesus taught and then explained, it is easy to surmise that the disciples may have been discouraged by what they heard...
 - a. In **“The Parable Of The Sower”**, only one soil of four would be truly receptive to the Word sown
 - b. In **“The Parable Of The Wheat And Tares”**, they learned that Satan would be doing his best to undermine the efforts of the Sower
2. As early as Chrysostom (349?-407 A.D.), commentators have suggested that the next two parables in **Mt 13:31-33** were told by Jesus to encourage His disciples in reference to the kingdom
 - a. The first parable is that of **“The Mustard Seed”** - **Mt 13:31-32**
 - b. The second parable is that of **“The Leaven”** - **Mt 13:33**
 - Both of which appear to describe the kingdom as destined for remarkable growth

[It is tempting to deal with both parables in just one lesson. But that we might give each one its own undivided attention, this lesson will focus only on **“The Parable Of The Mustard Seed”**.

To appreciate the point of the parable, background information may be helpful on...]

I. THE MUSTARD SEED

A. THE PLANT ITSELF...

1. The mustard plant is well known for its hot-flavored seeds
2. Among seeds sown in a garden it was generally the smallest
3. As a plant, it reaches ten, sometimes fifteen feet in height
4. In the fall of the year, its branches have become rigid, and the plant often serves as a shelter for birds of many kinds (William Hendricksen, Commentary on Matthew)

B. PROVERBIAL USES OF THE MUSTARD SEED...

1. The mustard seed was used frequently to describe anything that is small in its beginning
2. Jesus used it on another occasion to describe one’s faith - cf. **Mt 17:20**
3. The Koran reads “Oh, my son, every matter, though it be of the weight of a grain of mustard seed...” (quoted by R. C. Trench)

[With this understanding of the mustard plant and its seeds, perhaps we are better able to appreciate the meaning of the parable itself (please read **Mt 13:31-32**)...]

II. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE

A. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN WOULD HAVE A SMALL BEGINNING...

1. Old Testament prophecy foretold this:
 - a. Concerning the Messiah - cf. **Isa 11:1; 53:2-3**
 - b. Concerning the kingdom - cf. **Dan 2:35b,44** (starting out as a stone, becoming a great mountain)
2. Consider this description of the beginning...

“The Son of Man grew up in a despised province; he did not appear in public until his thirtieth year; then taught for two or three years in neighboring villages, and occasionally at Jerusalem; made a few converts, chiefly among the poor and unlearned; and then falling into the hands of his enemies, died the shameful death of the cross; such, and so slight, was the commencement of the universal kingdom of God.” (R. C. Trench, Notes On The Parables Of Our Lord)

B. BUT ITS TREMENDOUS GROWTH WOULD BELIE ITS HUMBLE BEGINNINGS...

1. Just as the “small stone” of **Dan 2:35** “became a great mountain and filled the whole earth”
2. The growth of the church in the first century A.D. certainly confirmed the truth of Jesus’ parable
 - a. The 120 disciples grew to over 3000 just in one day - **Ac 2:41-42**
 - b. It was soon about 5000 - **Ac 4:4**
 - c. The number of the disciples continued to “multiply”
 - 1) In Jerusalem - **Ac 6:7**
 - 2) Throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria - **Ac 9:31**
 - d. Years later, there were “myriads” of believers just in Jerusalem alone - **Ac 21:20**
3. Even today, we see the growth and influence of the kingdom of heaven in lives of believers around the world!

C. IT’S GROWTH WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO THE WORLD...

1. In the parable, Jesus spoke of how “the birds of the air come and nest in its branches”
2. What is meant by Jesus? He does not say, but the kingdom of God is certainly a blessing to all who take refuge in its “branches”
 - a. E.g., “for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” - **Ro 14:17**
 - b. To those seeking rest for their weary souls, the King offers His tender invitation to come to Him and enter His kingdom of rest - cf. **Mt 11:28-30**

{With this simple parable, Jesus offers encouragement to that small band of disciples following Him over the hills of Palestine. They would be a part of something that would grow and bless the world immensely!

What about today? The kingdom of heaven continues to grow and spread out its branches to those who will accept it, certainly. But can we ever expect similar growth to that witnessed in the first century? Consider a few thoughts about...]

III. THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM TODAY

A. THERE IS THE “MATHEMATICAL POSSIBILITY”

1. Beginning with just twenty disciples, each converting just one person a year, and their converts doing the same...
 2. ...the growth would be like a mustard seed!
 - a. End of year 1 - 40
 - b. End of year 5 - 640
 - c. End of year 10 - 20,480
 - d. End of year 15 - 655,360
 - e. End of year 20 - 20,971,520
 - f. End of year 25 - 1,342,177,280
- All it takes is for each person to bring one soul to Christ each and every year!

B. THERE IS CERTAINLY THE “SPIRITUAL POSSIBILITY”

1. We have the same “seed” of the kingdom, the Word of God!
 - a. A “seed” which is incorruptible, that lives and abides forever - **1 Pe 1:23-25**
 - b. A “seed” capable of producing what God intends - cf. **Isa 55:10-11**
2. While the first two parables remind us that not all will accept the Word of God, this parable declares that the kingdom will grow!

C. WHAT IS NEEDED IS PEOPLE...

1. **People with vision**
 - a. Who have the vision of Christ, as expressed in His parables
 - b. Who look not at an apple and count the seeds, but looks at a seed and counts the apples (with their many seeds)!
 - c. Who look at converting and developing disciples in the same way
2. **People willing to put the kingdom of God first in their lives**
 - a. The seed of the gospel will produce fruit, but only if it falls on good soil
 - b. If we allow...
 - 1) The cares of this world
 - 2) The deceitfulness of riches
 - 3) The pleasures of life...to “choke” us, we cannot bear good fruit
 - c. Therefore we need to put the kingdom of God first - cf. **Mt 6:33**
3. **People willing to abide in Christ**
 - a. For apart from Christ they can do nothing - **Jn 15:4-5**
 - b. For only they are able to bear “much fruit” - **Jn 15:5**
 - c. And only they will be able to glorify God and be His true disciples - **Jn 15:8**

CONCLUSION

1. The potential for the kingdom’s amazing growth rests in the Person who reigns as its King...
 - a. Those who will abide in Christ can be used by Him to produce the remarkable growth in the kingdom illustrated by this parable
 - b. As Paul wrote to the Philippians: **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” - Ph 4:13**
2. Brethren, allow **“The Parable Of The Mustard Seed”** to serve as...

- a. **An encouragement** - The kingdom of heaven is destined for great things, though its beginning was small
- b. **A reminder** - That if we are going to be useful to the Master in this ever growing kingdom, we must “abide in Him” so we can “bear much fruit”

Dear friend, have you rested your weary wings in this great tree called “the kingdom of heaven”? - cf.

Jn 3:3-5

The Parables Of Jesus

The Leaven (Mt 13:33)

INTRODUCTION

1. Our previous study examined “**The Parable Of The Mustard Seed**” - Mt 13:31-32
 - a. Where the kingdom is depicted as having remarkable growth, despite humble beginnings
 - b. Perhaps the parable was told by Jesus to reassure His disciples...
 - 1) That their involvement in the kingdom would not be for naught
 - 2) Especially after hearing two parables in which we see not all would receive the Word properly, and Satan’s efforts to hinder growth of the kingdom would be noticeable
2. Another parable that seems to have the same purpose of reassurance now follows...
 - a. Found in **Mt 13:33**
 - b. This has become known as “**The Parable Of The Leaven**” (READ)
3. Immediately we can see similarities to “**The Parable Of The Mustard Seed**”
 - a. Both are quite brief, with no explanations by Jesus recorded
 - b. Both appear to be describing the remarkable spread of the kingdom of heaven
4. But some differences can be noted, so this parable is certainly worthy of careful consideration

[Let’s begin, then, by noticing some...]

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON “LEAVEN”

A. WHAT WAS “LEAVEN”?

1. A small portion of fermented dough used to ferment other dough (Holman Bible Dictionary)
2. Once inserted into a batch, it continues its process of fermentation until the whole batch has risen (Hendriksen, New Testament Commentary)
3. Today, we more likely use the term “**yeast**” instead of “leaven”

B. SYMBOLIC USES OF “LEAVEN”

1. In the New Testament, “leaven” is often symbolic of corrupting influence
 - a. Jesus warned of “*the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees*”, which included their teaching and hypocrisy - cf. **Mt 16:5-12; Lk 12:1**
 - b. Paul wrote of the danger of how “*a little leaven leavens the whole lump*”, as he addressed the need to withdraw from the unpenitent brother - **1 Co 5:1-13**
2. This has led some to conclude that “leaven” in the parable represents something evil
3. But there are several reasons why this is not likely true...
 - a. There is no reason why its use elsewhere must be the same here
 - 1) A speaker or writer is certainly free to use a figure any way they wish, even differently in different situations
 - 2) To read the use of the figure as found elsewhere into this passage is a form of

“eisegesis”

- a) That is, reading something into the passage not actually there
 - 1/ Though in this case one may not be reading their own preconceived ideas into the passage, as is commonly done
 - 2/ But reading the ideas of another Biblical context into this one is still a form of **“eisegesis”**
- b) As opposed to **“exegesis”**, which is to read out of a passage what it actually says or means, and should be the goal of proper Bible study
- b. The last phrase would then suggest that the kingdom is destined to fail!
 - 1) The “leaven” is to eventually fill the whole loaf!
 - 2) If “leaven” represents corrupting influence, how discouraging!
- c. The close proximity of the parable to **“The Parable Of The Mustard Seed”** would suggest similarities in meaning (cf. the two parables in **Mt 13:44-46**)

[Well, if Jesus does not mean to use “leaven” in this context as symbolical of corrupting influence, then what does He mean?]

II. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE**A. THE KINGDOM’S GROWTH WILL BE PERVASIVE...**

- 1. That is, having the quality to permeate, to spread or flow throughout the world
- 2. One suggestion is that the loaf represents the world, and the leaven is the kingdom
- 3. Thus the reign of heaven (God) will gradually make its influence felt in the world
- 4. This “reign of heaven” could be manifested:
 - a. In the form of the gospel (the “word” of the kingdom, **Mt 13:19**), as it is was proclaimed to all creation - cf. **Mk 16:15-16**
 - b. In the form of the church, which spreads as people accept the gospel
 - c. In the influence of the Word and the church, as their influence is felt in society
- 5. This parable may also illustrates the “invisible” growth of the kingdom
 - a. As leaven does it work with less than noticeable effect
 - b. So the spreading influence of the kingdom is often unnoticeable, but real nonetheless!

B. THE KINGDOM’S INFLUENCE WILL BE COMPLETE...

- 1. Speaking of the loaf, Jesus said **“till it was all leavened”**
- 2. No part of the “loaf” (world) will be untouched by the influence of the kingdom
- 3. That the gospel did indeed spread in this way was expressed by Paul in **Ro 10:17-18; 16:25-26; Co 1:6,23**
- 4. Of course, not all have obeyed the gospel - e.g., **“The Parable Of The Four Soils”**
 - a. While the **“fragrance of His knowledge”** is diffused in every place...
 - b. ...to some it is **“an aroma of death”** - cf. **2 Co 2:14-16**
- 5. Yet, we still see the leavening influence of the Word and Christ’s reign...
 - a. In the growth of the church
 - b. In the influence of the Word in society (cf. our judicial system, charitable organizations, etc.)

III. APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE

A. DON'T LOSE HEART...

1. Don't measure the growth or success of the kingdom solely by visible standards
2. As Jesus said to the Pharisees...
 - a. *"The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say 'See here!' or 'See there!'" - Lk 17:20-21a*
 - b. *"For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."* - Lk 17:21b
3. The spread of the kingdom (the rule of God) is taking place wherever the "word of the kingdom" is being sown, and fruit will be borne as it falls on "good and noble hearts"
4. Remain confident:
 - a. That what began as a mustard seed will become a great tree
 - b. That what started in one small portion of the loaf will eventually spread through the whole loaf

B. DO YOUR PART TO BE A LEAVENING INFLUENCE...

1. Allow the "leaven of the kingdom" to permeate your own heart and life
 - a. Take the Word of God into your own heart
 - b. Study and meditate upon it, and then seek to apply it!
2. Allow that Word to produce fruit in your life, so that you become an leavening influence for the kingdom of God!
 - a. By word, as you share the gospel of the kingdom with others
 - b. By deed, as you do good works that glorify God
 - c. For as leaven, we are also *"the salt of the earth"* and *"the light of the world"*
- cf. **Mt 5:13-16**
 - 1) Designed to glorify God by our good works
 - 2) And so influence our world for good as well!

CONCLUSION

1. With an understanding of these two parables ("**The Mustard Seed**" and "**The Leaven**"), we can take heart in knowing that the work of Christ in regards to His Kingdom will not be for naught
2. As we close this lesson, let me ask "**What kind of leaven are you?**"
 - a. This parable has been describing "leaven" as a positive force
 - b. But remember, "leaven" is also used to illustrate that which is harmful
 - 1) The "leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" - **Lk 12:1**
 - 2) That which is a corrupting force, and needs to be purged - **1 Co 5:6-8**

Will you allow the grace of God to make you to be the kind of "leaven" that can be used to His glory...?

The Parables Of Jesus

The Hidden Treasure (Mt 13:44)

INTRODUCTION

1. In our study on **“The Parables Of Jesus”**, we have seen...
 - a. Different ways in which the message of the kingdom would be received (**“The Sower”**)
 - b. The efforts of Satan to corrupt the character of the kingdom, but its future consummation in purity and splendor being assured (**“The Wheat And Tares”**)
 - c. The growth and development of the kingdom (**“The Mustard Seed” & “The Leaven”**)
2. Each of these parables are found in **Matthew 13**, and as we continue to examine that chapter we find more to come...
 - a. A couplet of parables is found in **Mt 13:44-46**
 - 1) **“The Parable Of The Hidden Treasure”**
 - 2) **“The Parable Of The Pearl Of Great Price”**
 - b. Like the couplet of **“The Mustard Seed”** and **“The Leaven”**, in which a similar theme was found, there seems to be a theme common to these two parables
 - 1) The theme of the earlier couplet was the **growth and development** of the kingdom
 - 2) The theme of this couplet appears to be the **preciousness and value** of the kingdom

[In this study, we shall focus on **“The Parable Of The Hidden Treasure”**, beginning with...]

I. THE PARABLE EXPLAINED

A. THE DETAILS OF THE PARABLE...

1. A man finds a treasure hidden in a field
2. He first hides it, then proceeds to buy the field
3. Though he must sell everything he has in order to buy the field, he does so gladly in anticipation of the treasure that will then be rightfully his

B. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE...

1. Here is the explanation as given by two different commentators:
 - a. **“The kingdom of heaven is worth infinitely more than the cost of discipleship, and those who know where the treasure lies joyfully abandon everything else to secure it.”** (D. A. Carson)
 - b. **“...the kingdom of heaven, the glad recognition of God’s rule over heart and life, including salvation for the present and for the future, for soul and ultimately also for the body, the great privilege of being thereby made a blessing to others to the glory of God, all this, is a treasure so inestimably precious that one who obtains it is willing to surrender for it whatever could interfere with having it.”** (William Hendriksen)
2. What distinguishes this parable from the one following is that it describes the value of the kingdom to one who accidentally finds it

- a. Though not purposely looking for it, its value is immediately recognized
- b. So the kingdom of heaven has been, and will be, for many people!
3. As Hendriksen says again: **“...we should grasp its one important lesson: the incalculable preciousness of salvation for those who discover it and obtain possession of it without even looking for it!”**

C. THE APOSTLE PAUL AS AN EXAMPLE...

1. He discovered the “treasure” unexpectedly
 - a. It was on the road to Damascus, going to persecute Christians - **Ac 9:1-2**
 - b. For he thought it was the right thing to do - cf. **Ac 26:9-11**
 - c. But once he met the Lord, and learned the will of God, he did not hesitate to carry it out even at great cost to him - cf. **Ac 26:19-23**
2. His estimation of what he found
 - a. Something worth giving up all, if necessary - cf. **Ph 3:4-11**
 - b. Writing of “the gospel of the glory of Christ”, Paul refers to it as a “treasure” - **2 Co 4:7**
 - c. He writes of the “treasures of wisdom and knowledge” that are found in Christ - **Co 2:1-3**

[Clearly Paul considered Christ and His kingdom a “treasure” worth giving up all one had if necessary to obtain. What is there about the kingdom of Christ that makes it so valuable?]

II. THE KINGDOM OF EXCEEDING VALUE

A. A REFUGE FROM THE POWERS OF DARKNESS - Co 1:13

1. Outside the kingdom of heaven, one is in the kingdom of Satan - **Ep 2:1-3**
 - a. Under his influence
 - b. Trapped in various sins
2. But the kingdom of Christ offers deliverance, refuge
 - a. We are set free from the guilt and dominion of sin, so that we can serve God - **Ro 6:17-18**
 - b. God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to bear - **1 Co 10:13**

B. A DOMAIN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE, AND JOY - Ro 14:17

1. A righteousness through faith in Christ, in which our sins have been forgiven - **Ph 3:8-9**
2. A peace from God, which surpasses all understanding - **Ph 4:6-7**
3. An abiding joy in the Lord, no matter the circumstances - **Ph 4:4; cf. 2:17-18**

C. AN UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM - He 12:25-29

1. One which shall never be destroyed - cf. **Dan 2:44**
2. Therefore, a truly everlasting kingdom - cf. **2 Pe 1:10-11**

D. DESTINED FOR ETERNAL GLORY - 1 Co 15:21-26

1. Presented by Christ to God at His second coming, those who are truly “sons of the kingdom” will “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” - cf. **Mt 13:41-43**
2. From that time forward, those in the kingdom will experience the ultimate fellowship in the presence of God - **Re 21:1-5,9-12,22-27**

CONCLUSION

1. In light of both the present and future blessings found in the kingdom of heaven, perhaps we can appreciate why many consider the kingdom one of exceeding value
 - a. Even when not actively looking for it, but stumbling across it...
 - b. ...the value is recognized immediately by some, willing to pay whatever price necessary

2. What is the value of the kingdom? I wish you could ask...
 - a. Stephen, the first Christian martyr - cf. **Ac 7**
 - b. The early Christians, who experienced persecution - cf. **Ac 8:1-4**
 - c. The apostle Paul, who suffered so much for the kingdom - cf. **2 Ti 3:10-11; 4:6-8,16-18**
 - d. And of course, our Lord Jesus, who gave up all to make it possible - cf. **Ph 2:5-8**-- I am confident that with one voice they would say, "It is worth it all!"

3. How about us? Are we willing to pay the full price to obtain the "treasure" of the kingdom?
 - a. The price of repentance?
 - b. The price of complete submission to the will of Christ? - **Mt 28:18-20**
 - c. The price of putting the kingdom first in our lives? - **Mt 6:33**

Our response to the gospel, and how we live our lives as Christians, demonstrate our true estimation of the "treasure" of the kingdom of heaven!

The Parables Of Jesus

The Pearl Of Great Price (Mt 13:45-46)

INTRODUCTION

1. In **“The Parable Of The Hidden Treasure”**, I suggested...
 - a. That Jesus was depicting the **“value”** of the kingdom to one who accidentally finds it
 - b. That Paul’s conversion was an example of how one is willing to give up all in order to lay hold of the **“treasure”** of the kingdom
 - c. That the value of the kingdom can be seen when we consider that it is:
 - 1) A refuge from the powers of darkness - **Co 1:13**
 - 2) A domain of righteousness, peace, and joy - **Ro 14:17**
 - 3) An unshakable kingdom - **He 12:25-29**
 - 4) Destined for eternal glory - **Mt 13:41-43**
2. Jesus followed His parable with another short parable...
 - a. Commonly called **“The Parable Of The Pearl Of Great Price”** - **Mt 13:45-46**
 - b. Its similarity to the previous parable is obvious, and yet there is a difference

[The difference and some related thoughts will serve as the basis for our study as we take a closer look at **“The Parable Of The Pearl Of Great Price”**. We begin with...

I. THE PARABLE EXPLAINED

A. THE DETAILS OF THE PARABLE...

1. A merchant is seeking beautiful pearls
2. He finds one pearl of great price
3. Undeterred by its price, he sells all that he has and buys it!

B. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE...

1. The use of the word **“Again”** ties this parable to the preceding one
 - a. Where the value and preciousness of the kingdom was being described
 - b. Where we saw the value to one who accidentally finds it
2. But in this parable, the person is on a mission to find that which is of great value
 - a. He believes there is something out there worth looking for, or he would not be seeking it
 - b. When he finds it, he immediately recognizes its value and is willing to sell all to obtain it
3. Neither this parable (nor the previous one) is suggesting we can “buy” or otherwise “earn” our salvation
 - a. For salvation is a gift - cf. **Ro 6:23**
 - b. We can “buy” salvation only in the sense of gaining rightful possession of it
 - 1) Which we do by grace through faith - cf. **Ep 2:8-9**
 - 2) When we submit to the working of God and the renewing the Holy Spirit which takes place as we are baptized into Christ - cf. **Co 2:11-13; Ti 3:4-7**
4. This parable, then, describes how some people react to the kingdom of heaven, when they

know there must be something out there worthy of great value and have been searching for it

C. SOME BIBLICAL EXAMPLES...

1. **The Ethiopian eunuch - Ac 8:26-38**

- a. His journey to Jerusalem to worship, his reading of Scripture while returning, indicates he was spiritually searching
- b. His immediate desire to be baptized shows his estimation of the value of the salvation offered through Christ

2. **Cornelius - Ac 10:1-8,30-33**

- a. His prayers and alms were indicative of his search for “righteousness”
- b. As promised by Jesus (cf. **Mt 5:6**), God took note of his spiritual hunger and thirst, and sent Peter to tell him the gospel of Christ

3. **Lydia - Ac 16:11-15**

- a. Her meeting with other women to pray illustrates her spiritual searching
- b. Upon hearing the things spoken by Paul, she and her household were baptized

[Each of these examples should remind us that there are many people who know there is some “thing”, some “purpose”, some “meaning”, that is worthy of diligent search, and who spend their lives trying to find it. When by the grace and providence of God they come to learn of Christ and His kingdom, they are willing to give up all to obtain it!

These examples, and the parable itself, confirm the truthfulness of Jesus’ teaching about those “*who hunger and thirst for righteousness*”. That those who “hunger”, those who “search”, will indeed find what God has for them!

It might be that we may “stumble” across the blessings God has in Christ and His kingdom (as in “The Parable Of The Hidden Treasure”). But do we want to risk our salvation on possibly “stumbling” across it?

What can we do to ensure that we will find what God has for us? Well, we need to be like that merchant, “searching” for that “pearl of great price”. How does do that in regards to spiritual matters...]

II. SEARCHING FOR “THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE”

A. FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH - Ac 8:27-28

1. Be a student of the Scriptures
2. Apply the Scriptures to the best of your understanding
3. Be open to what others may have to share concerning the Scriptures

B. FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE BEREANS - Ac 17:10-11

1. Again, be open to what others may to share
2. But apply diligence (i.e., “readiness of mind”) to understand what others are saying
3. And in the end, let the Scriptures be your final authority
4. Demonstrate it by “searching the Scriptures daily”

CONCLUSION

1. Like the Ethiopian eunuch, the Bereans, Cornelius, Lydia, and many other religious people...
 - a. We may be lost in our present state of understanding of God's will
 - b. But if we will search like that "merchant" did, and have the desire to understand and please God like these people did...
 - c. ...then we can trust in God's Providence to lead us to the truth, and to that "pearl of great price"!

2. Is the "pearl of great price" worth it?
 - a. Again, I wish I could invite those who have passed on to give us their perspective
 - b. Who though they may have suffered greatly in this life, have come to experience the ultimate blessings of the "kingdom of heaven"
-- I am confident they would say "It is surely worth it all!"

3. And the blessings of the kingdom are not limited to the life hereafter; as Jesus reassured Peter, there are hundredfold blessings even "in this time" - cf. **Mk 10:28-30**

Dear friend, do you not desire this "pearl of great price"? Are you even searching? Can we help you in your search?

The Parables Of Jesus

The Dragnet (Mt 13:47-50)

INTRODUCTION

1. We have seen where Jesus taught two parables concerning the **growth and development** of the kingdom:
 - a. **“The Parable Of The Mustard Seed” - Mt 13:31-32**
 - b. **“The Parable Of The Leaven” - Mt 13:33**

2. We also saw where Jesus taught two parables concerning the **value and preciousness** of the kingdom:
 - a. **“The Parable Of The Hidden Treasure” - Mt 13:44**
 - b. **“The Parable Of The Pearl Of Great Price” - Mt 13:45-46**

3. Jesus also taught two parables depicting the **present mixture and future separation** involving the kingdom of heaven:
 - a. The first was **“The Parable of The Wheat And The Tares”**, which we have already studied - **Mt 13:24-30,36-43**
 - b. The second is **“The Parable Of The Dragnet”**, which will be the focus of this study - **Mt 13:47-50**

4. In each case where there are two parables seemingly addressing the same subject, there are subtle differences in which different aspects of the kingdom are being stressed
 - a. In the two parables describing the **growth and development** of the kingdom...
 - 1) One depicts the **visible** growth (The Mustard Seed)
 - 2) The other depicts the **invisible** growth (The Leaven)
 - b. In the two parables describing the **value and preciousness** of the kingdom...
 - 1) One illustrates the value of the kingdom to one **accidentally** finds it (The Hidden Treasure)
 - 2) The other illustrates the value of the kingdom to one **seeking** it (The Pearl Of Great Price)

[In a similar way, we will notice a subtle difference between **“The Parable of The Wheat And The Tares”** and **“The Parable Of The Dragnet”**...]

I. THE PARABLE EXPLAINED

A. THE DETAILS OF THE PARABLE...

1. A “dragnet” was cast into the sea
2. As defined by the **Holman Bible Dictionary**, a “dragnet” is...
 - a. “A large fishing net equipped with a weighted bottom edge for touching (“dragging”) the river or lake bottom and a top with wooden floats allowing the net to be spread across the water (**Isa 19:8**).”
 - b. “Such nets were normally let down from a boat and then drawn to shore by a crew positioned on the beach. In the case of a large catch the net was hauled to shore by

boat (**Jn 21:6-8**).”

3. Once the dragnet was drawn to shore, the fish were separated; those good for eating were saved in vessels, the inedible were discarded

B. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE...

1. As with “The Parable Of The Wheat And The Tares”, Jesus explains what this parable means - **Mt 13:49-50**
 - a. **The kingdom of heaven, in its present state, will be a mixture of good and bad**
 - 1) Just like a dragnet gathers in both good and bad fish
 - 2) We saw in “The Parable Of The Wheat And Tares” that this will be due to the influence of Satan, such that there will be those “that offend, and those who practice lawlessness” - cf. **Mt 13:41**
 - 3) Paul wrote that in “a great house” (i.e., the church) some vessels are “for honor and some for dishonor” - **2 Ti 2:20-21**
 - b. **But in the future there will be a separation - Mt 13:49**
 - 1) It will occur “at the end of the age” - cf. **Mt 13:39-40**
 - 2) The agents of this separation will be the “angels” - cf. **Mt 13:41**
 - 3) The “wicked” will be separated from the “just” (i.e., the righteous) - cf. **Mt 13:41**
 - c. **The punishment of the “wicked” is described - Mt 13:50**
 - 1) “cast...into the furnace of fire.” - cf. **Mt 13:42a**
 - 2) “There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” - **Mt 13:42b**
2. In giving His explanation, we see the emphasis of Jesus in this parable, and the fundamental difference between it and “The Parable Of The Wheat And The Tares”
 - a. The emphasis is upon...
 - 1) The “future” separation of those in the kingdom
 - 2) The punishment of the wicked
 - b. Unlike “The Parable Of The Wheat And The Tares”...
 - 1) There is nothing in the explanation related to the “present” mixture in the kingdom - contrast that with **Mt 13:24-30**
 - 2) There is nothing depicting the blessedness of the righteous - contrast that with **Mt 13:43**

[“**The Parable Of The Dragnet**”, then, **reinforces** the spiritual truths taught in “The Parable Of The Wheat And Tares”, especially those relating to **the coming judgment** and **condemnation of the wicked**.

That Jesus would emphasize the judgment and condemnation of the wicked in this parable ought to impress upon us that the “**good news**” of the **kingdom of heaven** also contains “**bad news**” for those who reject it. Since this parable focuses on the “destiny” of the wicked, this might be a good time to review what Jesus Himself taught on the subject...

II. JESUS’ TEACHINGS ON THE DESTINY OF THE WICKED

A. JESUS TAUGHT THE WICKED WILL BE JUDGED...

1. We have seen this truth illustrated in the two parables we have been comparing
2. He warned those cities that rejected Him of the coming judgment - **Mt 11:20-24**

3. He spoke of the condemnation that would come upon His generation - **Mt 12:41-42**
4. The wicked would be raised unto condemnation, unlike the righteous - **Jn 5:24-30**

B. JESUS TAUGHT THE WICKED WILL BE SEPARATED FROM GOD...

1. He spoke of this separation in His sermon on the mount - **Mt 7:21-23**
2. Again, when describing the judgment scene - **Mt 25:41-46**

C. JESUS TAUGHT THE WICKED WILL BE CAST INTO “HELL”...

1. A term used most often by Jesus to describe the destiny of the wicked
 - a. The Greek word is “geenna” {gheh'-en-nah}, which in Hebrew is “Ge-Hinnom”
 - b. B. W. Johnson comments: **“The term Gehenna arose from the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the Canaanites burned human sacrifices to Moloch. After the return of the Jews from the Captivity they made it a place of defilement, where the refuse of the city was thrown and burned. The name was applied to the place of future punishment by the Jews. The word is often used in the New Testament, and always denotes a place of future punishment.”**
 - c. Found **twelve (12)** times in the New Testament, and it is used only by Jesus with one exception (**Ja 3:6**)
2. Jesus used the term to describe the final place of punishment...
 - a. In His sermon on the mount - **Mt 5:21-22,29-30**
 - b. When sending His apostles on the “limited” commission - **Mt 10:28**
 - c. In warning against personal stumbling blocks - **Mt 18:8-9**
 - d. Perhaps the most vivid use of this term is in **Mk 9:43-48**
 - Jesus evidently used this word because it properly spoke to His contemporaries the horror and abomination of the eternal destiny awaiting the wicked!
3. This place called “hell” was originally prepared for the devil and his angels (**Mt 25:41**), but will serve as the place of punishment for the wicked as well

D. JESUS TAUGHT THE WICKED WILL SUFFER TORMENT...

1. **They will experience “the furnace of fire”**
 - a. As described in “The Parable Of The Wheat And The Tares”, and “The Parable Of The Dagnet” - **Mt 13:42,50**
 - b. This “furnace of fire” is the same as...
 - 1) The “fire” of Gehenna - **Mt 5:22; 18:8-9**
 - 2) The “lake of fire” - **Re 20:12-15; 21:8**
 - c. A fire that is never quenched - **Mk 9:43-48**
 - d. Notice Jesus’ description of Hades (the temporary dwelling of the wicked dead) - **Lk 16:22-24**
2. **They will experience “wailing and gnashing of teeth”**
 - a. As told in the two parables we have considered - **Mt 13:42,50**
 - b. Jesus used the similar expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth” on other occasions - **Mt 8:12 22:13; 24:51; 25:30**
3. **They will experience “outer darkness”**
 - a. As in the punishment of...
 - 1) The “sons of the kingdom” (unbelieving Israelites) - **Mt 8:12**
 - 2) The “unprepared wedding guest” (those who mistakenly believe they are saved?)

- **Mt 22:13**

- 3) The “unprofitable servant” (slothful Christians?) - **Mt 25:30**
- b. And the punishment described by Peter and Jude for false teachers - **2 Pe 2:17; Ju 13**
4. **They will experience “everlasting punishment”**
 - a. The punishment for the wicked is as “everlasting” as the life given the righteous - **Mt 25:46**
 - b. The wicked will be “punished” with “everlasting destruction” from the presence of the Lord - **2 Th 1:9**

CONCLUSION

1. As Jesus went about “**preaching the gospel of the kingdom**” (**Mt 4:23**), He did not hold back...
 - a. He called upon the people to repent - cf. **Mt 4:17**
 - b. He warned them of the impending judgment and torment to come
 - 1) As seen in “**The Parable Of Dragnet**”
 - 2) As seen in our survey of Jesus’ teaching on the destiny of the wicked
2. If we are to proclaim the “gospel of the kingdom” faithfully...
 - a. We must not only preach the “good news” of the kingdom...
 - b. We must also tell the “bad news” Christ revealed through His parables and other teachings!

Dear friend, are you living in view of the coming judgment? When “the great separation” is made, where will you be? Why not be “born again of the water and the Spirit”, so you may enter that wonderful kingdom? - **Jn 3:5; Mk 16:16; Ac 2:36-39**

The Parables Of Jesus

The Householder (Mt 13:51-52)

INTRODUCTION

1. Following His explanation of “**The Parable Of The Dragnet**” (Mt 13:47-50), we find Jesus asking His disciples: “*Have you understood all these things?*” (Mt 13:51)
2. This question likely relates not just to the preceding parable, but to all of those recorded in this chapter:
 - a. The Parable Of The Sower - **Mt 13:3-9,18-23**
 - b. The Parable Of The Wheat And The Tares - **Mt 13:24-30,36-43**
 - c. The Parable Of The Mustard Seed - **Mt 13:31-32**
 - d. The Parable Of The Leaven - **Mt 13:33**
 - e. The Parable Of The Hidden Treasure - **Mt 13:44**
 - f. The Parable Of The Pearl Of Great Price - **Mt 13:45-46**
 - g. The Parable Of The Dragnet - **Mt 13:47-50**
 - All of which reveal truths related to “*the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*” - **Mt 13:11**
3. When His disciples answer in the affirmative, Jesus tells yet another parable...
 - a. This one is called “**The Parable Of The Householder**” - **Mt 13:52**
 - b. This parable, however, is describing not so much the kingdom of heaven itself, but those (especially “scribes”) who have been instructed concerning the kingdom

[As we take the time to consider what Jesus said, seeking to glean what truths and principles we can from Him, let’s first look closely at...]

I. THE PARABLE ITSELF

A. JESUS IS MAKING A POINT ABOUT A “SCRIBE”...

1. “*Therefore every scribe instructed about the kingdom of heaven...*”
2. From the “Holman Bible Dictionary”, a scribe was a “**Person trained in writing skills and used to record events and decisions (Jer 36:26; 1 Chr 24:6; Est 3:12). During the Exile in Babylon educated scribes apparently became the experts in God’s written word, copying, preserving, and teaching it. Ezra was a scribe in this sense of expert in teaching God’s word (Ezr 7:6). A professional group of such scribes developed by New Testament times, most being Pharisees (Mk 2:16). They interpreted the law, taught it to disciples, and were experts in cases where people were accused of breaking the law of Moses. They led in plans to kill Jesus (Lk 19:47) and heard His stern rebuke (Mt 23).**”
3. They were more than simply copyists, but students and instructors as well
4. It would be assumed, therefore, that a scribe would be expected to understand the finer points of the Law of Moses

B. A SCRIBE “INSTRUCTED CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN...”

1. Jesus’ point is not about a normal scribe, who would understand only the Law
2. But a scribe who would be instructed about the kingdom of heaven (via the parables)

C. SUCH A SCRIBE “IS LIKE A HOUSEHOLDER...”

1. A householder with “**treasure**”, something of great value
2. Treasure that is both “**new**” and “**old**”
 - 1) The “old” treasure would be his understanding of the Law
 - 2) The “new” treasure would be his understanding of the kingdom of heaven

[The parable and its **explanation** appear simple enough to understand. But there are also **implications** from the parable that are worthy of careful consideration...]

II. IMPLICATIONS FROM THE PARABLE

A. EVERY DISCIPLE IS LIKE A SCRIBE...

1. This implication is a fair one to make
 - a. Because the parable was told in response to a question asked of His disciples
 - b. Because His disciples...
 - 1) ...had been told that only by understanding the Word can one bear good fruit - **Mt 13:23**
 - 2) ...had been asked whether they “understood all these things?” - **Mt 13:51**
 - c. Understanding God’s Word was a fundamental aspect of being a scribe!
2. Elsewhere Jesus makes it clear that His disciples must be like scribes
 - a. The very word “disciple” means a “learner”, which requires one to be like a scribe
 - b. In the Great Commission...
 - 1) Jesus told His apostles to “make disciples” (i.e., learners) - **Mt 28:19**
 - 2) His disciples would then be “taught” all that Christ commanded - **Mt 28:20**

B. EVERY DISCIPLE IS A LIKE HOUSEHOLDER WITH TREASURE...

1. That treasure is the Word of God, which even with the partial revelation of the Old Testament was...
 - a. “*More to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold*” - cf. **Ps 19:7-11**
 - b. Better than silver, fine gold, and rubies; and “*all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.*” - cf. **Pr 3:13-18**
2. The value of that treasure is enhanced with the full and final revelation of God’s Will through His Son Jesus Christ - cf. **Co 2:2-3**

C. EVERY DISCIPLE HAS BOTH OLD AND NEW TREASURE...

1. Not just the new treasure, but the old as well
2. Some Christians may downplay the importance of the Old Testament, but we shouldn’t!
 - a. It was written for our learning, to provide patience, comfort and hope - **Ro 15:4**
 - b. It was written for our admonition - **1 Co 10:11**
3. Dare we throw away old treasure, just because we have been blessed to receive new?
 - a. That which is “old” can help us appreciate more fully that which is “new”!
 - b. It can help make us “wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ” - **2 Ti 3:14-15**

- c. As “scripture” inspired of God, it is still profitable - **2 Ti 3:16-17**
- 4. Of course, we must **“rightly divide”** the word of truth - **2 Ti 2:15**
 - a. By observing the distinction between the Old and New Covenants - cf. **He 8:6-13**
 - b. By remembering that it is the fuller revelation provided by the New that helps to explain the “mystery” of the Old - e.g., **Lk 24:25-27,44-47**
 - 1) It was not until Jesus fulfilled and then explained Old Testament prophecies that His disciples were able to understand
 - 2) So we should not seek to understand the New in light of the Old, but the Old in light of the New!

CONCLUSION

- 1. The main point I wish to stress is that as disciples of Jesus we have been richly blessed!
 - a. Jesus said it was because we have been blessed to see and hear things others did not - **Mt 13:16-17**
 - b. When we understand the parables and His other teachings concerning the kingdom of heaven, as well as the Old Testament, then we have **treasure added upon treasure !**
- 2. But we must be like the scribes of old to enjoy these treasures...
 - a. Emulating especially the example of Ezra - **Ezr 7:10**
 - b. Preparing our hearts to seek the Word, to do it, and then to teach it
- 3. Do we appreciate the great treasure we have available to us?
 - a. Do we appreciate its greatness because it alone points us...
 - 1) To Him who is the center and theme of its revelation, Jesus Christ?
 - 2) And to His kingdom that is everlasting?
 - b. Or are we like so many, who forsake this great treasure for that which is temporary, and does not really satisfy?

Don't allow the distractions of this world to cause the “treasures” to slip through your fingers!

The Parables Of Jesus

The Unmerciful Servant (Mt 18:21-35)

INTRODUCTION

1. **The Parables Of Jesus** we have considered so far have centered around the kingdom of heaven itself..
 - a. How the “seed” of the kingdom would be received (“*The Sower*”)
 - b. Its mixed character and future consummation (“*The Wheat And The Tares*”, “*The Dragnet*”)
 - c. Its growth and development (“*The Mustard Seed*”, “*The Leaven*”)
 - d. Its exceeding value (“*The Hidden Treasure*”, “*The Pearl Of Great Price*”)
2. The next parable we shall consider is one that describes **the character of the citizens** which are to make up the kingdom..
 - a. It is commonly called “**The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant**”
 - b. It is recorded in **Mt 18:21-35**

[We begin our study by noticing...]

I. THE PARABLE AND ITS MESSAGE

A. THE OCCASION WHICH LED TO ITS TELLING...

1. Peter’s question about forgiving a brother - **Mt 18:21**
 - a. He probably thought he was being very gracious
 - b. For many Jewish rabbis taught that three (3) times was sufficient
2. Jesus’ initial response - **Mt 18:22**
 - a. His answer is not to be taken literally
 - b. Rather, “**Jesus confronts Peter with the truth that the spirit of forgiveness really knows no boundaries.**” (Believers’ Study Bible)
3. To reinforce His point, Jesus proceeds to tell the parable...

B. THE PARABLE ITSELF...

1. A king shows mercy to his servant by canceling his huge debt - **Mt 18:23-27**
 - a. How large amount was 10,000 talents?
 - 1) “**If the Attic talent is intended, about 6,000 denarii were involved in just one Attic talent.**” (BSB)
 - 2) “**Remembering that a denarius was a day’s normal wage, the poor fellow owed something like 60,000,000 denarii.**” (BSB)
 - 3) Using the rate of \$50 as one day’s wage, the amount would be \$3,000,000,000 (**3 billion dollars!**)
 - b. The mercy of the king goes beyond the actual request
 - 1) The request was for patience to pay the debt
 - 2) Yet the king was willing to forgive the debt entirely!
2. That servant in turn then refuses to cancel a fellow servant’s petty debt - **Mt 18:28-30**

- a. How much was a hundred denarii?
 - 1) Remember, a “denarii” was equivalent to a day’s wage
 - 2) Using the same rate above (\$50/day), the amount would be **\$5000**
 - b. The unmerciful servant refuses to heed the same plea made earlier by himself
3. The final result: Upon this cruel servant the king imposes the former sentence, even adding to it! - **Mt 18:31-34**
- a. Before, he, his family, and his possessions were only going to be sold
 - b. But now, he is to handed over to the “torturers”

C. THE LESSON OF THE PARABLE...

1. As stated by Jesus Himself - **Mt 18:35**
 - a. *“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”*
 - b. Failure to forgive a brother will bring severe punishment!
2. **“Prompted by gratitude the forgiven sinner must always yearn to forgive whoever has trespassed against him”** (unknown)
3. We can also draw several subsidiary lessons:
 - a. We are all God’s debtors - **Mt 18:23**; cf. **Ro 3:23**
 - b. None are able to pay what is owed - **Mt 18:25**
 - c. But by Christ’s atoning sacrifice, the debt is paid - **Mt 18:27**; cf. **Mt 20:28**
 - d. Only those who are willing to forgive others can be assured that they are indeed forgiven - **Mt 18:35**; cf. **Mt 6:14-15**
 - e. It should be easy to forgive others, for what we owe God is infinitely more than what others owe us - **Mt 18:32,33**
 - f. The unforgiving person is destined for everlasting punishment! - **Mt 18:34,35**; cf. **Ro 1:31**

[Perhaps the most important point we learn from this parable is that the kingdom of heaven is to consist of people who are both forgiven and forgiving, who have both received mercy and are merciful. - cf. **Ja 2:13**

Understanding the importance of forgiving others, how can we develop a forgiving spirit?]

II. DEVELOPING A FORGIVING SPIRIT

A. FOCUS ON GOD’S FORGIVENESS OF YOU...

1. This is where the unmerciful servant went wrong
2. This is how Paul suggested we develop a forgiving spirit - **Ep 4:32**; **Co 3:13**

B. ALLOW THE LORD TO HELP US TO “FORGIVE AND FORGET”...

1. Some may protest and say “It is impossible to forget!”
2. But let’s first define “forget”
 - a. To be unable to remember (something)
 - b. To treat with thoughtless inattention; neglect: forget one’s family
 - c. To leave behind unintentionally
 - d. To fail to mention

- The American Heritage Dictionary
- 3. When I think of forgiving and forgetting, it is the last three definitions I have in mind
 - a. Technically, we may be able to recall the offense to our minds
 - b. But for all practical purposes, we so disregard the offense that it is “out of mind”
- 4. Is this possible? By the grace of God, yes!
 - a. The example of Joseph - **Gen 41:51**
 - b. The attitude of Paul - **Ph 3:13**
 - Both these men had plenty of things done to them that could have made them resentful, but God helped them to “forget” those things
- 5. Can a person who says “I will forgive but not forget”, truly have forgiven?
- 6. **“If I say, ‘Yes, I forgive, but I cannot forget,’ as though the God, who twice a day washes all the sands on all shores of all the world, could not wash such memories from my mind, then I know nothing of Calvary love.”** (Amy Carmichael)

CONCLUSION

1. I believe that when we truly contemplate the love, mercy, and forgiveness that God has shown us in Christ Jesus...
 - a. It is indeed possible to forgive and forget
 - b. At least in the sense of removing it from the attention of our minds
2. And from **“The Parable Of The Unmerciful Servant”**...
 - a. We should learn that it is essential that we do so
 - b. For the citizens of the kingdom of heaven are to be characterized by the attitudes of mercy and forgiveness towards others

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” - Jesus (Mt 6:14-15)

Have we allowed the mercy of God to melt our hearts? Have we even accepted the mercy of God into our lives by obeying Jesus Christ? Allow **“The Parable Of The Unmerciful Servant”** to remind us that both are possible!

The Parables Of Jesus

The Laborers In The Vineyard (Mt 20:1-16)

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study in “The Parables Of Jesus”...
 - a. We saw that **an unforgiving spirit** has no place in the hearts of those who would make up the kingdom of heaven
 - b. Cf. “The Unmerciful Servant”, **Mt 18:21-35**
2. Our next parable identifies another attitude of heart that has no place in the kingdom...
 - a. This parable is known as **“The Laborers In The Vineyard”**
 - b. Found in **Mt 20:1-16**, let’s begin with a careful reading of it (READ)
3. The meaning of this parable has challenged many expositors, and explanations offered have been varied

[While admittedly difficult, I believe the main point can be determined with a fair degree of certainty. Especially if we begin by taking into consideration...]

I. THE SETTING

A. THE CONVERSATION WITH THE RICH YOUNG RULER - Mt 19:16-22

1. Jesus had been approached by this man with a question concerning eternal life
2. In the course of their conversation, Jesus challenged the young man to give up all and follow Him
3. The man went away sorrowful, unable to accept the challenge

B. THE DISCUSSION WITH THE DISCIPLES - Mt 19:23-26

1. Jesus used this opportunity to teach how difficult it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven
2. This causes the disciples to wonder who then could be saved?
3. Jesus’ response is that with God all things are possible

C. THE QUESTION RAISED BY PETER - Mt 19:27

1. Unlike the rich young man, Peter and the other disciples had accepted the challenge to give up all and follow Jesus - cf. **Mt 4:18-22**
2. So he asks: **“Therefore what shall we have?”**
3. It appears that Peter is wanting to know...
 - a. If the rich can be saved (though barely, and with the help of God)...
 - b. What more will those receive, who have given up all to follow Christ?
4. Peter’s question could be viewed as coming from a commercial or mercenary spirit...
 - a. I.e., having some sort of personal profit as a chief aim
 - b. I.e., motivated solely by a desire for personal gain

5. Peter's motive may have been pure, in which case Jesus' complete answer may have been designed to be a "preemptive strike" against any improper motives

D. THE REPLY GIVEN BY JESUS - Mt 19:28-30

1. First, an assurance...
 - a. Specifically, to the apostles - **Mt 19:28**
 - 1) In the "regeneration", they will be judging the twelve tribes of Israel
 - 2) This promise could refer either to:
 - a) Their role as apostles in the gospel age following Pentecost - cf. **Mt 16:19**
 - b) A special role following the return of Christ when He comes to judge the world - cf. **Mt 25:31-ff**
 - b. Generally, to all disciples - **Mt 19:29**
 - 1) In this life, a "hundredfold" houses, brothers, sisters, etc.
 - 2) In the age to come, "everlasting life" - cf. **Mk 10:29-30**
 - 3) I.e., those who give up all will receive more than enough in return
2. But then, a warning - **Mt 19:30**
 - a. **"But many who are first will be last, and the last first."**
 - b. A rather cryptic warning, one repeated again in **Mt 20:16**

[Since this warning both precedes and follows the parable we are studying, it is evident that the parable was told to explain the warning! And since the warning was first given in response to Peter's question, any explanation of the parable should be based upon the setting that preceded its telling.

With this in mind, let's proceed to consider...]

II. THE PARABLE AND ITS MESSAGE

A. THE PARABLE SUMMARIZED...

1. Early in the morning, a landowner hires laborers to work for an agreed upon wage - **Mt 20:1-2**
2. Later, at different hours of the day, he finds more and hires them also, for a fair but unspecified wage - **Mt 20:3-7**
3. At the end of the day, they are all paid equally, which irritates those who had worked all day - **Mt 20:8-12**
4. The landowner responds to the complainers...
 - a. I treated you fairly, for you received according to our agreement - **Mt 20:13-14a**
 - b. I wish to pay the others the same - **Mt 20:14b**
 - 1) Do I have not the right? - **Mt 20:15a**
 - 2) Are you envious, because I am gracious? - **Mt 20:15b**
5. Jesus concludes by repeating the warning - **Mt 20:16** (some manuscripts add another warning: "*For many are called, but few chosen*")

B. THE MESSAGE OF THE PARABLE...

1. Many and varied have been the interpretations; for example...
 - a. The various bands of workers are the O.T. saints; those called at the eleventh hour are the apostles

- b. The workers first called are the Jews, those called last are the Gentiles
- c. The parable represents the whole gospel age up to Christ's return, and the workers are groups saved at various periods
- d. It refers to different periods of a person's life in which he may respond to the Lord: some responding early, others late in life
- 2. Since this parable is in response to Peter's question, I suggest...
 - a. That the first workers represent the apostles and others like them
 - 1) Who are called by Christ through the gospel early in life
 - 2) And who therefore may labor long and hard in the "vineyard" (i.e., the kingdom of God)
 - b. The other workers represent those who are called by Christ via the gospel at various times
 - 1) Some of whom are called late in life
 - 2) Who do not have opportunity to do as much for the Lord
- 3. In light of this interpretation, the main point of the parable is...
 - a. What everyone receives will be more than **fair** ("*Did you not agree with me...?*")
 - b. No one has the right to question the **generosity** of the Lord ("*Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things?*")
 - c. Those who may serve long and hard should not be **envious** if others receive the same reward ("*Is your eye evil because I am good?*")
 - d. Therefore no one should serve the Lord with a commercial or mercenary spirit!
 - 1) The very danger Peter was close to falling into by the question he raised!
 - 2) A danger to which we are all susceptible!
- 4. Perhaps I should stress that this parable is NOT saying that those who purposely put off obeying Christ until the last moment can be saved!
 - a. If that were the point, the parable would have been worded differently
 - 1) Notice that those who responded at the late hour of the day had not been working "Because no one hired us" - **Mt 20:7**
 - 2) They accepted the offer as soon as they heard it, though late in the day
 - They were not people who turned down many opportunities to accept the offer to labor in the vineyard, only to accept at the last hour!
 - b. Whether one can be saved at the last moment after lifelong rejection of the gospel is another question
 - 1) One in which only the Lord can rightfully answer
 - 2) However, notice what is said of those who remain in a condition of rejecting the gospel:
 - a) They judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life - cf. **Ac 13:46**
 - b) They are storing up for themselves wrath in the day of wrath - cf. **Ro 2:4-11**

CONCLUSION

- 1. It is my understanding that the proper application of this parable is this...
 - a. **When we are called by the gospel to obey Christ, we should respond at once!**
 - 1) For some, we may hear the invitation early in life
 - 2) Others may not come to know of the gospel until late in life
 - b. **As laborers in the vineyard (i.e., the kingdom), we should work diligently in whatever**

time we may have left

- 1) We may be blessed to offer a full life of service to the Lord
 - 2) Or we may only have a short time
 - c. **We should do whatever we can without a commercial or mercenary spirit** (e.g., “Do I get more because I gave more?”)
2. With this parable, we learn more about those in the kingdom of heaven...
 - a. Just as the parable of “**The Unmerciful Servant**” teaches us there is no place in the kingdom of heaven for “an unforgiving spirit”...
 - b. So the parable of “**The Laborers In The Vineyard**” teaches us there is no room in the kingdom of heaven for those with either “a mercenary spirit” or “an envious spirit”!
 3. My fellow Christians, what is our attitude toward our service to Christ?
 - a. One of gratitude?
 - b. Or one of commercialism?
 - There is only one attitude that is acceptable!
 4. For those who are not yet Christians...
 - a. Why not let the gracious spirit of the “landowner” revealed in this parable encourage you to accept the grace of God in humble obedience to His gospel?
 - b. Why not live out the rest of your life in grateful service to Him?

The Parables Of Jesus

The Two Sons (Mt 21:28-32)

INTRODUCTION

1. As seen in the last two parables, Jesus often responded to questions from His disciples with a parable
 - a. Cf. **“The Unmerciful Servant”** (Mt 18:21-35), in reply to a question about forgiveness
 - b. Cf. **“The Laborers In The Vineyard”** (Mt 20:1-16), in reply to a question about what disciples would receive who have given up all to follow Jesus

2. He also used parables in replying to some of the challenges by those who opposed Him
 - a. During His final week in Jerusalem, He is challenged by religious leaders - **Mt 21:23-27**
 - b. In response, He told three parables...
 - 1) **“The Two Sons”** - Mt 21:28-32
 - 2) **“The Wicked Vinedressers”** - Mt 21:33-46
 - 3) **“The Wedding Feast”** - Mt 22:1-14

[In this lesson, we shall focus our attention on the parable of **“The Two Sons”** (Mt 21:28-32), looking first at...]

I. THE PARABLE AND ITS EXPLANATION

A. THE PARABLE ITSELF IS QUITE SIMPLE...

1. It is an account of a man with two sons and a vineyard
2. The father tells his two sons to work in the vineyard
 - a. The first son says he won't go, but later regretted it and went
 - b. The second son said he would, but did not actually go

B. JESUS EXPLAINS THE PARABLE...

1. He begins with a question: ***“Who of the two did the will of his father?”***
2. The answer is obvious, and the religious leaders reply ***“The first”***
3. Jesus' reply to the religious leaders is then very direct
 - a. ***“Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.”***
 - b. ***“For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.”***
4. Jesus was applying this parable to the religious leaders of His day
 - a. They were like the second son, who said he would go, but didn't
 - b. Whereas those tax collectors and harlots who repented at the preaching of John were like the first son, who first said no, but then went
5. It must have been a shock to hear Jesus tell them that those despised by the Jews would enter the kingdom of God before their religious leaders!

6. But as Luke records in his gospel...
 - a. The tax collectors (and others) who accepted John's baptism "***justified God***"
 - b. Whereas those religious leaders who were not baptized "***rejected the counsel of God for themselves***" - Lk 7:29-30

[Jesus will have more to say concerning these religious leaders in His next two parables, but what important lesson can we draw from this parable for us today?]

II. APPLYING THE PARABLE TODAY

A. THE MAIN POINT OF THE PARABLE...

1. Is it not that we must be "**doers**" and not "**sayers**"?
2. As Hendriksen says in his commentary: "**That lesson is, of course, this: the doing of the will of God is the one thing needful.**"
3. Jesus emphasized this truth on other occasions as well:
 - a. In His Sermon on the Mount - Mt 7:21-27
 - b. In giving The Great Commission before His ascension to heaven - Mt 28:20
4. As John Stott wrote: "**Greatness in the kingdom of God is measured in terms of obedience.**" (Authentic Christianity)

B. THIS LESSON IS ONE SORELY NEEDED TODAY...

1. The doctrines of **cheap grace** and **easy believism** have created a generation of "sayers" and not "doers"
 - a. Many profess Jesus as Lord, but then don't do what He says - cf. Lk 6:46
 - b. They are like the second son, who says he will do the father's will, but doesn't
2. Misunderstanding the doctrine of "**salvation by grace through faith**", many people have concluded that requiring obedience to God's command is "**legalism**" or "**salvation by works of merit**"
 - a. Yet nothing could be further from the truth!
 - b. Keeping the commandments of God is essential to salvation - Mt 7:21-23; 28:20; Jn 14:15,21,23; 15:10,14; 1 Co 7:19; 1 Jn 2:3-4
3. What we must remember is this...
 - a. When we keep God's commandments, we in no way earn or merit salvation
 - b. We simply do that which is our duty to do, and always remain "**unprofitable servants**" saved by grace - cf. Lk 17:10; Ti 3:4-7
 - c. Yet, we still "***should be careful to maintain good works***"! - Ti 3:1,8,14

CONCLUSION

1. Remember that it was the "religious leaders" in Jesus' day...
 - a. Who "***rejected the counsel of God for themselves***" in not accepting John's teaching for the need for repentance and baptism
 - b. Who likely believed that they had good "theological grounds" for not heeding the simple commands of God given through His preachers
2. In similar fashion, many "religious leaders" of our day...

- a. Reject the clear teaching of Christ and His apostles concerning the commands to repent and be baptized - cf. **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38**
 - b. They reject the “counsel of God for themselves” based upon “theological grounds”
-- When the common man who reads without preconceived notions has no problem understanding what the Scriptures teach on the subject
3. Could it be that today there are many people (even “tax collectors” and “harlots”) who will enter the kingdom of God before many religious people do?

What kind of “son” are you? One who does the will of his Father? Or one who says he will, but in the end does not? How you respond to the commands of our Lord determines the difference...

The Parables Of Jesus

The Wicked Vinedressers (Mt 21:33-46)

INTRODUCTION

1. As we saw in our last study, Jesus often used parables to reply to those who opposed Him
2. In the parable of “**The Two Sons**” (Mt 21:28-32), Jesus responded to those who had rejected John the Baptist
3. But in the parable of “**The Wicked Vinedressers**” (Mt 21:33-46), Jesus vividly describes the sinfulness of those religious leaders who were rejecting the very Son of God!

[Let’s begin with a reading of the parable and Jesus’ follow-up comments (READ). This is one parable in which Jesus’ meaning and purpose is very evident...]

I. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE

A. THE VARIOUS ITEMS OF THE PARABLE ARE EVIDENT...

1. The **vineyard** immediately brings to mind Israel
 - a. The figure of a vineyard referring to Israel was well-known - cf. **Isa 5:1-7**
 - b. But here it is not Israel as a nation per se...
 - 1) Rather, “**the special advantages and opportunities which were given to the people as the chosen seed**” (W.M. Taylor, The Parables of Our Savior)
 - 2) For later Jesus explains the vineyard (or kingdom of God) “will be given to a nation producing its fruit” - cf. **Mt 21:43**
2. The **landowner** who planted the vineyard is God
3. The **wicked vinedressers** represents Israel’s leaders - cf. **Mt 21:45**
 - a. Their chief priests, scribes, elders, and all their followers
 - b. Therefore, the physical nation of Israel as a whole
4. The **servants** who were sent in behalf of the landowner represents the prophets
 - a. As a nation, Israel rejected many of her prophets - cf. **2 Chr 36:15-16**
 - b. Note the plaintive cry of Jesus over Jerusalem later on - **Mt 23:37**
5. The **landowner’s son** is Jesus Christ Himself

B. THE SUCCEEDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REVEAL JESUS’ INTENT...

1. Which was to help them see why God would be just
 - a. In bringing condemnation upon Israel
 - b. In giving the blessings of Israel to those more deserving - cf. **Mt 21:43**
2. Indeed, their rejection of Jesus had been foretold in the Scriptures - **Mt 21:42**; cf. **Psa 118:22,23**
 - a. The “builders” were the religious leaders of the nation
 - b. The “stone” which they rejected was Christ
 - c. Yet, this stone would be made a “chief cornerstone” by God Himself

- 1) In which God would build a something “new “
- 2) I.e., the church in which both Jew and Gentile were fellow citizens of the household of God- cf. **Ep 2:19-20**
3. In elaborating on “the stone which the builders rejected”, Jesus reveals the terrible consequence for those who reject it - **Mt 21:44**
 - a. Another way of saying it is anyone who opposes Christ is destined to fall, even be “pulverized”
 - b. The same was said of those who would not trust in the Lord in Isaiah’s day - cf. **Isa 8:13-15**

[The main lesson of this parable can be summarized in the words of **Ps 2:12**...

*“Kiss (i.e., pay homage to) the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish in the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
“Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.”*

So obvious was Jesus’ meaning and intent in telling this parable, that the religious leaders’ would have arrested Him at that moment had it not been for the people (**Mt 21:45-46**).

What application can we make for ourselves from this parable? Is there a lesson for us today that can be drawn...?]

II. AN APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE

A. FIRST, NOTE THAT GOD OFTEN BESTOWS WONDERFUL PRIVILEGES...

1. This He had done with the nation of Israel
 - a. Like a precious vineyard, God planted Israel in Canaan
 - b. He blessed the nation with laws, priests, prophets, and other special privileges
 - c. He eventually sent His only begotten Son as their Messiah
2. How about us today?
 - a. Have we not received wonderful privileges from God?
 - b. We enjoy free access to the Word of God, and the freedom to worship without fear of persecution; many in the world do not
 - c. We are blessed to hear things that prophets, kings, and saints of old desired to hear and were not able - cf. **Mt 13:16-17**

B. SECOND, NOTE HOW PEOPLE OFTEN MAKE BAD USE OF THEIR PRIVILEGES...

1. The history of Israel as a nation established by God
 - a. They consistently murmured against God in the wilderness
 - b. They turned away from God time and again during the period of the Judges
 - c. They persecuted His prophets, and eventually rejected His own Son
2. What about us today?
 - a. We have blessings given to us through Christ
 - 1) The forgiveness of sins through His blood

- 2) The aid of the Holy Spirit in putting to death the deeds of the body
- 3) The joy of fellowship in the family of God
- 4) The privilege of sharing the gospel with a dying world
- b. And yet Christians often turn their back on such blessings
 - 1) They sin, and do not seek forgiveness
 - 2) They do not seek the help God gives to deal with the problem of sin
 - 3) They neglect their brethren by forsaking the assembling, and by not developing close relationships with them
 - 4) They make little or no effort to spread the precious gospel of Christ

C. THIRD, NOTE THE AWFUL JUDGMENT THAT COMES UPON THOSE WHO MAKE BAD USE OF THEIR PRIVILEGES...

1. Again, the nation of Israel is an example
 - a. They suffered forty years of wandering in the wilderness
 - b. God allowed neighboring nations to be a thorn in their side
 - c. They endured Assyrian and Babylonian captivity
 - d. God destroyed their temple and their religion by the Syrians (167 B.C.) and the Romans (70 A.D.)
 - e. He has indeed taken away the kingdom of God from them, and given it to a nation bearing the fruits of it - cf. **Mt 21:43**
2. Would God bring such judgments against His church or people today if they abuse their privileges?
 - a. Consider the words of Jesus - **Jn 15:1-2,6; Re 2:4-5, 16; 3:1-3**
 - b. Consider what was written to the Hebrew Christians - **He 10:26-31**
3. Clearly, if we do not utilize our special privileges...
 - a. God will take away the blessings we have (i.e., the kingdom of God)
 - b. And give it to someone who appreciates it (i.e. bears the fruit of it)

CONCLUSION

1. Truly God has given us wonderful blessings...
 - a. He made us worthy to be "*partakers of the inheritance of the saints*" - **Co 1:12**
 - b. He "*has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love*" - **Co 1:13**
 - c. In Christ we have "*redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins*" - **Co 1:14**
 - d. He sent us apostles and prophets of His Son, whose words are in the New Testament
2. Let us be careful how we receive them (cf. **Jn 13:20**), for the next time the Beloved Son is sent, He is coming in terrifying judgment! - **2 Th 1:7-10**

Indeed, as Jesus said, "*For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.*" (**Lk 12:48**)

The Parables Of Jesus

The Wedding Feast (Mt 22:1-14)

INTRODUCTION

1. We come to the third of three parables Jesus told when challenged by the religious leaders in the temple during His last week...
 - a. **“The Two Sons”** was told in regards to their rejection of John the Baptist - **Mt 21:28-32**
 - b. **“The Wicked Vinedressers”** described how God would reject them because they had rejected His prophets, and ultimately His own Son! - **Mt 21:33-46**
 - c. In **“The Wedding Feast”**, the wickedness and rebelliousness of the religious leaders is even more vividly described - **Mt 22:1-14**
2. In **“The Wedding Feast”**, the Lord is revealing Himself and the nature of their rejection more clearly than He did in the previous parable...
 - a. There He was indeed the son; but here He is a royal son
 - b. There they were rejecting what they rightfully owed by way of contract; but here they are rejecting kindness which had been graciously offered to them!
3. In this parable, we also see an expansion of the element of Divine Judgment...
 - a. The previous parable described judgment upon Israel for rejecting God’s Son
 - b. So does this parable, but it also describes judgment upon those who have accepted the King’s invitation, yet not in the way it was intended to be received!

[Let’s read the parable beginning in **Mt 22:1** (READ). Now let’s spend a few moments taking a closer look...]

I. THE PARABLE “ANALYZED”

A. AN INVITATION SPURNED (1-10)

1. **The kingdom of heaven is likened to a wedding feast - Mt 22:1-2**
 - a. Isaiah had used the figure of a feast to prophecy of the Messianic age - **Is 25:6**
 - b. The Book of Revelation describes a future marriage of the Lamb and His Bride - **Re 19:7**
2. **And yet the invitation is spurned...**
 - a. By those indifferent - **Mt 22:3-5**
 - b. By those rebellious - **Mt 22:6**
 - Jesus may have reference here to the Jewish nation, as He did in the parable of “The Wicked Vinedressers” - cf. **Mt 21:33-46**
3. **The King’s furious reaction - Mt 22:7**
 - a. Those who had so callously rejected His invitation, abused His servants, are themselves destroyed
 - b. Many understand this to be a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in 70 A. D. - cf. **Lk 19:41-44**

4. **The invitation is extended to others - Mt 22:8-10**
 - a. As in the parable of “The Wicked Vinedressers”, the opportunity to enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of God is extended to others - cf. **Mt 21:43**
 - b. This has reference to the offer of the gospel and the kingdom to the Gentiles - cf. also **Mt 8:5-12**

B. A GUEST IMPROPERLY ATTIRED (11-14)

1. **Without a wedding garment - Mt 22:11-12**
 - a. It was customary for the hosts to provide their guests suitable apparel
 - b. To not wear the provided garment showed a lack of respect and appreciation
 - c. No real excuse could be offered for not wearing one (“he was speechless”)
2. **The King’s furious reaction - Mt 22:13**
 - a. The seriousness of the insult is seen in the reaction of the king
 - b. The punishment described is similar to that found in other parables - **Mt 13:42,50**
3. **Jesus’ conclusion - Mt 22:14**
 - a. This summarizes the main point of the entire parable
 - b. The invitation (call) of God is extended to many, but few receive it in such a way to be among the “chosen”

[This parable was clearly told in response to the rejection of the King’s Son and His Kingdom by the Jewish nation. However, elements of the parable apply to us as well, for the invitation to attend “**The Wedding Feast**” is still being offered through the call of the Gospel!

With that in mind, consider a few more thoughts on...]

II. THE PARABLE “APPLIED”

A. HAVE YOU SPURNED THE FATHER’S INVITATION?

1. **Through indifference?**
 - a. Many people do not know God because of a lack of interest
 - b. Yet God has so ordered the affairs of life to encourage faith and interest in Him - cf. **Ac 17:26-27; Ro 1:20; 1 Ti 2:3-4**
 - c. For this reason, even those who through indifference do not know God and obey the gospel will be condemned - cf. **2 Th 1:7-10**
2. **Through rebelliousness?**
 - a. There are many who know full well the Father’s invitation
 - b. But for whatever reason they rebel against it
 - c. In so doing, they despise riches of God’s grace and store up for themselves God’s righteous indignation - cf. **Ro 2:4-11**

[Certainly all should respond to the Father’s invitation if they desire to enjoy the spiritual blessings of the kingdom of heaven. But as we learn from the parable, there is more...]

B. ARE YOU ATTIRED FOR THE WEDDING?

1. Many seek to attend the “wedding” in apparel of their own choosing
 - a. Some, not knowing the righteousness of God, have sought to establish their own - cf.

Ro 10:1-3

- b. People do this today, when they expect salvation on terms different than those taught in the gospel
 - 1) E.g., trying to obtain salvation based upon their own good works
 - 2) E.g., trying to obtain salvation on faith without repentance and obedience
2. We must be willing to put on the “apparel” that God gives us:
 - a. **We must “put on” Jesus Christ!**
 - 1) First and foremost this involves clothing ourselves with Christ
 - 2) Which Paul explains takes place in baptism - cf. **Ga 3:26-27**
-- Have you put Christ on in baptism?
 - b. **We must “put on” the new man!**
 - 1) Paul applies the figure of putting on a garment to the development of Christian conduct and character - cf. **Co 3:5-14**
 - 2) Do we wish to be found at the wedding feast adorned with the apparel of the “old man with his deeds”?
-- Are you putting off the “old man”, and putting on the “new man”?
 - c. **We must “put on” righteous deeds!**
 - 1) John described the preparation for glorious wedding of the Lamb and His bride - **Re 19:6-9**
 - 2) We understand that the “*righteous acts of the saints*” are not done to merit salvation - cf. **Ti 3:4-5**
 - 3) They are done to bring honor to God, and therefore we are to be ever ready and zealous to do good works - cf. **Mt 5:16; Ti 3:1,8,14**
-- Are you doing what you can to “beautify” the wedding garment of the bride?

CONCLUSION

1. We have truly been blessed to be given the opportunity to receive the Father’s invitation to the wedding feast of His Son!
2. But we learn from Jesus and His parables that the “kingdom of heaven” is for those who thankfully and properly receive the grace that God has to offer
3. The example of the nation of Israel should serve as a warning to all, both Jew and Gentile, that while God’s call of the gospel is open to all, the saying of Jesus still remains true...

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”

You have been called, but will you be chosen?

The Parables Of Jesus

The Wise And Foolish Virgins (Mt 25:1-13)

INTRODUCTION

1. We have seen that several of Jesus' parables describe the consummation of the "kingdom of heaven" which takes place when Jesus returns...
 - a. **"The Wheat And Tares" - Mt 13:24-30, 36-43**
 - b. **"The Dragnet" - Mt 13:47-50**

2. Following His Discourse on the Mount of Olives in which He seems to address...
 - a. Either the destruction of Jerusalem (which occurred in 70 A.D.)
 - b. Or His coming at the end of the age (yet to occur)...we find another parable: **"The Wise And Foolish Virgins" - Mt 25:1-13**

3. Scholars often debate over whether the discourse of **Matthew 24** pertains...
 - a. Strictly to the destruction of Jerusalem that occurred in A.D. 70
 - b. Strictly to the Second Coming of Christ
 - c. To both events, as the first is a type or shadow of the latter, such that certain terms can be used to describe both events, though figurative in one case and literal in another

4. Whichever it might be, in the final analysis the parable of **"The Wise And Foolish Virgins"** has important lessons to be learned
 - a. For even if Matthew 24 pertains solely to the destruction of Jerusalem...
 - b. ...other passages in the New Testament teach the Second Coming of the Lord, and we need to be watchful for that great event! - cf. **2 Pe 3:10-14**

[With that in mind, let's use this opportunity to take a closer look at this parable Jesus taught...]

I. THE PARABLE ANALYZED

A. KEY ELEMENTS IN THE PARABLE...

1. Ten virgins go out with lamps to await the arrival of the bridegroom - **Mt 25:1-4**
 - a. Five foolish virgins take no oil
 - b. Five wise virgins take extra oil
2. The bridegroom is delayed in his coming - **Mt 25:5**
3. The bridegroom's arrival is announced, and the virgins trim their lamps - **Mt 25:6-7**
4. The foolish virgins find that their oil is running out - **Mt 25:7-9**
 - a. They plead with the wise virgins to share their oil
 - b. But the wise virgins refuse, saying there is not enough
5. As the foolish virgins go to get some oil, the bridegroom comes and those prepared go in with him to the wedding, and the door is shut - **Mt 25:10**
6. The foolish virgins then arrive, but they are not allowed in - **Mt 25:11-12**
7. Jesus then makes the application - **Mt 25:13**

B. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE...

1. The main message is quite clear, as evident from:
 - a. Jesus' comments leading up to this parable - cf. **Mt 24:42-46**
 - b. Jesus' comment at the end of the parable itself - **Mt 25:13**
 - 1) There is the need for constant watchfulness
 - 2) For no one knows the moment when the Lord is coming!
2. As worded in Hendriksen's commentary, "**...the need of being prepared at all times for the coming of the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ.**"
3. This message is repeated later on in the New Testament...
 - a. By Paul, writing to the Thessalonians - **1 Th 5:1-6**
 - b. By Peter, to the Christians in Asia Minor - **2 Pe 3:10-12**
 - c. By Jesus, to the church at Sardis - **Re 3:2-3**

[Not knowing the day or hour of His coming, we must be always be ready...this is the basic message of the parable. But what else can we glean from this parable?]

II. THE PARABLE APPLIED

A. CHRISTIANS ARE LIKE THE VIRGINS AWAITING THE BRIDEGROOM...

1. Some are wise
 - a. They diligently prepare themselves for the Master's coming, heeding the call to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord - **2 Pe 3:18; 1:5-8**
 - b. Knowing what is to come, they "look" for it and live accordingly - **2 Pe 3:11-14**
 - c. For them, the coming of the Lord will be a blessing! - **2 Pe 1:10-11**
 2. Some are foolish
 - a. They know the Lord is coming, but they are not prepared
 - b. They may even be like that evil servant who says "My master is delaying his coming", and act accordingly - cf. **Mt 24:48-49**
 - c. Yet Jesus has warned what will happen to such evil servants - **Mt 24:50-51**
- **Are we like the wise virgins, or the foolish ones?**

B. ONE SHOULD NOT TRUST IN PREVIOUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS...

1. Note that the foolish virgins did have "some" oil - **Mt 25:8**
 2. So they had made some preparation, but foolishly trusted in what they had done in the past
 3. Neither should we "rest on our laurels", but have the attitude of Paul - **Ph 3:12-15**
- **Are you foolishly depending upon what you have done in the past?**

C. PREPAREDNESS IS NOT TRANSFERABLE...

1. The wise virgins could not share their oil with the foolish virgins - **Mt 25:9**
2. Nor can we impart what salvation we have received to someone else (they must receive it from the Lord Himself) - cf. **Ps 49:7; Pr 9:12**
3. Do not think that we can be "saved by association"
 - a. It did not work for the Jews - cf. **Jer 7:4-7**
 - b. Neither will it work for us; each of us must have our own name in the Book of Life - cf. **Re 20:12-15**

- **Are you foolishly trusting in your relationship with someone else for your salvation (a parent, a spouse, a church, etc.)?**

D. THOSE UNPREPARED DO NOT RECEIVE A SECOND CHANCE...

1. Despite their pleas, the foolish virgins were not permitted to the wedding - **Mt 25:10-12**
2. When the Lord comes again, the time for salvation is gone!

[Each of these points is related to the main message of the parable: the need to be prepared at all times for the coming of Christ. In view of this great need, here are some thoughts on...]

E. MAINTAINING A STATE OF PREPAREDNESS...

1. **Be careful not to let this world to preoccupy you - Lk 21:34-35**
 - a. Through its worldly lusts
 - b. Through its worldly concerns
2. **Be steadfast in prayer - Lk 21:36**
 - a. For in prayer we naturally maintain an attitude of watchfulness (which is a mark of preparation) - cf. **Ep 6:18**
 - b. For in prayer we can assure that we will be counted worthy as we confess our sins - cf. **1 Jn 1:9**
3. **Be diligent to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ - 2 Pe 3:18**
 - a. As defined in **2 Pe 1:5-8**
 - b. The blessings of which are described in **2 Pe 1:10-11**

CONCLUSION

1. This parable teaches that a great day is coming, a day in which those in the kingdom today will find themselves in two different groups...
 - a. Those who prepared themselves and faithfully watched for His coming
 - b. Those who were not prepared, to whom they will hear the Lord say:

“Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.”

2. Dear brother or sister in Christ, if the Lord were to come today...
 - a. Would He find you watching?
 - b. Would He find you prepared?-- Would He even know you? - cf. **Mt 7:21-23**

“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.” (Mt 25:13)

The Parables Of Jesus

The Talents (Mt 25:14-30)

INTRODUCTION

1. Immediately following the parable of “**The Wise And Foolish Virgins**” (Mt 25:1-13), we find Jesus telling the parable of “**The Talents**” (Mt 25:14-30)
2. While both parables relate to the kingdom of heaven, and especially in anticipation of the Lord’s return, note the key difference:
 - a. The first stresses the need to be **prepared**; the latter, the need to be **productive**
 - b. The first emphasizes **watching** for the Lord; the latter, **working** for the Lord
3. In both parables we learn what should characterize those who **eagerly wait** for the coming of the Lord

[How can we best apply what Jesus is teaching in this parable? Let’s begin by examining...]

I. THE PARABLE AND ITS LESSONS

A. THE PARABLE ANALYZED...

1. A man, about to travel to a far country, distributes his goods (“talents”) among his servants - **Mt 25:14-15**
 - a. A “talent” here is a monetary measure, amounting to 6000 denarii, which would take an ordinary laborer twenty years to earn (a denarius being a day’s wage)
 - b. The number of “talents” was given “*to each according to his own ability*”
2. The use made of the talents is described - **Mt 25:16-18**
 - a. Two of the servants doubled their talents
 - b. One servant simply hid the money
3. The lord of the servants returns, and a reckoning is made - **Mt 25:19-30**
 - a. His return was after “*a long time*”
 - b. The first two servants describe how they doubled their amount...
 - 1) They stand before the lord with excitement (implied in the word “*look*”)
 - 2) Their lord was pleased
 - a) He praises them for their work, saying “*Well done*”
 - b) He commends them as “*good and faithful servants*”
 - c) He rewards them by promoting them: “*you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things*”
 - d) He invites them to share in his happiness: “*Enter into the joy of your lord*”
 - c. The servant who hid his money then faces his lord...
 - 1) He begins by making excuses
 - a) “*Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown...*”
 - b) “*I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground.*”
 - 2) He seeks to appease the lord by returning what he had been given: “*Look, there*

you have what is yours.”

- d. The lord’s response...
 - 1) He calls him a “*wicked and lazy servant*”
 - 2) He tells him what was the least he should have done: “*you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers...*”
 - 3) He takes away what he had, and gave it to the servant with ten talents, with this explanation:
 - a) “*For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance*”
 - b) “*But from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away*”
 - 4) He has the “*unprofitable servant*” cast into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth

B. THE PARABLE APPLIED...

1. Main points of the parable:
 - a. Be faithful in using the opportunities for service which the Lord has given us
 - b. Diligence is rewarded; negligence is punished
2. Other points to be noted (adapted from Hendricksen’s commentary):
 - a. Whatever we have, whether opportunities or abilities, belongs to God; we may possess, but God owns; we are simply stewards - **Mt 25:14**
 - b. The Lord grants opportunities for service in keeping with our ability to make use of them - **Mt 25:15**
 - 1) In the day of judgment, the number of “talents” will not matter
 - 2) The question will be, “Have you been faithful in your use of the talents?”
 - c. Jesus did not expect to return immediately - **Mt 25:19**; cf. **25:5**
 - d. Everything should be done with a view of the day of reckoning which is coming!
 - e. Our responsibilities here and now are important, but they will be surpassed by those in the life hereafter - **Mt 25:21**; cf. **Re 22:3-5**
 - f. To share in the Master’s own joy is part of the glory of the life hereafter - **Mt 25:21**; cf. **2 Th 1:10-12** (where we are told we will share in His glory)
 - g. Those who make excuses are “wicked and lazy” servants - **Mt 25:25-26**
 - h. A place of punishment is reserved for the unprofitable servants! - **Mt 25:30**; cf. **13:41-42**
 - i. The sin of OMISSION is just as bad as the sin of COMMISSION
 - 1) Those who do evil will experience “wailing and gnashing of teeth” - **Mt 13:41-42**
 - 2) But also those who do nothing! - **Mt 25:30**

[Many are the lessons that can be gleaned from this parable of “The Talents”. The main lesson is simple: **Be productive where the Lord has given you ability and opportunity!**

But this often raises a question: What are my “talents” (used here not as a measure of money, but of ability and opportunity)? Here are some thoughts in an attempt to address this issue...]

II. DETERMINING OUR “TALENTS”

A. REMEMBER THAT NOT ALL HAVE THE SAME “TALENTS”...

1. The **number** of the talents may be different
 - a. Some may have only “one” talent
 - b. Some may have “five” talents-- Remember, the Lord gives “*to each one according to his own ability*”
2. The **nature** of the talents may be different
 - a. Paul made this clear in **Ro 12:3-8**
 - b. Some teach, others serve; some may do more than one-- But everyone has “*gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us*”

B. SOME “TALENTS” ARE EASIER TO DETERMINE THAN OTHERS..

1. In some cases our abilities are evident
 - a. E.g., inherited or gained wealth
 - b. E.g., positions of influence
2. But some abilities might at first be “hidden”
 - a. For example, teaching and preaching
 - b. E.g., I would have never thought that I had the ability to teach or preach, in view of my childhood speech impediment-- **Some talents may therefore lie dormant, awaiting awakening**

C. DETERMINING ONE’S TALENTS...

1. Through trial and error
 - a. Try different areas of service, to see which ones might come naturally
 - b. Try them again and again, for some talents may only develop through hard work
2. Through seeking counsel from others
 - a. Others can often see our strengths and weaknesses better than we ourselves
 - b. Solomon praised the value of receiving counsel - **Pr 11:14; 12:15; 15:22; 19:20**-- **Through such personal diligence and advice from others, one can gain insight into the abilities and opportunities that the Lord has given him or her**

CONCLUSION

1. If we are in the kingdom, the Lord has given us all some ability in which to serve Him
 - a. One day, He is coming again and there will be a reckoning
 - b. If we are going to be “prepared”, we need to be “productive”
2. Are you productive? Or are you like the “wicked and lazy servant”?
 - a. Will the Lord say to you: “*Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your lord.*”?
 - b. Or will he say: “*You wicked and lazy servant*”, and consign you to the place of torment?

What He will say **then** depends upon your service in the kingdom **now**...

The Parables Of Jesus

The Growing Seed (Mk 4:26-29)

INTRODUCTION

1. Up to this point our study has focused on parables found in Matthew's gospel...
 - a. Many were found only in Matthew, though some are also found in the other gospels
 - b. We skipped a couple of parables found in Matthew that we will examine later in one of the other gospels

2. In this lesson, however, we shall examine a parable that is found only in the gospel of Mark
 - a. It is called **"The Growing Seed"**
 - b. And it is recorded in **Mk 4:26-29** (Read)

3. The setting of this parable appears to be the same occasion in which Jesus told...
 - a. The parable of **"The Sower"** - cf. **Mk 4:1-20**
 - b. The parable of **"The Mustard Seed"** - cf. **Mk 4:30-32**
 ...therefore it was at the point in Jesus' ministry when He began to teach publicly in parables

[Let's begin by taking a closer look the parable itself...]

I. THE PARABLE ANALYZED

A. WHAT THIS PARABLE REVEALS ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD...

1. It describes how the Word of God produces fruit (i.e., how the kingdom grows)
 - a. While the "seed" is not identified in this parable as the Word of God...
 - b. ...it was defined as such in the parable of **"The Sower"** - cf. **Mk 4:14; Lk 8:11**
2. The growth produced by the Word...
 - a. Is a mystery - **Mk 4:26-28a**
 - 1) The sower can sow the seed and see it sprout and grow
 - 2) But the growth is beyond his comprehension, and even grows by itself
 - b. Is gradual - **Mk 4:28b**
 - 1) It doesn't all occur at once
 - 2) But step by step: first the blade, then the head, then the full grain
3. But through such growth the harvest eventually comes - **Mk 4:29**
 - So the kingdom of God, growing by virtue of the Word of God being planted, is similar to the amazing growth observed in the sowing of grain

B. COMPARING THIS PARABLE WITH THE ONE OF "THE SOWER"...

1. The parable of **"The Sower"** emphasizes human responsibility
 - a. The seed did not produce the desired fruit unless it fell on good soil
 - b. It takes "a good and noble heart" for the seed to produce fruit! - cf. **Lk 8:15**
2. But the parable of **"The Growing Seed"** stresses the divine power within the Word
 - a. A "good and noble heart" cannot bear fruit by itself!

- b. It takes a seed that has within itself the power to germinate and grow in good soil
- 3. And this parable emphasizes the need for those who sow to trust and hope in the power of the seed, i.e., the Word of God

[Yes, the Word is the “seed” which contains the power for spiritual life and growth when planted in the soil of a good and noble heart! We may not be able to understand the true working of that power, but this parable illustrates how we can still use it!

That we might utilize this powerful seed more often and more successfully, consider a few more thoughts as we talk about...]

II. THE PARABLE APPLIED

A. THE WORD OF GOD IS A POWERFUL “SEED”...

- 1. It can cause us to be “born again” - **1 Pe 1:22-25; Ja 1:18**
- 2. It can help us to “grow” - **1 Pe 2:1-2**
- 3. It can indeed “save your souls” - **Ja 1:21**
- All of this is possible because the Word of God is living and powerful, filled with Spirit-giving life - cf. **He 4:12; Jn 6:63**

B. THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO UTILIZE THIS POWERFUL “SEED”...

- 1. **By receiving it into our own hearts**
 - a. Here we are talking about the growth of the kingdom of God in our lives
 - b. Of course, we must receive it properly
 - 1) With a good and noble heart - **Lk 8:15; cf. Ac 17:11**
 - 2) With meekness - **Ja 1:21**
 - 3) As babies longing for their mothers’ milk - **1 Pe 2:2**
 - All the while “laying aside” those things that would “choke” out the Word in our lives - cf. **Ja 1:21; 1 Pe 2:1**
 - c. When so received, growth will occur
 - 1) But remember the parable, for the growth is gradual
 - 2) “first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head...” - **Mk 4:28**
 - Therefore the need to continue to feed upon the Word of God, “that you may grow thereby” - **1 Pe 2:2**
- 2. **By sowing it as far and wide as we possibly can**
 - a. Here we are talking about the growth of the kingdom of God in the world
 - b. Like the sower in the parable of “**The Sower**”, we must sow the seed everywhere
 - c. But like the sower in the parable of “**The Growing Seed**”, we must remember...
 - 1) Growth comes only through the divine power of the seed
 - a) It is God who gives the increase
 - b) We are simply “seed-throwers” and “water-boys” - cf. **1 Co 3:5-7**
 - 2) Growth comes in stages, not all at once
 - a) There will be days when all we seem to be doing is “sowing”
 - b) There will be days when all we seem to be doing is “waiting”
 - Like the farmer, then, we must be patient - cf. **Ja 5:7**

CONCLUSION

1. The general lesson in the parable of “**The Growing Seed**” is this:
 - a. In the kingdom of God, as in the kingdom of nature, we are laborers together with God
 - b. The results of our work depend on Him, and for the perfection of these results He takes His own time

2. This being the case...
 - a. It is our duty to sow the seed (the Word of God), it is up to God to give the increase - cf. **1 Co 3:6-9**
 - b. Having sown the seed, we must wait for time and God to perfect the growth - cf. **Ph 1:6**
 - c. The growth that comes will do so in gradual stages
 - d. Not until there has been time for development are we to expect to reap

3. Therefore this parable teaches us to trust and hope in power of the Word of God
 - a. Do we trust in its power to save the lost?
 - 1) Or do we look to gimmicks designed by men?
 - 2) The gospel is God’s power to save! - cf. **Ro 1:16-17**
 - b. Do we trust in its power to save your own soul?
 - 1) Or do we look to self-help methods that promise but really can’t deliver?
 - 2) The Word of God is what is capable of saving our souls! - cf. **Ja 1:21**

Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom, brother? Both in the world, and in your own life as well...?

The Parables Of Jesus

The Two Debtors (Lk 7:41-43)

INTRODUCTION

1. Do you appreciate what Jesus has done for you? Does your service and devotion to Jesus demonstrate the true extent of your appreciation?
 - a. If you are slack in your service, what does that indicate?
 - b. If you wish you could be more diligent in your service, what would help to motivate you?
2. Answers to these questions are found in a parable and its setting that Jesus told on an occasion where He was invited to eat at the house of a Pharisee - **Lk 7:36-50**

[As we continue our series on “The Parables Of Jesus”, let’s examine the setting and parable itself that has become to be known as the parable of “**The Two Debtors**”...]

I. THE PARABLE AND ITS SETTING

A. THE SETTING...

1. Jesus accepts an invitation to eat at a Pharisee’s house - **Lk 7:36**
2. A woman “who was a sinner” (perhaps a prostitute) comes in...
 - a. She brings an alabaster flask of fragrant oil - **Lk 7:37**
 - b. She first stands behind Jesus, weeping - **Lk 7:38a**
 - c. She then washes His feet with her tears, and wipes them with her hair - **Lk 7:38b**
 - d. Finally, she kisses His feet and anoints them with the fragrant oil - **Lk 7:38c**
3. The host wonders whether Jesus could truly be a prophet, for if so He would know what kind of woman she was - **Lk 7:39**
4. Knowing what is in the Pharisee’s heart, Jesus offers to say something - **Lk 7:40**

B. THE PARABLE ITSELF...

1. A creditor had two debtors - **Lk 7:41**
 - a. One owed five hundred denarii
 - b. The other owed fifty denarii (a denarius was equivalent to a day’s wage)
2. The debtors could not repay, yet the creditor forgave them both - **Lk 7:42a**

C. JESUS FOLLOWS UP WITH A QUESTION AND APPLICATION...

1. He challenges Simon (the Pharisee) with a question - **Lk 7:42b-43**
 - a. “*Which of them* (the debtors) *will love him* (the creditor) *more?*”
 - b. Simon’s response: “*I suppose the one whom he forgave more*”
 - 1) Does “*I suppose*” suggest a reluctance to respond on Simon’s part?
 - 2) Could it be he has already begun to see the point of the parable?
 - c. Jesus replies that Simon has properly judged the correct answer
2. Jesus then makes the contrast between Simon and the woman - **Lk 7:44-46**
 - a. Simon gave Him no water for His feet, but she washed them with her tears and dried

- them with her hair
- b. Simon gave Him no kiss, but she has not ceased to kiss His feet
 - c. Simon did not anoint His head with oil, but she anointed His feet with fragrant oil
 - All of these things Simon should have done as a normal host, but he did not do it for the most important Guest at all!
3. Jesus drives the point home - **Lk 7:47**
- a. The first part of this verse is difficult: **“...her sins which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.”**
 - 1) Is Jesus saying that her love is the “cause” of her forgiveness, or the “proof”?
 - a) Is she forgiven because she loved much? (that’s what it sounds like)
 - b) Or is her much love the evidence of the forgiveness of her many sins?
 - 2) Jesus does say that her “faith” saved her - **Lk 7:50**
 - a) That is, her faith was the cause for her being forgiven
 - b) And her love may have been a reflection of her faith (cf. **“faith working through love” - Ga 5:6**)
 - b. But the latter part of the verse, and the implication of the parable itself suggests that her love is the result or proof of her forgiveness
 - 1) **“But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little”**
 - a) Just as one who receives little forgiveness, loves little...
 - b) ...so one who receives much forgiveness, loves much!
 - 2) **“Her love was the result, and not the cause, of her forgiveness. Our sins are not forgiven because we love God, but we love God because they are forgiven (1 Jn 4:19). Such is the inference of the parable, and such the teaching of the entire NT.”** (McGarvey’s Fourfold Gospel)
 - 3) **“For she loved much (hoti êgapêsen polu). Illustration or proof, not reason for the forgiveness. Her sins had been already forgiven and remained forgiven. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little (Hôï de oligon aphietai oligon agapâi). This explanation proves that the meaning of hoti preceding is proof, not cause.”** (Robertson’s Word Pictures)
4. If the woman’s love is simply the evidence her forgiveness, as the parable suggests, then Jesus’ next words were designed to further reassure her - **Lk 7:48-50**
- a. **“Your sins are forgiven.”**
 - b. **“Your faith has saved you. Go in peace”**
 - Both statements simply confirm that her great display of love was properly placed, for she had indeed been saved by her faith

[While Jesus’ words in **Lk 7:47** are indeed challenging, the parable and its setting teaches a simple truth: **those who have been forgiven of much are more likely to appreciate their salvation than those forgiven of little!** Let’s expound upon this point as we seek to apply the parable to ourselves...]

II. APPLYING THE PARABLE

A. THIS PARABLE CAN PROVIDE GREAT COMFORT TO SINNERS...

1. Many people who come to Jesus have really made a mess of their lives
2. They know it, and the sense of their guilt is acute

- a. But this parable reminds us the Lord is willing to forgive no matter the debt!
 - b. And the woman reminds us that as one's sense of guilt is acute, so their love will be greater!
 - c. With a greater love, there will be the motivation for greater service!
3. Just as with the apostle Paul, who did not consider himself worthy to be called an apostle - cf. **1 Co 15:9-10**
- So rather than wallow in your guilt of the past, allow the great forgiveness Jesus offers to motivate you to love and serve Him even more!

B. THIS PARABLE REVEALS HOW WE CAN INCREASE OUR LOVE AND DEVOTION TO JESUS...

1. Remember, the more cognizant we are of the forgiveness we have in Christ, the more we will love and serve Him
2. There are at least two ways one can have an heightened sense of forgiveness
 - a. One way is to have been forgiven of much, as in the case of this woman
 - b. But another way is learn more about the nature of sin...
 - 1) I.e., how just one sin makes us guilty of all - cf. **Ja 2:10**
 - 2) I.e., how the wages of sin is spiritual death, separation from God - **Ro 6:23; Isa 59:1-2**
3. We cannot change the degree of our sinfulness prior to coming to Christ...
 - a. But we can always increase the level of our understanding about sin!
 - b. I.e., the more we learn about the terrible nature of sin...
 - 1) The more we appreciate the forgiveness we have in Christ!
 - 2) The more motivated we are by love to serve Him - cf. **2 Co 5:14-15**

CONCLUSION

1. What is our devotion and service to Jesus like?
 - a. Do we treat Him like Simon did?
 - b. I.e., we invite Him into our lives, but really don't give Him the honor He deserves?
2. Could it be that we are more like the Pharisee than we care to admit?
 - a. Failing to give Jesus the proper devotion due Him?
 - b. Looking down in self-righteousness at people who we think are not worthy of Him?
3. If you find yourself with an attitude like Simon's, instead of one like the woman...
 - a. Remember that those forgiven most are capable of loving Jesus more!
 - b. And that perhaps you need to reflect more on your true spiritual condition!

For it was to the sinful woman, and not to self-righteous Simon, that Jesus said:

“Your sins are forgiven.”
“Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

The Parables Of Jesus

The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37)

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the more well-known parables that of **“The Good Samaritan”** - cf. **Lk 10:30-37**
 - a. Hospitals have been named after the person in this story (e.g., Good Samaritan Hospital)
 - b. “Good Samaritan” laws have been passed to encourage passersby to help those in need

2. It has been common to apply **allegorical interpretations** to this parable; for example...
 - a. The traveler represents man, who has left the heavenly city (Jerusalem) for the worldly one (Jericho)
 - b. The robbers are representative of the devil and sin, who leave man dying in sin
 - c. The priest and the Levite refer to the Law and its sacrifices, which are unable to help
 - d. But the good Samaritan is Jesus, who provides the help needed
 - e. The wine represents the blood of Christ; the oil, the anointing of the Holy Spirit
 - f. The inn is the church, the innkeeper representative of the apostles; the two coins representing baptism and the Lord’s Supper

3. As interesting as such interpretations may be...
 - a. Is it really what Jesus is teaching in this parable?
 - b. Or does Jesus have some other lesson that He wants us to glean from it?

[In this study we shall review the setting of the parable, and then offer some lessons that I believe are more in keeping with Jesus’ original purpose in telling it...]

I. THE PARABLE AND ITS SETTING

A. THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN JESUS AND A LAWYER...

1. A lawyer stands up to **“test”** Jesus - **Lk 10:25**
 - a. A **“lawyer”** in this context would be one well-versed in the Law of Moses
 - b. The word **“test”** doesn’t have to imply negative connotations; it may simply mean the man was seeking to ascertain Jesus’ faithfulness to the Law
 - c. But there are some implications that he was seeking to trick Jesus...
 - 1) He **“stood”** up, perhaps to draw attention to himself
 - 2) Later, he sought to **“justify”** himself with another question; implying he was interested in more than just a simple answer to his question
 - d. His question was similar to that asked by the rich young ruler (**Lk 18:18**): **“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”**
2. Jesus answers the question by pointing him back to the Law - **Lk 10:26**
 - a. In so doing, Jesus shows His own confidence in the Law
 - c. In a similar manner Jesus pointed the rich young ruler to the Law - **Lk 18:20**
 - b. Keep in mind that at this time the Law was still in force, so the answer was still to be found in it - cf. **Mt 5:17-19**

3. The lawyer replies with a proper understanding of what the Law taught concerning eternal life - **Lk 10:27-28**
 - a. He quotes from **Deu 6:5** and **Lev 19:18**
 - b. Both which Jesus quoted to another lawyer on a later occasion - cf. **Mt 22:34-40**
 - c. Upon these two laws, one to love God, the other to love your neighbor...
 - 1) The entire Law was based
 - 2) Those living while the Law was still in force could “live” (i.e., be saved)
4. But the lawyer is not finished... - **Lk 10:29**
 - a. He desires to “justify” himself (was he embarrassed Jesus answered him so easily?)
 - b. He asks the question which precipitates the parable: **“And who is my neighbor?”**

B. THE PARABLE ITSELF...

1. A man travels from Jerusalem to Jericho, and is beaten - **Lk 10:30**
 - a. A distance of about 20 miles
 - b. A dangerous road, known as **“The Way of Blood”** because of the robbers
 - c. Stripped of his clothing and wounded by thieves, he is left half dead
2. Two pass by, doing nothing - **Lk 10:31-32**
 - a. The first was a priest, the second was a Levite
 - b. Both of these were of the religious elite in Israel at that time
3. A Samaritan comes by and shows compassion - **Lk 10:33-35**
 - a. Samaritans were despised by the Jews - cf. **Jn 4:9**
 - b. They were the descendants of those imported at the time of the Assyrian captivity (cf. **2 Kin 17:24-41**)
 - c. Yet this Samaritan who would have been despised by the Jews shows compassion
 - 1) He bandages the wounds, applying oil and wine (first aid in those days)
 - 2) He puts the wounded man on his own animal and takes him to an inn
 - 3) He gives the innkeeper two denarii (two days’ wages) to provide care
 - 4) He tells the innkeeper to spend whatever it takes, and he will repay him when he comes again

C. JESUS’ FOLLOW-UP TO THE PARABLE...

1. He poses the question: Which of the three proved to be a neighbor? - **Lk 10:36**
2. The lawyer replies with the obvious answer: **“He who showed mercy on him.”**
3. Jesus then admonishes the lawyer to do likewise
4. Notice that Jesus turned the focus of the original question...
 - a. From **“Who is my neighbor?”** to **“Who was the one that was neighbor to the one in need?”**
 - b. This indicates that Jesus sought to draw attention to what it means to **“Love your neighbor as yourself”**

[The purpose of the parable, in view of the context and the manner in which Jesus applied it, is clear: **Jesus teaches who our neighbors really are, and what it means to love your neighbor as yourself.**

Here are some lessons that can be gleaned from the parable when its purpose is kept in mind...]

II. LESSONS FROM THE PARABLE

A. A NEIGHBOR IS ONE IN NEED WHOM WE CAN HELP...

1. One might think that a neighbor is one with whom we share affinities
 - a. Such as being of the same race, nationality, or religion
 - b. I.e., anyone who is not considered your enemy
 2. Yet Jesus put such a concept to rest by using the Samaritan as an example
 - a. The Samaritans were different in race, nationality and religion from the Jews
 - b. There was animosity between them - cf. **Jn 4:9; Lk 9:52-53**
 - c. Though considered enemies, the Samaritan was helping a Jew in need
 3. And so it is that Christians are to show **“hospitality”** (lit., ‘love of strangers’) - cf. **Ro 12:13; Mt 5:43-48; Ga 6:10**
- **Your neighbor, then, is anyone in need whom you have the ability to help!**

B. THE INCONGRUITY OF DIVORCING NEIGHBORLINESS FROM RELIGION...

1. Of the three passersby in the parable, the first two should have been the first to help
 - a. The priest and the Levite should have been influenced by their religion to help
 - b. Indeed they were taught to love the stranger - **Lev 19:33-34; Deu 10:17-19**
 2. When they separated neighborliness from their religion, they became hypocritical
 - a. For the priest would teach the Law, and the Levite would assist in the service
 - b. But failing to **“practice what they preach”** showed how shallow their devotion to their faith really was
 3. As Christians, we need to be sure to practice **“pure and undefiled religion”**, otherwise we deceive ourselves - cf. **Ja 1:22,26-27**
- **What kind of religion do we have?**

C. THE COST OF COMPASSION...

1. A willingness to cross social barriers
 - a. As Jesus illustrated in using a Samaritan in this parable
 - b. There should be no religious, racial, or national barriers to showing compassion!
2. A willingness to take risks
 - a. The Samaritan took a great risk by stopping to help
 - 1) What if the robbers were still near by?
 - 2) What if other thieves came by on this road known as “The Way Of Blood”?
 - b. So Christians are called upon to take risks - cf. **Lk 6:30**
 - 1) How do we know people won’t take advantage of our generosity?
 - 2) Perhaps this is an area where we need to have faith in God
3. A willingness to set aside busy schedules
 - a. The Samaritan was on a journey, but took the time to stop and care for the man
 - b. Jesus taught us to take the time to show compassion even when forced - **Mt 5:41**
 - 1) The first mile may have been forced
 - 2) But the second mile was one to be given out of love
4. A willingness to make sacrifices
 - a. The Samaritan sacrificed more than just time and energy
 - 1) He used some of his own provisions - **Lk 10:34**
 - 2) He even offered an open-ended agreement to provide for his help - **Lk 10:35**

- b. Jesus taught His disciples to be willing to make sacrifices - **Lk 6:29-30,34-35**
- c. In so doing, we are truly followers of God and walking in love - **Ep 5:1-2**

CONCLUSION

1. With the parable of “**The Good Samaritan**”, we are challenged to a higher standard of love
 - a. Higher in that the definition of **neighbor** is more inclusive
 - b. Higher in that the definition of **compassion** is greater
2. This should not be surprising in light of what Jesus told His disciples earlier:

“For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Mat 5:20)

3. What is your righteousness like? That of the priest and Levite, or of the Samaritan?
 - a. Only as we “*go and do likewise*” (**Lk 10:37**), emulating the example of the good Samaritan, can it be said that our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees!
 - b. Only then do we have the assurance of entering the kingdom of heaven!

Of course, without the salvation that Jesus makes possible, no degree of righteousness is possible... - cf. **Ac 2:36-38; 22:16**

The Parables Of Jesus

The Friend At Midnight (Lk 11:1-13)

INTRODUCTION

1. In studying the parables of Jesus, we have seen how He used the parabolic method of teaching on different subjects...
 - a. Mostly on the theme of the kingdom of heaven
 - b. But also in response to questions by His disciples and even His enemies
2. One such parable was told in response to a question related to prayer...
 - a. Jesus had been praying in a certain place - **Lk 11:1**
 - b. When He ceased praying, one of His disciples asked: *“Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples”*
3. In answering that request, Jesus did three things...
 - a. He first told them “how” and “what” to pray for
 - b. He then told a parable to stress a crucial element in “how” to pray
 - c. He followed up by elaborating on what the parable was designed to illustrate
4. The parable is known as **“The Friend At Midnight”**
 - a. It is recorded in **Lk 11:5-8**
 - b. In it we find Jesus illustrating the importance of **persistence in prayer**

[Let’s begin our study by noticing that...]

I. JESUS’ PRAYING PROMPTS A REQUEST

A. HE HAD BEEN PRAYING IN A CERTAIN PLACE - Lk 11:1a

1. In the gospels we see glimpses into the prayer habits of Jesus
 - a. Rising early to pray in a solitary place - **Mk 1:35**
 - b. Often withdrawing into the wilderness to pray - **Lk 5:16**
 - c. Praying all night in preparation to selecting His apostles - **Lk 6:12-13**
 - d. His beautiful prayer recorded in **Jn 17**
 - e. His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane - **Mt 26:36-44**
 - f. His prayers on the cross - **Mt 27:46; Lk 23:34,46**
2. Undoubtedly His example had an impact on those who saw Him praying

B. A DISCIPLE WANTS JESUS TO TEACH THEM TO PRAY - Lk 11:1b

1. Even as John had taught his disciples
2. Certainly this Jewish disciple knew how to pray in some sense, but understood that Jesus had so much more to teach him

[So it is we may know how to pray, but we can always learn more from the Master of prayer...]

II. JESUS ANSWERS BY TEACHING A MODEL PRAYER

A. COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS “THE LORD’S PRAYER”...

1. Recorded here in **Lk 11:2-4**
2. Also in His sermon on the mount - **Mt 6:9-13**

B. THIS PRAYER SERVES AS AN EXAMPLE...

1. The words “in this manner” (**Mt 6:9**) suggest that “The Lord’s Prayer” is a **pattern** and not a liturgy that must be recited every time we pray
2. Here we begin to learn the “how” and “what” of prayer
 - a. “How” to pray would include “simplicity” in prayer
 - 1) The word “therefore” in **Mt 6:9** connects what follows with what was said before - cf. **Mt 6:7-8**
 - 2) Jesus’ pattern for prayer is an “illustration” in contrast to the “many words” used by the heathen
 - 3) In the prayer itself, note the brevity of words - **Lk 11:2-4**
 - b. We learn the “what” of prayer should include such things as:
 - 1) Reverence for God and His “Name” (i.e., His Being and Character) - **Lk 11:2**
 - 2) Praying for the progress of God’s Kingdom and Will on the earth - **Lk 11:2**
 - 3) Asking for physical necessities - **Lk 11:3**
 - 4) Also, our spiritual needs...
 - a) Forgiveness of sins as we forgive others- **Lk 11:4**
 - b) Protection and deliverance from evil - **Lk 11:4**

[In His sermon on the mount, Jesus chose to follow His pattern prayer with an emphasis on forgiving others (**Mt 6:14-15**). But on this occasion, He has a different concern in mind. So He follows with a parable...]

III. THE PARABLE OF THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT

A. THE PARABLE SUMMARIZED...

1. You find yourself with company and inadequate provisions
2. Yet you know that you can go to your friend’s house and borrow some food
3. Even if it late at night, and...
 - a. He and his family are already in bed
 - b. He would normally not help you, even though you are a friend
...yet you know that if you “persist”, he will help you! - **Lk 11:5-8**

B. THE POINT OF THE PARABLE IS SIMPLE, BUT IMPORTANT...

1. Jesus is illustrating the importance of “**persistence in praying**”
2. One does not know “how” to pray, then, unless they learn to be persistent in prayer!

[The importance of persistence is stressed even further as we consider...]

IV. JESUS’ APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSISTENCE - Lk 11:9-10

1. It is those who ask, seek, and knock, who will receive, find, and have doors opened
2. The element of persistence is implied even in...
 - a. The present tense of the verbs for “ask”, “seek”, and “knock” (literally, “keep on asking”, “keep on seeking”, and “keep on knocking”)
 - b. The progressive relation between the words:
 - 1) One normally starts out by “asking”
 - 2) As they learn more, they begin “seeking”
 - 3) As they arrive close to their destination, they start “knocking”
3. Failure to persist in prayer, then, may be one reason some prayers go unanswered!

B. REMEMBERING WHO IT IS YOU ARE ASKING - Lk 11:11-13

1. To encourage persistence in prayer, Jesus speaks of earthly fathers and their sons
 - a. If a son asks his father for bread, while he give him a stone?
 - b. If he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead?
 - c. If he asks for an egg, will the father offer him a scorpion?
-- Each of these rhetorical questions imply a definite “No!”
2. Then how much more will our heavenly Father gives us that which is good?
 - a. If earthly fathers, though evil, know how to give good gifts to their children
 - b. How much more will our heavenly Father give the Spirit to those who ask Him?
 - c. This reference to the Holy Spirit may relate to promise of the Spirit
 - 1) A promise made by Jesus on another occasion - **Jn 7:37-39**
 - 2) A promise offered by Peter on the day of Pentecost - **Ac 2:38-39**
3. Jesus’ point seems to be this:
 - a. If persistence with a friend will prove fruitful (cf. the parable)...
 - b. If earthly fathers know how to give good gifts to their children...
...how much more will persistence prove fruitful with our heavenly Father!

CONCLUSION

1. We may know “how” to pray when it comes to saying the right things, but from this parable we learn that we do not know “how” to pray until we have learned to pray with “persistence”
2. So important is this quality of prayer that Jesus taught another parable on the very same theme! (cf. **“The Parable Of The Persistent Widow” - Lk 18:1-8**)
3. But for now, let’s remember what we have learned from Jesus at “the school of prayer”...
 - a. That we have a heavenly Father who knows how to give good gifts to His children
 - b. That this should motivate us to ask, and to ask persistently!

Have you received the gift spoken of in our text? The Father gives His Spirit to those who obey Him in faith, repentance and baptism... - cf. **Jn 7:37-39; Ac 2:38; 5:32**

The Parables Of Jesus

The Rich Fool (Lk 12:13-21)

INTRODUCTION

1. It is amazing sometimes how spiritually dense, and worldly minded, people can be...
 - a. I've known some to habitually fall asleep, not during a long sermon, but at the beginning!
 - b. On one occasion, I was sharing the gospel of Christ with a person...
 - 1) After presenting the gospel message and reviewing examples of conversion in the NT, I asked if he had any questions
 - 2) He only had one: "In that passage where the Spirit caught Philip away (**Ac 8:39**), do you think that could have actually been a UFO?"
2. A similar thing happened to Jesus on one occasion...
 - a. He was teaching on the importance of fearing God, and confessing Him before others
 - b. When someone from the crowd interrupts with a request for Jesus to resolve a family dispute over an inheritance!
 - This prompted not only a terse response from Jesus, but a warning and parable to the crowd about the dangers of covetousness and placing one's confidence in earthly riches

[The parable, known as "**The Rich Fool**", is recorded in **Lk 12:13-21**. In our materialistic society, what Jesus has to say is especially relevant today. Let's start by taking a closer look at...]

I. JESUS' RESPONSE TO AN UNTIMELY REQUEST

A. JESUS HAD BEEN TEACHING A LARGE MULTITUDE...

1. Warning them about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees - **Lk 12:1-3**
2. Teaching them about the fear of God - **Lk 12:4-7**
3. Instructing them on the need to confess Him before men - **Lk 12:8-12**

B. WHEN ONE FROM THE CROWD MAKES A REQUEST...

1. He wants Jesus to resolve a family dispute over an inheritance - **Lk 12:13**
2. The question reveals where the man's attention has been...
 - a. Not on the spiritual truths being taught by the Son of God
 - b. But on how he can get his share of the inheritance from his brother!
 - This is as incongruous as thinking about a football game during a sermon!

C. JESUS' RESPONSE...

1. The Lord's displeasure is evident - **Lk 13:14**
 - a. By His use of the term "Man" - "**The very form of addressing him puts him at a distance. 'Man' is about as frigid as can be.**" (MacLaren)
 - b. By refusing to become an arbitrator in this matter
2. The Lord knows the true nature of this man's problem - **Lk 13:15a**
 - a. It is covetousness, or greed, the constant desire for more

- b. It is problem that all need to heed, so He warns not just the one man, but the entire crowd (cf. *“them”*)
- 3. The Lord’s warning is grounded upon an important truth - **Lk 13:15b**
 - a. *“...for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”*
 - b. From what follows, “life” includes both physical and spiritual well-being
 - 1) For material abundance did not prolong the rich man’s physical life
 - 2) And it certainly did not ensure that one would be rich toward God!

[To illustrate the need to heed this warning, Jesus proceeds to tell...]

II. THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

A. THE PARABLE SUMMARIZED...

- 1. A rich man is richly blessed with large crops - **Lk 12:16**
- 2. As he considers his situation, he makes plans for the future
 - a. To build greater barns to store his crops - **Lk 12:17-18**
 - b. To retire and enjoy the fruits of his labors for many years - **Lk 12:19**
- 3. Yet God tells him he is a fool! - **Lk 12:20**
 - a. Because that very night he is to die, and his soul will be required of him
 - b. And the things he had provided, whose will they be?

B. THE PARABLE ANALYZED...

- 1. The man assumes that his life consists in the abundance of things he possesses
 - a. The crops are his
 - b. They will provide for his soul for many years to come
- 2. The foolishness and selfishness of the rich man is seen in that...
 - a. He does not know himself
 - 1) He fails to realize that his “body” is mortal, and will not necessarily live on for many years
 - 2) He does not consider that his riches really can’t satisfy his “soul”!
 - b. He does not consider the needs of others
 - 1) The needs of the poor are not even taken into consideration
 - 2) He thinks only of self (note the “I’s” and “my’s”)
 - c. Nor does he thank and glorify God
 - 1) For all practical purposes, he is an atheist
 - 2) One who truly believes in God would respond like the Psalmist in **Ps 116:12**

C. THE PARABLE APPLIED...

- 1. Jesus makes the application in **Lk 12:21**
- 2. Those who lay up treasure for themselves, and are not rich toward God, are like this rich fool!
- 3. If your plans for the future focus on self, and not on God and others, you are no different than the rich fool
- This ought to encourage serious reflection in those planning their retirement!

[Not that it is wrong to plan for the future, but we need to keep in mind the brevity of life, and the will of the Lord (cf. **Ja 4:13-16**).

How can we be sure that we who may be rich in this life are also rich toward God?]

III. BEING RICH TOWARD GOD

A. BEING IN CHRIST IS CERTAINLY REQUIRED...

1. For all spiritual blessings come through Him - **Ep 1:3**
2. The exceeding riches of God's grace will be shown only through Christ - **Ep 2:4-7**

B. BUT PROPER USE OF MATERIAL RICHES CAN HELP...

1. Notice the words of Jesus, spoken soon after this parable - **Lk 12:33-34**
 - a. He tells them to sell what they have and give alms
 - b. To provide a treasure in heaven that does not fail
 2. Helping the poor is often connected with "*laying up treasure in heaven*"
 - a. As Jesus counseled the rich young ruler - **Mt 19:21**
 - b. As Paul told Timothy to command those rich in this present age - **1 Ti 6:17-19**
 3. Not that one can "buy their way into heaven"...
 - a. But to ensure that their heart is in the right place
 - b. "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart will be also.*" - cf. **Mt 6:19-21**
- As we use material wealth to help the less fortunate, we become rich toward God!

C. NOTICE HOW JESUS ENCOURAGED HIS DISCIPLES IN THIS MATTER...

1. He followed the parable with a reminder of God's loving care - **Lk 12:22-30**
2. The key is to make the kingdom (or rule) of God the focus of our life - **Lk 12:31**
3. For then God will do two things:
 - a. Provide "*all these things*" (i.e., things necessary for life and body) - **Lk 12:31**
 - b. Give you "*the kingdom*" (i.e., things necessary for the soul) - **Lk 12:32**
4. So they are exhorted to give alms and provide for treasure in heaven! - **Lk 12:33**

CONCLUSION

1. From the parable of "**The Rich Fool**", we learn that we can:
 - a. Lay up treasure for oneself
 - b. Yet not be rich toward God
2. To do the first without the second ignores the soul, and has no guarantee for the body
3. To focus on being rich toward God saves the soul, while providing for the body!

Where is YOUR treasure? Are you storing up for yourself a good foundation for the time to come? - cf. **1 Ti 6:6-10,17-19**

The Parables Of Jesus

The Barren Fig Tree (Lk 13:6-9)

INTRODUCTION

1. As we were making our way through the parables of Jesus as recorded in Matthew's gospel, we noticed several that were directed toward the nation of Israel in particular...
 - a. **"The Two Sons"**, which speaks to the rejection of John the Baptist - **Mt 21:28-32**
 - b. **"The Wicked Vinedressers"**, which applied to how Israel rejected God's prophets, and eventually His Own Son - **Mt 21:33-46**
 - c. **"The Wedding Feast"**, which provided a more vivid depiction of wickedness and rebelliousness of the religious leaders - **Mt 22:1-14**

-- These three parables were told during the last week of Jesus' ministry, shortly before His crucifixion

2. Earlier, Jesus taught another parable that some believe was along a similar theme...
 - a. That is, related to God's dealings with the nation of Israel as a whole
 - b. And how the nation of Israel would be destroyed if it did not receive Jesus as the Messiah

-- The parable is known as **"The Barren Fig Tree"**, recorded in **Lk 13:6-9**

3. That may be true...
 - a. But the application has as much to do with individual repentance as national repentance
 - b. This should make the parable of particular interest to us today, as we attempt to learn from our Lord what He was teaching about the need to repent

[Let's begin our study by noticing...]

I. THE PARABLE IN ITS ORIGINAL SETTING

A. JESUS WAS RESPONDING TO NEWS ABOUT A CALAMITY - Lk 13:1-5

1. He was told of how Pilate (the Roman governor) had...
 - a. Killed some Galileans (Jews from Galilee, the same region Jesus was from)
 - b. Mingled their blood along with their sacrifices
2. He anticipated the thinking of those who brought Him this news...
 - a. Were those who suffered such atrocities worse sinners than other Galileans?
 - b. No, and unless they repented they would likewise perish!
3. He reinforces His point with a reference to a similar calamity
 - a. In which a tower in Siloam (in Jerusalem) collapsed and killed eighteen people
 - b. Those victims were no worse sinners than others in Jerusalem
4. He then repeats His warning that unless they repent, they will all likewise perish!
 - a. Some understand this to be a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70
 - b. Whether or not, it still called for individual repentance

B. THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE - Lk 13:6-9

1. The basic elements of the parable...
 - a. A man is disappointed that a fig tree in his vineyard is unfruitful
 - b. He wants to cut it down, but is persuaded by the keeper of the vineyard to give it one more year
 - c. If no fruit is borne, then the tree is to be cut down
2. The basic point of the parable...
 - a. The central lessons of **verses 1-5** are clear: **“Repent!”**
 - b. The parable in **verses 6-9** takes the call to repentance one step further: **“Repent NOW!”** (HENDRIKSEN)
 - c. Fruitlessness will not be endured forever!

[Those who heard Jesus would appreciate the point, for what farmer desires to put up with a tree that won't bear fruit? But do we today appreciate the point?

To help make it even clearer, consider what we can glean from this parable as some...]

II. LESSONS FOR US TODAY

A. WHERE GOD HAS EXTENDED PRIVILEGES, HE EXPECTS RETURNS...

1. The owner of the vineyard expected the fig tree to bear fruit
 - a. He had given it good soil
 - b. For three years it had been provided care
 - c. He was giving it an extra year, but only for the purpose of bearing fruit
 2. God blessed Israel, and He was disappointed when it did not bear fruit- cf. **Isa 5:1-7**
 3. So He has blessed us through His Son Jesus, and we are to glorify God by bearing fruit - **Jn 15:8**
- Have you utilized the privileges God has given you...?

B. THE LORD IS LONGSUFFERING, BUT IT DOESN'T LAST FOREVER...

1. We see the longsuffering of the owner of the vineyard
 - a. He had given the fig tree three years to produce fruit
 - b. He was persuaded to give it another year with special care
 - c. But that last year was the final opportunity the tree would be given
2. We see the longsuffering of the Lord in His dealing with nation of Israel
 - a. His longsuffering in the wilderness
 - b. His longsuffering in the times of the judges
 - c. His longsuffering during the reigns of the kings
 - d. And yet, He did take the “kingdom of God” away from them and give it to a nation bearing the fruits of it - cf. **Mt 21:43**
3. So the Lord has been longsuffering to us...
 - a. For He does not want anyone to be lost - **2 Pe 3:9**
 - b. His longsuffering has been for our salvation - **2 Pe 3:15**
 - c. But the longsuffering will one day end, and the “day of the Lord” will come - **2 Pe 3:7,10**

C. THOSE WHO ARE UNFRUITFUL WILL BE CUT OFF...

1. The barren fig tree, if it remained so, was to be cut down
2. So Jesus warned His disciples that such would happen to them if they did not bear fruit ...
 - a. ***“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;”*** - **Jn 15:2a**
 - b. ***“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”*** - **Jn 15:6**
3. Paul warned the Gentile Christians that they would be cut off if they did not remain faithful (which implies fruitfulness) - **Ro 11:19-23**
4. We read of the end of those who were saved, but fell away; despite receiving blessings from God, their end is likened to that of thorns and briars - **He 6:1-8**
 - a. That is, ***“rejected and near to being cursed”***
 - b. ***“...whose end is to be burned.”***

CONCLUSION

1. In light of such warnings, perhaps we can appreciate more...
 - a. The twofold warning given by Jesus: ***“...unless you repent you will all likewise perish”*** - **Lk 13:3,5**
 - b. The basic lesson of the parable of “The Barren Fig Tree”: **Repent NOW!** - **Lk 13:6-9**
 - 1) For the Lord has been longsuffering already
 - 2) And what time you have left may be short!
2. Don't think that people who die tragic deaths are any worse sinners than yourself...
 - a. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God - **Ro 3:23**
 - b. Even just one sin makes one guilty of all - **Ja 2:10**
 - c. And the wages of sin is death (eternal separation from God) - **Ro 6:23**; cf. **Re 21:8**
 - So if we do not repent, our end will be no less tragic than the worst calamity ever to befall mankind!
3. But the good news of the gospel is that God offers us the gift of eternal life! - **Ro 6:23**
 - a. However, remember the warning for those who do not repent - **Ro 2:4-11**
 - b. And, unlike the barren fig tree, you may have less than a year to bear fruit!

The Parables Of Jesus

Taking The Lowest Place (Lk 14:7-11)

INTRODUCTION

1. We have seen that Jesus did not limit His use of parables to instructing only His disciples:
 - a. He often used them in responding to those who challenged Him...
 - 1) Cf. “The Two Sons” - **Mt 21:28-32**
 - 2) Cf. “The Wicked Vinedressers” - **Mt 21:33-46**
 - 3) Cf. “The Wedding Feast” - **Mt 22:1-14**
 - b. He also used them in more casual settings...
 - 1) As a guest in a Pharisee’s home, cf. “The Two Debtors” - **Lk 7:41-43**
 - 2) Replying to a lawyer’s question, cf. “The Good Samaritan” - **Lk 10:25-37**
 - 3) Responding to a request to settle a family dispute, cf. “The Rich Fool” - **Lk 12:13-21**
 - 4) In offering His perspective on a calamity, cf. “The Barren Fig Tree” - **Lk 13:6-9**
2. It was in another casual setting that we find Jesus using a parable to teach an important lesson...
 - a. The parable is found in **Lk 14:7-11**
 - b. It can be called **“Taking The Lowest Place”**, and it illustrates the value of humility

[Let’s being with...]

I. ANALYZING THE PARABLE

A. THE SETTING

1. Jesus had gone to eat at the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on the Sabbath - **Lk 14:1a**
2. They had watched Him closely - **Lk 14:1b**
 - a. Perhaps to see if He would heal the man with dropsy? - cf. **Lk 14:2**
 - b. Jesus posed a question about the lawfulness of healing on the Sabbath - **Lk 14:3**
 - 1) To which they did not respond - **Lk 14:4**
 - 2) To which they could not respond, after Jesus...
 - a) Healed the man - **Lk 14:5**
 - b) Posed another question revealing their inconsistency - **Lk 14:6**
3. Jesus had also been watching them closely - **Lk 14:7**
 - a. He had noted how those invited were selecting the best places to sit
 - 1) It is thought that the seating arrangements at that time may have involved three tables in the shape of an flat-bottomed “U”
 - 2) **“The triclinia, or Grecian table, then in use had three sections which were placed together so as to form a flat-bottomed U. The space enclosed by the table was not occupied. It was left vacant that the servants might enter it and attend to the wants of the guests who reclined around the outer margin of the table.”** (McGarvey)
 - 3) **“The central seat of each of these three sections were deemed a place of**

honor. This struggle for precedence was a small ambition, but many of the ambitions of our day are equally small.” (McGarvey)

- b. This petty positioning around the tables prompted Jesus to teach a lesson using a parable

B. THE PARABLE ITSELF...

1. The setting is a wedding feast, a common social event in those days - **Lk 14:8**
2. Jesus warns against sitting down in the best place - **Lk 14:8b-9**
 - a. Someone more honorable may have been invited
 - b. When they arrive, the host will ask you to move
 - c. With shame you will have to move to the lowest place (likely the only place left!)
3. Instead, He counsels them to sit in the lowest place - **Lk 14:10**
 - a. That way, the host will come along and say **“Friend, go up higher”**
 - b. So instead of shame, brought about trying to sit in the best place, you will receive glory among those who sit at the table with you
4. Jesus then concludes with this maxim: **“For whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”** - **Lk 14:11**
 - a. A **“maxim”**: a fundamental principle, general truth, or rule of conduct
 - b. It was one of our Lord’s favorite
 - 1) Used in the parable of “The Pharisee And The Publican” - cf. **Lk 18:14**
 - 2) Spoken when teaching His disciples not to be like scribes and Pharisees - cf. **Mt 23:6-12**
 - c. It is found in the Old Testament - cf. **Ps 18:27; Pr 18:12; 29:23**
 - d. And repeated in the New Testament - cf. **Ja 4:6; 1 Pe 5:5**

[Remember that this is a parable; Jesus’ purpose is not just to have us focus on the story (in this case, the advice about attending wedding feasts), but the main principle illustrated by the parable.

With that in mind, here are a few thoughts in regards to...]

II. THE PARABLE APPLIED

A. WE LEARN THE DANGER OF PRIDE...

1. The wise man wrote:
 - a. **“Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.”** - **Pr 16:18**
 - b. **“A man’s pride will bring him low, But the humble in spirit will retain honor.”** - **Pr 29:23**
2. The danger of pride is not just in social settings (as per the parable), but in our relationship with God!
 - a. The Lord hates pride - **Pr 8:13**
 - b. It defiles man - **Mk 7:21-23**
 - c. It is of the world, not of the Father - **1 Jn 2:15-17**

B. WE LEARN THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMILITY...

1. The Lord blesses the humble - **Ps 25:9; Pr 3:34**
2. Humility is a mark of wisdom - **Pr 11:2**

3. Humility precedes honor like arrogance goes before destruction - **Pr 18:12; cf. 22:4**

C. THEREFORE, LET US AS DISCIPLES OF CHRIST...

1. Be clothed with humility - **Co 3:12**
2. Be humble before God - **1 Pe 5:6**
3. Be humble in our dealings with our brethren in Christ - **Ph 2:3**
4. Be humble in our dealings with those around us, even those who oppose us - **Ti 3:2; 2 Ti 2:24-25**

CONCLUSION

1. Through such a simple parable, Jesus has taught us a most important truth: the need to be humble in our relations with God and those around us!
2. Humility is not a popular grace in our culture...
 - a. It is considered a sign of weakness by many
 - b. People fear that they will be made a floor mat by others
3. But we must remember that God is watching, and it is He who said:

*For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
“I dwell in the high and holy place,
With him who has a contrite and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isaiah 57:15)*

4. If we desire the Lord to dwell with us, then let us walk humbly before Him, as Micah wrote...

*He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justly, To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)*

May God give us the grace to so walk before Him!

The Parables Of Jesus

The Great Supper (Lk 14:15-24)

INTRODUCTION

1. In our last study, we found Jesus at the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees...
 - a. He had gone there to eat bread on the Sabbath - **Lk 14:1**
 - b. Watched closely by the lawyers and Pharisees who were present, Jesus healed a man with dropsy, and silenced their objections to Him healing on the Sabbath - **Lk 14:2-6**
 - c. Noticing how they were choosing the best places to sit, Jesus taught the parable of **“Taking The Lowest Place”** to teach the importance of humility - **Lk 14:7-11**

2. It was on this same occasion that Jesus taught another parable...
 - a. Known as the parable of **“The Great Supper”**, it is recorded in **Lk 14:15-24**
 - b. One immediately notices similarities between this parable and the parable of **“The Wedding Feast”**, found in **Mt 22:1-14**

3. But these parables are not one and the same...
 - a. The occasion is different
 - 1) The parable of **“The Wedding Feast”** was actually told later in Jesus’ ministry, during His final week, and in the Temple
 - 2) The parable of **“The Great Supper”** was told much earlier, and at the house of the Pharisee
 - b. The application is different
 - 1) The parable of **“The Wedding Feast”** appears directed more to the nation of Israel as a whole, in rejecting the Son of the King - cf. **Mt 22:1-3**
 - 2) The parable of **“The Great Supper”** does not appear to have such a limited focus, thus its application may hit a little closer to home

[Since it “hits closer to home”, we want to be careful to make whatever application of this parable we can. Let’s begin with some preliminary observations...]

I. THE PARABLE ANALYZED

A. THE SETTING...

1. Again, Jesus is eating at the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees, along with a number of lawyers and Pharisees - **Lk 14:1-6**
 - a. He had just told the parable of **“Taking The Lowest Place”** - **Lk 14:7-11**
 - b. He then tells His host that when he has a dinner or a supper, that he ought to invite those who cannot repay him - **Lk 14:12-14**
 - 1) Jesus is not saying that we can “never” have our friends, etc., over
 - 2) His language here is similar to that found in **Jn 6:27**
 - a) Where, taken literally, one might conclude it is wrong to work for a living
 - b) But the **“do not this...but do this”** is a grammatical way to stress what should

- be emphasized
 - c) In this case, spiritual food is more important than physical food
 - d) Another example of this type of language is found in **1 Pe 3:3-4**
 - 3) So He is stressing hospitality towards those who cannot repay us in this life
 - 2. Jesus' comments prompt a response from one who heard Him - **Lk 14:15**
 - a. ***"Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"***
 - b. This saying was likely precipitated by Jesus' reference to the being repaid at the resurrection of the just - cf. **Lk 14:14**
 - c. ***"The language of Christ implied that God himself would feast those who feasted the poor, and this implication accorded with the Jewish notion that the kingdom of God would be ushered in with a great festival. Inspired by this thought, and feeling confident that he should have been part of the festivities, this guest exclaimed upon the anticipated blessedness."*** (McGarvey)
 - d. That the speaker would refer to eschatological blessings in the symbolism of a heavenly banquet was not out of place - cf. **Mt 8:11-12; Re 19:9**
 - It is this comment by the other guest that prompts Jesus to tell another parable

B. THE PARABLE ITSELF...

1. A certain man gives a great supper and extends his invitation - **Lk 14:16-17**
2. However, those invited began to make excuses...
 - a. One had bought a piece of ground, and said he must go see it - **Lk 14:18**
 - b. Another had bought five yoke of oxen, and wanted to test them - **Lk 14:19**
 - c. A third said he had married, and could not come - **Lk 14:20**
3. The master, being angry, sends his servant to go out and invite others...
 - a. At first, the poor, maimed, lame and blind (i.e., social outcasts) - **Lk 14:21**
 - b. But there is still room, so the servant is sent out again, to compel those among the highways and hedges to come - **Lk 14:22-23**
4. But those invited who made excuses would not taste of his supper - **Lk 14:24**

[Jesus does not explain the meaning of this parable, so we are left on our own. Here are some thoughts in regards to...

II. THE PARABLE APPLIED

A. GOD HAS MADE WONDERFUL PROVISIONS FOR THE FUTURE...

1. The great supper likely symbolizes the time after the resurrection - cf. **Lk 14:14-15**
2. As indicated above, the blessings of the kingdom of heaven in its eternal state are often depicted in the figure of great feast - cf. **Mt 8:11-12; Re 19:9**
3. Paul writes of the wonderful blessings yet to come - cf. **Ep 2:7**
4. John writes of the vision he saw relating to these blessings - **Re 21:1-7, 9-12; 22:1-5**
- Whatever these symbols represent, who would not want to experience it?

B. NOT ALL INVITED WILL EXPERIENCE THESE BLESSINGS...

1. God has graciously extended the invitation of salvation, along with its future blessings, to many
 - a. To the Jew first, and also to the Greek (i.e., the Gentiles) - cf. **Ro 1:16**

- b. God certainly desires all to be saved, not wanting any to perish - **1 Ti 2:3-6; Ti 2:11; 2 Pe 3:9**
- c. And so the invitation has been made to all - cf. **Re 22:17**
- 2. Sadly, though, many will not accept the invitation, making excuses instead
 - a. These excuses may involve things that within themselves are noble
 - 1) Such as business responsibilities - cf. **Lk 14:18-19**
 - 2) Such as family responsibilities - cf. **Lk 14:20**
 - b. The problem is that priorities are misplaced, and one should not allow earthly matters to take priority over spiritual matters - cf. **Mt 6:33; Lk 10:38-42**

C. THOSE WHO WILL EXPERIENCE THE BLESSINGS MIGHT SURPRISE US!

- 1. Many understand the parable to have initial reference to the offer of the gospel to Gentiles after its rejection by the Jews - e.g., **Mt 21:43**
- 2. Others see the reference to the offer of salvation to the publicans and sinners after its rejection by the religious leaders of that day - e.g., **Mt 21:31-32**
- 3. Might we not make application to ourselves today?
 - a. Many “in the church” often make excuses for not serving the Lord as they should
 - b. Yet with a spirit of self-righteousness they expect to be “guests at the great supper”
 - c. In the end, though, it will be the humble, often despised yet ever faithful, servants of the Lord who shall “taste my supper” - cf. **Lk 14:24**

CONCLUSION

- 1. The Lord has certainly prepared a wonderful “supper”, and has extended the invitation to all:

“Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” (Re 19:9)

*“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’
And let him who thirst come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”
(Re 22:17)*

- 2. The danger is allowing the affairs of life to keep us from accepting this gracious invitation:

“But they all with one accord began to make excuses...” (Lk 14:18a)

Are you prone to make excuses in responding to the call of the Lord? May the parable of “**The Great Supper**” serve as a warning to us all!

The Parables Of Jesus

The Lost Sheep (Lk 15:1-7)

INTRODUCTION

1. In previous parables we have seen expressed the Father's desire that the lost be saved...
 - a. E.g., "The Wedding Feast" - **Mt 22:1-14**
 - b. E.g., "The Great Supper" - **Lk 14:15-24**-- Both of which revealed the Father's desire that many enjoy the wonderful blessings to be found in His kingdom

2. In the fifteenth chapter of Luke, we find three more parables that reveal the great love of our Father in heaven...
 - a. "The Lost Sheep" - **Lk 15:1-7**
 - b. "The Lost Coin" - **Lk 15:8-10**
 - c. "The Prodigal Son" - **Lk 15:11-32**

3. These three parables...
 - a. Were told on the same occasion, in response to murmuring by Pharisees and scribes
 - b. Have the same central theme: *"The Father's yearning love for the lost"* (Hendriksen)

4. These parables were designed, though...
 - a. Not just to tell us about the Father's love for the lost
 - b. But what should be our attitude toward the lost as well!

[The first of these three parables is **"The Lost Sheep"** (Lk 15:1-7). As we endeavor to appreciate its full meaning, let's begin by noticing...]

I. THE SETTING OF THE PARABLE

A. TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS DRAW NEAR TO JESUS - Lk 15:1

1. The **"tax collectors"** (publicans, KJV) were considered extortioners and traitors by the scribes and Pharisees
 - a. Extortioners, because they collected more than was required, for personal gain
 - b. Traitors, because while Jews they represented an occupying power (Rome)
2. The **"sinners"** were other people of bad reputation
 - a. Perhaps people excommunicated from the synagogues (B. W. Johnson)
 - b. Perhaps including harlots, who were known to be receptive to the preaching of the kingdom - cf. **Mt 21:31-32**-- Just as they were interested in hearing what John had to say, so they were interested in listening to Jesus!

B. THE PHARISEES AND SCRIBES MURMUR ABOUT JESUS RECEIVING SINNERS - Lk 15:2

1. The **Pharisees** and **scribes** were among the Jewish religious leaders at that time
 2. Jesus had often been seen in the company of “sinners”
 - a. He selected a tax collector to be one of His disciples, and did not hesitate to dine with other tax collectors - **Lk 5:27-29**
 - b. Sinners would often linger around Him, to the consternation of the religious elite - **Lk 7:36-39**
- Once again, this practice of Jesus associating with sinners brings a charge against Him

[In response to this “murmuring” by the Pharisees and scribes, Jesus now tells three parables. The first of which is “**The Lost Sheep**”, and in **verses 4-7** we find....]

II. THE PARABLE ITSELF, AND JESUS’ APPLICATION

A. THE PARABLE - Lk 15:4-6

1. To illustrate their own hypocrisy and inconsistency, Jesus challenges them to consider whether they would do any different by starting out with: “*What man of you...*”
2. Any one of them, with a hundred sheep, but one sheep having gone astray...
 - a. Would leave the ninety-nine and go after the lost one till he found it
 - b. Would bring it home rejoicing
 - c. And would invite others to rejoice over finding the sheep that was lost

B. THE APPLICATION BY JESUS - Lk 15:7

1. Just as they would rejoice over finding one lost sheep...
2. So there is more joy in heaven:
 - a. Over one sinner who repents
 - b. Than over ninety-nine just persons in no need of repentance

[In this simple parable, Jesus shows the hypocrisy and inconsistency of those who murmured against Him. But Jesus did much more: He gave us a glimpse into the heart of God, and His great love for sinners. Also, what should be our attitude toward sinners as well.

With that in mind, here is a summary of some..]

III. LESSONS TO BE GLEANED FROM THE PARABLE

A. THE LOVE OF GOD FOR THOSE WHO ARE LOST...

1. God’s love is a “seeking” love
 - a. That is, He is not simply waiting for those who are lost to find Him
 - b. But He has and continues to reach out for those who are lost!
2. As evidence of this...
 - a. God sent His Son to save the world - **Jn 3:16**
 - b. Jesus came to seek and save the lost - **Lk 19:10**
3. Therefore we should not be surprised to learn that His disciples are also to be involved in “seeking and saving the lost” - cf. **Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16**

B. THE JOY OF GOD OVER THOSE WHO REPENT...

1. In this parable...
 - a. Jesus simply says there will be “joy in heaven”
 - b. The other two parables in this chapter will make it clear that God rejoices when the lost are saved
2. While God is certainly pleased that “ninety-nine” are righteous...
 - a. There will be “more joy” over one sinner who repents
 - b. And rightly so, in light of what might have happened if the “lost” had not been “found”!
3. Implied in all this is the thought that WE should have the same attitude of love and joy when it comes to the salvation of sinners!

[Which leads me to one last point that should not be overlooked when we consider the context in which this parable was told...]

C. THE PRINCIPLE OF SEPARATION DOES NOT MEAN ISOLATION...

1. It is true that Christians are to be “separate” from the world - cf. **2 Co 6:14-18**
 - a. We must not be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers”
 - b. We must “come out from among them and be separate”
2. But does this require isolating ourselves from those in the world? No!
 - a. Paul recognized that we could eat with those in the world - **1 Co 5:9-11**
 - b. He instructed the Corinthians to eat with those in the world - **1 Co 10:27-29**
 - c. Jesus certainly ate with sinners! - **Lk 15:1-2**
 - d. And we cannot be...
 - 1) The salt of the earth unless we mingle with the meat - cf. **Mt 5:13**
 - 2) The light of the world unless we shine in darkness - cf. **Mt 5:14**

CONCLUSION

1. Indeed, love for the lost may sometimes mean that we have to...
 - a. “go into the wilderness” to find the one which is lost - **Lk 15:4**
 - b. Put up with those who may “murmur” because of our associating with sinners - **Lk 15:2**
2. But if associating with sinners is truly an effort to “seek and save that which is lost”...
 - a. We are demonstrating the kind of love for the lost displayed by Father in heaven
 - b. We can look forward to the same joy experienced in heaven when one sinner repents!

And this joy is not limited to those in heaven, or to those involved in seeking the lost. It is also available to those who are being saved, as seen in the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch! - cf. **Ac 8:35-39**

Have you responded to the gospel in the same manner as the Ethiopian eunuch?

The Parables Of Jesus

The Lost Coin (Lk 15:8-10)

INTRODUCTION

1. Our previous lesson introduced the context in which this parable is found...
 - a. The tax collectors and sinners had drawn near to Jesus to hear Him - **Lk 15:1**
 - b. The Pharisees and scribes were murmuring because Jesus would receive them and eat with them - **Lk 15:2**
 - c. In response, Jesus told three parables as recorded in Luke 15...
 - 1) “The Lost Sheep” - **Lk 15:3-7**
 - 2) “The Lost Coin” - **Lk 15:8-10**
 - 3) “The Prodigal Son” - **Lk 15:11-32**
3. As noted in the previous lesson...
 - a. These three parables have the same central theme: *“The Father’s yearning love for the lost”* (Hendriksen)
 - b. They also reveal what our own attitude should be toward the lost

[In this lesson, we shall consider the parable of **“The Lost Coin” (Lk 15:8-10)**. Let’s begin by reading the parable and then taking a closer look...]

I. THE PARABLE ANALYZED

A. AS TOLD BY JESUS...

1. Any woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin...
 - a. Will light a lamp, sweep the house, and seek diligently until she finds it
 - b. Upon finding it will call her friends and neighbors together to rejoice with her
2. In similar fashion, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents - **Lk 15:8-10**

B. SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION...

1. The silver coin, like the Roman denarius, was equivalent to a day’s wage
2. The home of the poorer classes was usually small, with dirt floors and few windows
3. Finding a lost coin in a dark and dusty place would not be easy

C. WHAT THE PARABLE MEANS...

1. William Hendriksen, in his commentary, relates some interesting “explanations”
 - a. That the woman symbolizes the Holy Spirit, supposedly because...
 - 1) The Son was symbolized in the parable of “Lost Sheep”
 - 2) The Father would be featured in the parable of “The Prodigal Son”-- Therefore having the woman represent the Spirit would complete the trinity
 - b. That the lamp represents the gospel
 - c. That the broom signifies the Law

2. But Hendriksen discounts such imaginative allegorizing (as do I)
 - a. As with most parables, there is only one point, just one central lesson
 - b. And Jesus' own explanation makes it clear what the parable is designed to teach
3. This parable reinforces the main point in the previous parable...
 - a. That there will be "*more joy in heaven*" over one sinner who repents - **Lk 15:7**
 - b. Here, the expression is "*more joy in the presence of the angels of God*" - **Lk 15:10**
 - 1) Does this mean to say that angels rejoice when a sinner repents?
 - a) They certainly take a deep interest in our salvation - **1 Pe 1:10-12; He 1:13-14; Mt 18:10**
 - b) They have been, and will be, involved in carrying out God's plan of salvation - **Lk 2:10-14; Mt 25:31; 2 Th 1:7-9**
 - 2) But note that Jesus said "*in the presence of the angels*"...
 - a) The joy is experienced in their presence, not in them per se
 - b) Who is in their presence? God!
 - c) He Who dwells in the presence of angles will greatly rejoice! - cf. **Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11; Zeph 3:17; 2 Pe 3:9**

[Again, this parable's theme is similar to the others in this chapter: "**The Father's yearning love for the lost**". Such love is evident by the joy "*in heaven*" and "*in the presence of angels*" when just one sinner repents.

Now for a few thoughts concerning...]

II. THE PARABLE APPLIED

A. WHAT OUR ATTITUDE SHOULD BE TOWARD THE LOST...

1. There are four different attitudes one can assume toward the lost:
 - a. **Hate them** (self-righteous individuals may have this attitude)
 - b. **Regard them with indifference** (some Christians have this attitude)
 - c. **Welcome them when they come to you** (the Pharisees and scribes considered Jesus guilty of this one)
 - d. **Seek them**
2. From the first two parables and the setting which precipitated their telling, we learn...
 - a. Jesus not only "welcomed" them (option "c")
 - b. He "sought" them! (option "d") - e.g., **Lk 19:10 (cf. v. 5); Jn 10:16**
 -- So our attitude should be one of both welcoming and seeking those who are lost!

B. WHAT OUR ATTITUDE SHOULD BE TOWARD THE PENITENT...

1. Both parables ("The Lost Sheep" and "The Lost Coin") describe the heavenly joy when a sinner repents - **Lk 15:7,10**
2. What is our attitude when a sinner repents?
 - a. **Are we indifferent?** ("Ho hum, so what...")
 - b. **Are we skeptical?** ("I wonder if they really repented")
 - c. **Are we judgmental?** ("Shame on them for sinning in the first place!")
 - d. **Or are we full of joy?** ("That's wonderful! Praise be to God!")

-- When a soul repents, it should be an occasion of great joy! - e.g., **2 Co 7:4-9**

CONCLUSION

1. The parable of **“The Lost Coin”** should serve to remind us that...
 - a. God not only welcomes sinners, He goes out of His way to save them!
 - b. God rejoices when sinners repent

2. It is important that we possess these same attitudes toward the lost...
 - a. First, and foremost, because we are to imitate our Father and our Savior - **Ep 5:1-2**
 - b. Secondly, Jesus felt it important enough to tell two parables that are virtually identical
 - 1) Perhaps for sake of emphasis
 - 2) Perhaps one to strike home to the men (**“The Lost Sheep”**), and the other to drive the point home to the women (**“The Lost Coin”**)
 - c. But also, because Jesus went on to tell another parable that will make the point even stronger!
-- That parable is **“The Prodigal Son”**, which we hope to consider in our next study.

But if you are in need of repentance, why not answer the call of the Father who is seeking you today? He calls you through the gospel (**2 Th 2:14**), and He is calling you into His kingdom and glory (**1 Th 2:12**). There will be joy in heaven, and in our own hearts as well!

The Parables Of Jesus

The Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32)

INTRODUCTION

1. With the parable of “**The Prodigal Son**”, Jesus reaches the apex in His response to the charge against Him by the Pharisees and scribes...
 - a. Their accusation? “*This man receives sinners and eats with them.*” - **Lk 15:2**
 - b. His response? Three parables in which He illustrates “**The Father’s Yearning Love For The Lost**” (Hendriksen)...
 - 1) “The Lost Sheep” - **Lk 15:3-7**
 - 2) “The Lost Coin” - **Lk 15:8-10**
 - 3) “The Prodigal Son” - **Lk 15:11-32**
2. The parable of “**The Prodigal Son**” has been called...
 - a. “**The pearl and crown of all the parables**” (Trench)
 - b. *Evangelium in Evangelio* (i.e., The Gospel within the Gospel)
3. While it is commonly called “**The Prodigal Son**” (prodigal meaning “wasteful”)...
 - a. It can rightfully be called the parable of “**The Loving Father**” (Wiersbe)
 - b. For it reveals more about the love of the father than of the sinfulness of the younger son
4. The parable also reveals much about the heart of the unforgiving elder son, whose purpose in this parable is to rebuke those unwilling to reach out and receive the lost who repent

[Let’s begin our study of this “pearl and crown of all the parables” by reading it in its entirety, and then examining its major features (please read **Lk 15:11-32**)...]

I. ANALYZING THE PARABLE OF “THE PRODIGAL SON”

A. HIS DEPARTURE FROM HOME - Lk 15:11-13a

1. The younger son asks his father to give him his portion of the inheritance due him
 - a. According to the Law of Moses, the eldest son received a double portion - cf. **Deu 21:17**
 - b. Since there were two sons, the younger son would receive one-third
2. Like so many impatient young people today, the younger son...
 - a. Desired to be free from parental restraints
 - b. Desired to have his father’s inheritance “now”
3. The father grants him his request, and the younger son soon takes all that he has to a distant country

B. HIS LIFE ABROAD - Lk 15:13b-19

1. With “prodigal” (wasteful, extravagant) living, he soon depletes his possessions
2. His poverty is complicated by a famine that strikes the country

3. In desperation, he hires himself to another to feed his pigs
 - a. This would be most degrading to a Jew, for pigs were considered unclean - cf. **Lev 11:7**
 - b. According to Hendriksen, there was a saying current among the Jews at that time: **“May a curse come upon the man who cares for swine!”**
 - c. With great hunger, he would have gladly eaten what was given to the pigs
4. He finally comes to his senses...
 - a. Recalling how well fed were his father’s hired servants
 - b. They had plenty, and here he was, perishing with hunger!
 - So to hunger and humiliation, there is now added homesickness
5. He resolves to return home...
 - a. To confess his sin against heaven (i.e., God’s will) and his father
 - b. To confess his unworthiness to be called his father’s son
 - c. To be made only like one of his father’s hired servants

C. HIS RETURN HOME - Lk 15:20-32

1. **Warmly welcomed by his father - Lk 15:20-24**
 - a. Carrying out his resolution, the prodigal son returns home
 - b. While still a great way away, the father sees him (had he been looking for his son?)
 - c. The father’s great love is immediately evident...
 - 1) He has compassion
 - 2) He runs to greet his son
 - 3) He throws his arms around his son’s neck
 - 4) He kisses him
 - d. The son quickly confesses his sin, and his unworthiness to be called a son
 - e. But before he can even say “Make me one of your hired servants”, the father joyfully calls upon his servants to...
 - 1) Bring out the best robe and put it on him
 - 2) Put a ring on his hand, and sandals on his feet
 - 3) Kill the fatted calf in order to celebrate his return
 - All of which serve to reinstate the son as a person of importance and authority
 - f. What this means to the father is touchingly summarized in these words...
 - 1) **“for this my son was dead and is alive again”**
 - 2) **“he was lost and is found”**
 - Certainly any parent can relate to emotions expressed by this father!
2. **Jealously rejected by his brother - Lk 15:25-32**
 - a. The elder son, returning from the field, wonders what the celebration is about
 - b. When told by one of the servants, he angrily refuses to go in
 - c. The father comes out, and pleads with him...
 - 1) The elder son’s complaints:
 - a) For many years he had served his father
 - b) He had never transgressed his father’s will
 - c) The father had never provided such a celebration for him
 - d) But when the son who squandered his father’s inheritance with harlots returns home, the fatted calf is killed for him!
 - Isn’t it easy to sympathize with the elder son?

- 2) The father's response:
 - a) Note first how tenderly the father treats THIS son (addressing him as *"child"* in the Greek)
 - b) He recognizes the elder son's faithfulness (*"you are always with me"*)
 - c) He reassures the son that the remaining inheritance is his (*"all that I have is yours"*)
 - d) Yet the father maintains that it is right to celebrate...
 - 1/ *"your brother..."* (note the contrast)
 - a/ The elder son had called his brother, "this son of yours"
 - b/ The father emphasizes the brotherly relation, "your brother"
 - 2/ *"...was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."* (repeating what was said to the servants in **Lk 15:24**)

[So ends this "pearl and crown" of all the parables, leaving us with a sharp contrast between the love of the father and the jealousy of the elder brother. No further explanation is given, but none is really needed if we just contemplate upon this parable in its context.

But to make sure we don't overlook the obvious, just a few thoughts in regards to...]

II. APPLYING THE PARABLE OF "THE PRODIGAL SON"

A. THE MAIN ELEMENTS ARE EASILY DISCERNED...

1. The father symbolizes our heavenly Father
2. The prodigal son in coming home represents the penitent sinner
3. The elder brother reflected the attitude of the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes - cf. **Lk 15:2**

B. THE KEY LESSONS SHOULD BE EVIDENT AS WELL...

1. **Our heavenly Father loves His children**
 - a. Even when they turn away from Him, His hearts yearns for them in love
 - b. But especially when they return with a penitent attitude
 - 1) There is *"joy in heaven"* - **Lk 15:7**
 - 2) There is *"joy in the presence of the angels of God"* - **Lk 15:10**
 - 3) It was right to *"make merry and be glad"* - **Lk 15:32**
2. **The faithful children of God need to understand the proper way to receive the erring child who returns to God**
 - a. Not with any sibling jealousy, but with joyous celebration! - **Lk 15:32**
 - b. With a strong reaffirmation of love:
 - 1) As illustrated by the father in the parable
 - 2) As Paul instructed the Corinthians in **2 Co 2:6-8**

CONCLUSION

1. **"The Prodigal Son"**, along with the two previous parables, was told by Jesus to teach these important lessons to the Pharisees and scribes

2. Yet while directed toward them, imagine how these parables comforted the hearts of those **“tax collectors and sinners”** who had drawn near to Jesus to hear Him! - **Lk 15:1**
 - a. Though considered unacceptable by the religious elite, they learned that they could be accepted by God!
 - b. That God was seeking for them, and would lovingly receive them if they would repent!
 - Is this the same message we convey to those lost in sin, but who are willing to draw near and listen to the gospel?
3. We must never forget that it was Jesus who said:

“Those who are well do not need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (Lk 5:31-32)

Dear friend, have you like the prodigal son “come to himself”, realizing how far one falls when they turn away from God?

May you be moved to repentance this by parable, “the gospel within the gospel”; and may you never forget that your heavenly Father anxiously awaits your reconciliation with Him!

Together with God, we offer you the gospel of Christ (cf. **Mk 16:15-16**) as a message of reconciliation:

“Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”
(2 Co 5:20)

The Parables Of Jesus

The Unjust Steward (Lk 16:1-15)

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Luke 15**, Jesus responded to the murmuring of the Pharisees and scribes by telling three parables...
 - a. “The Lost Sheep” - **Lk 15:1-7**
 - b. “The Lost Coin” - **Lk 15:8-10**
 - c. “The Prodigal Son” - **Lk 15:11-32**
 -- These parables answered the charge that Jesus received sinners and ate with them, and beautifully illustrate “**The Father’s Yearning Love For The Lost**” (Hendriksen)

2. At the beginning of **Luke 16**, we find that Jesus now turns to his disciples...
 - a. He tells the parable of “**The Unjust Steward**” - **Lk 16:1-8a**
 - b. He makes the application of the parable - **Lk 16:8b-13**
 - c. And responds to the derision of the Pharisees who heard Him - **Lk 16:14-15**

3. The parable of “**The Unjust Steward**” is considered by many to be difficult...
 - a. It has caused much perplexity
 - b. It has made some wonder if Jesus was commending the unjust steward for his dishonesty
 -- But the main point of the parable should be clear enough when we consider it carefully

[And that is exactly what I hope to do as we begin by noticing first...]

I. THE PARABLE ITSELF

A. A WASTEFUL STEWARD - Lk 16:1-2

1. A rich man hears that his steward was wasting his goods
2. The steward is told to give an account of his stewardship and then be relieved

B. A SHREWD STEWARD - Lk 16:3-8a

1. The steward reasons within himself concerning his dilemma:
 - a. “*What can I do?*”
 - b. “*I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg*”
2. He determines to so act as to ensure that others will receive him into their homes
 - a. He calls for his master’s debtors
 - b. He has them change their bills to reflect smaller debts
 - 1) This cheats his master even more
 - 2) But ingratiates him to his master’s debtors by lowering their debts
 - c. It may be the steward simply removed what interest had incurred with the debts
 - 1) Though usury was forbidden by the Law (**Ex 22:25; Deu 23:19**), this prohibition was often circumvented
 - 2) It was common at that time for a rich man to have his steward do it, and then deny

- knowledge of it if came to light (i.e., “plausible deniability”)
- 3) If it was only interest being removed, what the steward did not only pleased the debtors, but the master couldn’t publicly object
 - cf. The Parables Of Jesus, Simon Kistemaker, p. 228-229
 3. The unjust steward is commended by his master for his shrewdness
 - a. Not that the master approved of the action per se
 - b. But he could not deny that the steward was shrewd enough to know how to use what he had to his best advantage

[The purpose of the parable is not to commend the steward for his “dishonesty” (note: he is called the “unjust” steward, though that appellation might refer to his conduct prior to being found out for his wastefulness), but for his “shrewdness”. He used what was at his disposal to plan for the future! That is the point Jesus is making, as we go on to see...]

II. THE PARABLE APPLIED

A. JESUS’ COMMENT CONCERNING SHREWDNESS - Lk 16:8b

1. *“For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.”*
2. The word “shrewd” means...
 - a. Characterized by keen awareness, sharp intelligence, and often a sense of the practical
 - b. Disposed to artful and cunning practices; tricky
 - The first definition reveals that being shrewd does not always mean evil
3. Jesus’ observation is that:
 - a. People of the world are generally very resourceful with things of this world
 - b. Such is not always the case with the people of God

B. JESUS’ APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE - Lk 16:9

1. This verse is difficult, but let’s begin with explanations for some of the terms:
 - a. *“unrighteous mammon”*
 - 1) The word “mammon” is the Aramaic word for “riches”
 - 2) It may be called “unrighteous” because it is often used for evil purposes, or because it is uncertain, undependable - cf. **1 Ti 6:17**
 - b. *“when you (it) fails”*
 - 1) When your riches fail
 - 2) Or when you fail due to lack of riches
 - c. *“they may receive you”*
 - 1) “they” refer to the “friends” made through the use of mammon
 - 2) Some interpret this to refer to God and Jesus, others think those you have helped
 - d. *“into everlasting habitations”* - i.e., heaven itself
 - 1) Either that God and Jesus will receive you into heaven
 - 2) Or those souls you may have helped will welcome you into heaven
2. With these definitions in mind, here are two explanations worthy of note:
 - a. **“The only friends who can receive us into heaven are the Father and the Son. These are, then, the friends we must secure. During life our means must be so used as to please God and to lay up eternal treasure. If we use it as a trust of**

the Lord we will secure such a friend. Instead of hoarding we must make heavenly friends.” (B. W. Johnson)

- b. **“Worldly possession are the Christian’s stewardship. If he has been wasting them in self-indulgence, he must take warning from the parable and so employ them in deeds of usefulness and mercy that, when the stewardship is taken from him, he may have obtained for himself a refuge for the future. But how can those whom the Christian had befriended receive him into heaven? The key to the difficulty is found at Mt 25:35-40 where our Lord altogether identifies himself with his poor and unfortunate disciples, and returns on their behalf a heavenly recompense for any kindness which has been shown them on the earth. Only in this secondary and subordinate sense can those whom the Christian has benefited receive him into heaven. Nor does the passage teach that there is any MERIT in almsgiving, since the thing given is already the property of another (Lk 16:12). Almsgiving is only a phase of the fidelity required of a steward, and the reward of a steward is not of merit but of grace. See Lk 17:7-10 Mt 25:21.”** (J. W. McGarvey)
3. The main point of the parable, in either case, is make proper use of material riches...
 - a. Use them with a view to eternity!
 - b. Be aware of the danger of riches!
4. This is made clearer as we go on to consider...

C. JESUS’ ADMONITION TO FAITHFULNESS - Lk 16:10-12

1. He starts by stating two maxims - cf. **Lk 16:10**
 - a. **“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much”**
 - b. **“He who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much”**
2. He then applies it to the matter of “mammon” - **Lk 16:11**
 - a. If we haven’t been faithful in our handling of “mammon” (material riches)...
 - b. How can we expect to be entrusted with “true riches” (spiritual riches)?
 - Remember the parable of “The Talents”? - cf. **Mt 25:14-30**
3. He then reminds us that what riches we have are not our own - **Lk 16:12**
 - a. If we aren’t faithful with that which belongs to another...
 - b. Then who will give us what is ours?
 - At the present we are simply stewards; nothing we have is really ours, but God’s!

D. JESUS’ WARNING CONCERNING TWO MASTERS - Lk 16:13

1. Perhaps another reason why Jesus refers to material riches as “unrighteous” mammon is because it tends to draw people away from God!
2. While mammon desires to be our master, so does God
3. Since we cannot serve two masters, we can’t serve both God and mammon
 - This may imply we must control mammon (and not vice versa) through proper use

[In warning about the danger of mammon and the need to use it properly, a reaction comes not from the disciples, but the Pharisees who were listening in...]

III. THE PHARISEES’ DERISION AND JESUS’ RESPONSE

A. THE PHARISEES DERIDE JESUS - Lk 16:14

1. The reason is because they were lovers of money
2. We should therefore expect all lovers of money to react in a similar way to what Jesus is teaching in this passage
3. Indeed, even some worldly Christians don't take Jesus seriously when it comes to material riches

B. JESUS RESPONDS - Lk 16:15

1. They seek to justify themselves before men, but God knew their heart
 - a. They may have taken issue with Jesus, professing theological grounds
 - b. But the real reason: they were lovers of money!
2. God and man do not always see things alike
 - a. There are things that man esteems highly (like money)
 - b. But such things may be an abomination to God (e.g., money when improperly used)

CONCLUSION

1. The parable of “**The Unjust Steward**” is designed to stimulate our thinking about the proper use of material riches...
 - a. What is praised is not the dishonesty of the steward, but his shrewdness
 - b. Especially in his use of money to ingratiate himself to future benefactors
2. Jesus teaches us to be shrewd in our use of material riches...
 - a. Use them with a view to eternity, demonstrating that you can be faithful with true riches, and with what will one day be truly your own!
 - b. By using mammon properly, it becomes our servant rather than our master
3. In his first epistle to Timothy, Paul had similar things to say about material riches...
 - a. There is a dangerous side to material riches - **1 Ti 6:9-10**
 - b. But when properly used, they can help store up for ourselves a good foundation for the time to come, and lay hold on eternal life! - **1 Ti 6:17-19**
 - Not that riches can earn or merit salvation, but improper use can certainly keep us from it! (cf. **1 Ti 6:9-10**)

Are you shrewd with the use of the riches presently entrusted to your stewardship? Are you using them to make friends (e.g., pleasing God) who can receive you into everlasting habitations when your material riches are no more? Remember the words of Jesus:

“Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?” (Lk 16:11)

The Parables Of Jesus

The Rich Man And Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31)

INTRODUCTION

1. We come now to a familiar story told by Jesus: “**The Rich Man And Lazarus**”
 - a. Commonly referred to as parable, though I have my doubts
 - 1) It is the only one in which names of actual individuals are used
 - 2) One was certainly a real-life person, Abraham
 - b. Some try to avoid its teaching concerning life after death by saying it is only a parable
 - 1) E.g., “Jehovah’s Witnesses”
 - 2) Who do not believe in life after death for the wicked
 - c. But even this story is a parable, parables told by Jesus were true-to-life
 - 1) Not fantasy stories
 - 2) But illustrations based upon events that were actually possible
 - So not only is there the ultimate point to be gleaned, but there is much we can learn about life after death from this “parable”!

2. There are similarities with this story and “The Unjust Steward”...
 - a. Both start out by saying “*There was a certain rich man...*”
 - b. The previous parable stressed the proper use of wealth; this story illustrates one who did not “*make friends...by unrighteous mammon*”
 - c. Both call us to repent before it is too late

[Let’s begin our study by considering...]

I. THE PARABLE ITSELF

A. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS IN LIFE...

1. A certain rich man - **Lk 16:19**
 - a. Clothed in purple and fine linen
 - b. Fared sumptuously every day
2. A certain beggar named Lazarus - **Lk 16:20-21**
 - a. Full of sores
 - b. Laid at the rich man’s gate, hoping to be fed crumbs from the rich man’s table
 - c. Dogs came and licked his sores (adding to his misery, or providing what little comfort he enjoyed?)

B. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS IN DEATH...

1. They both die - **Lk 16:22**
 - a. Lazarus is carried away by angels to Abraham’s bosom (what bliss!)
 - b. The rich man was buried (what an understatement by way of contrast!)
2. The rich man in torment - **Lk 16:23-26**
 - a. He is in “**Hades**”, but sees Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom

- 1) The origin of the word “Hades” is uncertain...
 - a) Either from **idein** (seen) with a negative prefix A-, meaning “the unseen, invisible”
 - b) Or from **aianes**, meaning “gloomy, gruesome”
- 2) In Classical Greek...
 - a) Homer used the word as a proper name for the “god of the underworld”
 - b) In other literature, it stood for “the underworld” as the abode of all the dead
 - 1/ Which was divided into two parts (similar to Luke 16)
 - 2/ These two parts were:
 - a/ The “Elysian fields”, the abode of the good
 - b/ “Tartarus”, the place of punishment for the wicked
- 3) In the NT, “Hades” is found only eleven times...
 - a) Ten times it is translated “hell” or “hades” (**Mt 11:23; 16:18; Lk 10:15; 16:23; Ac 2:27, 31; Rev 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14**), and once it is the “grave” (**1 Co 15:55**)
 - b) Some believe that “Hades” is the realm of ALL the dead (similar to the concept of the Greeks), and made up of two separate parts...
 - 1/ With Paradise (at least prior to the Ascension of Christ) for the righteous
 - 2/ And Tartarus for the wicked - cf. **2 Pe 2:4,9**
 - c) Others believe the term “Hades” refers only to the place of the **wicked**
 - 1/ That it is not clear in **Lk 16:22-23** whether Hades was just the abode of the rich man, or also that of Lazarus and Abraham
 - 2/ And in **Ac 2:26-27,31** we may have a case of synonymous parallelism, with only the resurrected body of Christ in view (“soul” being used to refer to the body, and “Hades” is referring to the grave, as “Sheol” in the Hebrew sometimes does)
 - d) In any case, “Hades” is used at least on several occasions in the New Testament...
 - 1/ As the place of the wicked - **Lk 16:23**
 - 2/ As a place where the wicked are in torment - **Lk 16:23**
 - 3/ As a temporary place, to be thrown into “the lake of fire” after the Judgment - **Re 20:13-14**
- b. The rich man pleads with Abraham for relief - **Lk 16:24-26**
 - 1) That he might send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool his tongue
 - 2) But Abraham reminds him how conditions have now been reversed
 - 3) Besides, there is a gulf that prevents one from going to one place to the other
3. The rich man pleads with Abraham for his five brothers - **Lk 16:27-31**
 - a. That Abraham might send Lazarus to warn them of this place
 - b. Abraham says they have Moses and the prophets (i.e., the word of God)
 - c. The rich man fears that will be inadequate to convince them to repent
 - d. Abraham says that if they won’t listen Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rise from the dead

[While the condition of the dead is described here in very literal, earthy terms, the story of “**The Rich Man And Lazarus**” does reveal truths about life after death. What those truths are we shall see as we continue with...]

II. THE PARABLE APPLIED

A. THE MAIN POINT...

1. The importance of heeding the Word of God! - **Lk 16:29**
 - a. Only by heeding the Word of God can one escape the torment of Hades
 - b. The rich man had not done so; for his brothers, it would be their only hope
2. If God's Word doesn't move you to repentance, a miracle won't either! - **Lk 16:31**
 - a. Some people say they would believe if they only saw a miracle
 - b. But many people saw Jesus' miracles, and did not believe; even His resurrection from the dead did not convince some!

-- This may explain why the apostles depended upon the Scriptures more than miracles to convince people Jesus was the Messiah - cf. **Ac 17:1-3**

B. OTHER LESSONS TO BE DRAWN...

1. A few points adapted from those listed by J. C. Ryle :
 - a. A man's worldly condition is no test of his state in the sight of God
 - 1) One may be rich, but not rich toward God - **Lk 12:21**
 - 2) One may be poor, but rich in faith! - **Ja 2:5**
 - b. Death is the common end to which all classes of mankind must come ("*the same event happens to them all*" - cf. **Ecc 2:14**)
 - c. The souls of believers are specially cared for by God in the hour of death ("*...carried by angels to Abraham's bosom*" - **Lk 16:22**)
 - d. The reality of hell
 - 1) This story depicts the intermediate state of the wicked, between death and the resurrection
 - 2) We learn that the wicked...
 - a) Do not cease to exist ("*he lifted up his eyes and saw*") - **Lk 16:23**
 - b) Are aware of where they are, and what is going on around them ("*I am tormented in this flame*") - **Lk 16:24b**
 - c) Recognize others ("*Father Abraham...send Lazarus...*") - **Lk 16:24a**
 - d) Remember those who have yet to follow them in death ("*for I have five brothers*") - **Lk 16:28a**
 - e. Unconverted men find out the value of a soul, after death, when it is too late
 - 1) Jesus tried to teach the value of the soul before it was too late - **Mt 16:26**
 - 2) When we will learn? Now, or when it is too late?
 - f. The greatest miracles would have no effect on men's hearts, if they will not believe God's word
 - 1) This relates to the main point of the story
 - 2) Which emphasizes the importance of heeding the Word of God, and not depending upon some sort of miracle!
2. A lesson NOT to be drawn from this parable is that it is sinful to be rich...
 - a. The rich man was not the only person in this story who had been rich in his life
 - 1) Abraham had been very rich! - cf. **Gen 13:2**
 - 2) But he was also very hospitable - cf. **Gen 18:1-8**
 - b. The difference is that Abraham...

- 1) Was a man of faith (which comes by heeding the word of God - **Ro 10:17**)
- 2) Was a man who *“made friends...by unrighteous mammon”*

CONCLUSION

1. Why did Jesus tell this story?
 - a. Was it directed to His disciples in particular?
 - b. Or was it told with the Pharisees in mind?
2. While the disciples would learn from it, I suspect the Pharisees were the intended audience...
 - a. They were “lovers of money” - **Lk 16:14**
 - b. They had just derided Jesus for His parable and the application of “The Unjust Steward”
-- The story of “The Rich Man And Lazarus” illustrates the folly of trusting in one’s wealth
3. May this story serve to remind us of...
 - a. The reality of punishment prepared for the wicked
 - b. The importance of preparing our soul for eternity
 - c. The place the Word of God has in that preparation!

As James wrote in his epistle...

*“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness,
and receive with meekness the implanted word,
which is able to save your souls.
“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
(Ja 1:21-22)*

Are you heeding the Word of God which is able to save your soul?

The Parables Of Jesus

The Unprofitable Servants (Lk 17:7-10)

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus often used the master-servant relationship in His parables to teach His disciples important principles concerning their service to God...
 - a. Illustrating the importance of forgiveness in **“The Unmerciful Servant”** - Mt 18:21-35
 - b. Condemning the mercenary spirit of service in **“The Laborers In The Vineyard”** - Mt 20:1-16
 - c. Stressing the need for faithful and fruitful service in **“The Talents”** - Mt 25:14-30
2. Once again He uses the master-service motif...
 - a. As He tells the parable known as **“The Unprofitable Servants”** - Lk 17:7-10
 - b. In which He demonstrates an important attitude to be found in His disciples

[As we study this parable, it might be well to ask ourselves: **“What should be our attitude about the service we render to God?”** With that question in mind, let’s first consider...]

I. THE PARABLE ITSELF

A. THE CONTEXT...

1. It may appear this parable is disconnected to what preceded it
2. But in describing the power of faith (Lk 17:5-6), it would be easy for the disciples to fall into a snare of pride
3. This parable would certainly help keep things in proper perspective

B. THE DETAILS...

1. Jesus challenges His apostles to consider how they would act toward a servant
 - a. As master, none of them would be expected to invite the servant to sit down and eat with His master - Lk 17:7
 - b. As master, any one of them would expect the servant to prepare his master’s meal and serve him, eating only after the master is done - Lk 17:8
 - c. As master, none of them would likely thank the servant for doing what has been commanded of him - Lk 17:9
2. So they are to view themselves in regards to what they do as servants...
 - a. When they have done that which they were commanded, they should view themselves as **“unprofitable”** servants - Lk 17:10a
 - b. That is, they have simply done their duty as servants, doing nothing worthy of merit - Lk 17:10b

C. THE MEANING...

1. Be careful not to conclude the parable presents the proper attitude of the **“master”**
 - a. Jesus is depicting the normal expectation of a master to make His point

- b. In **Lk 12:35-37** He describes what He Himself will do as Master
- 2. Instead, this parable is illustrating the proper attitude of the “**servant**”
 - a. When all that is commanded is done, we have not earned or merited anything
 - b. We have simply done that which is our duty as servants
 - c. Whatever reward we might receive is due to grace, not merit!

[This parable is therefore illustrating the attitude we should have toward our own service to God. Since we were “*bought at price*” (**1 Co 6:20**), we are truly servants and should have the proper attitude of servitude. With this explanation, here are some thoughts related to...]

II. THE PARABLE APPLIED

A. IT REMOVES ANY IDEA OF EARNING OUR SALVATION...

- 1. Keeping God’s commandments are important (see below), but they do not merit or earn our salvation - cf. **Ti 3:4-5; Ep 2:4-9**
- 2. After everything we do, we are still “*unprofitable servants*” - cf. **Isa 64:6**
- 3. Whatever reward we receive is one of grace, not merit!

B. IT STRESSES THE NEED FOR OBEDIENCE...

- 1. While we cannot earn or merit our reward, obedience is essential!
 - a. “*We have done that which was our duty to do.*” - **Lk 17:10**
 - b. “*...keeping the commandments of God is what matters.*” - **1 Co 7:19b**
 - c. “*He who says ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in Him.*” - **1 Jn 2:4**
- 2. Many people tend to equate obedience with legalism...
 - a. Especially when it is pointed out that they are not keeping a particular command
 - b. Legalism is the idea that one earns or merits salvation by their obedience
 - c. If we believe that obedience earns our salvation, then we are legalists
 - d. But if we obey God out of love and duty, we are simply faithful servants!

CONCLUSION

- 1. This parable reminds us of the need for obedience, as do other passages:
 - a. Only those who do the Father’s will enter the kingdom of heaven - **Mt 7:21**
 - b. We must observe all that Christ commanded - **Mt 28:20**
 - c. Christ is the author of salvation to all who obey Him - **He 5:9**
 - d. When He comes again, those who did not obey His gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction - **2 Th 1:7-9**; cf. **1 Pe 4:17**
- 2. But it’s primary lesson is to remind us that no matter how much we do for the Lord...
 - a. We are still “*unprofitable servants*”
 - b. Whatever we have done was our duty as servants to begin with
- 3. Therefore, whatever reward we receive will be one of grace and not merit; and what wonderful grace that will be, to hear the Lord say at the end of time:

“Well, done good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.” (Mt 25:21)

Are you a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, doing that which is your duty to do?

The Parables Of Jesus

The Persistent Widow (Lk 18:1-8)

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Luke 18**, we find two parables that deal with the subject of prayer...
 - a. **“The Persistent Widow” - Lk 18:1-8**
 - b. **“The Pharisee And The Tax Collector” - Lk 18:9-14**
2. This is not the first time Jesus used a parable to teaching concerning prayer...
 - a. Remember **“The Friend At Midnight”?** - **Lk 11:5-13**
 - b. In which Jesus taught the value of persistence in prayer?
3. Evidently the element of persistence in prayer was very important to Jesus...
 - a. For that is also the theme of the first parable in **Luke 18**
 - b. As the first verse reads: *“Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart...”*

[Are we persistent in our prayers? Do we appreciate the value of such persistence? Or have we lost heart and don't pray as we ought? Let's see what we can glean from the parable of **“The Persistent Widow”**...]

I. THE PARABLE ITSELF

A. THE CHARACTER OF THE JUDGE - Lk 18:2

1. One who did not fear God nor regard man
2. An unjust judge, for which this parable is sometimes known as “The Unjust Judge”

B. THE DISTRESS OF THE WIDOW - Lk 18:3

1. She has some adversary who has wronged her
2. She seeks the aid of the judge to avenge her

C. THE DIFFICULTY SHE FACED - Lk 18:4a

1. The judge would not help her at first
2. Repeated attempts seem to fall on deaf ears

D. AT LAST THE JUDGE HEEDS HER COMPLAINT - Lk 18:4b-5

1. Not out of any sense for what was right in the sight of God or man
2. But only to avoid being wearied by her constant appeals

[Unlike many of the parables, we are not left on our own to determine the point of this parable. Jesus Himself makes it clear as we consider...]

II. THE PARABLE APPLIED

A. HEAR WHAT THE UNJUST JUDGE SAID...

1. He was moved by the persistence of the widow
2. Even when he was not moved by reverence for God or regard for man

B. SHALL NOT GOD AVENGE HIS OWN ELECT?

1. This is an argument from the lesser to the greater
 - a. If an unjust judge will heed a persistence widow...
 - b. ...how much more will a Just God heed His chosen people!
2. Our assurance is even stronger when we note the following contrasts:

The Widow	God's People
a. A stranger	a. His elect - cf. 1 Pe 2:9-10
b. Only one	b. We are many
c. At a distance	c. We can come boldly - cf. He 4:15-16
d. An unjust judge	d. A righteous Father
e. On her own	e. God is for us - cf. Ro 8:31-32
f. Pleads her own case	f. We have an Advocate - cf. Ro 8:34
g. No promise of an answer	g. Promised it will be given - Lk 18:8a
h. Access limited	h. Access unlimited (can pray to God anytime)
i. Asking provoked judge	i. Asking delights God
3. If persistence paid off for the widow, how much more for God's elect who pray?

C. GOD WILL AVENGE HIS ELECT!

1. He may bear long with the prayers of His persecuted people... - **Lk 18:7b**
 - a. For example, cf. **Re 6:9-10**
 - b. His longsuffering may be to give the persecutors time to repent - **2 Pe 3:9**
2. But when His vengeance comes, it will come swiftly!
 - a. There is a Day coming in which God will take vengeance - cf. **2 Th 1:7-9**
 - b. And when it comes, there will be "sudden destruction" with no way of escape - cf. **1 Th 5:1-3**

D. BUT WILL THERE BE FAITH ON THE EARTH WHEN HE COMES?

1. The Lord will come, avenging His elect
2. But His delay may prompt some to lose faith (implying lack of prayer is indicative of lack of faith!)
3. The Lord's concern over this matter is what prompts this parable!
 - a. That men always ought to pray
 - b. That men not lose heart

CONCLUSION

1. Have you begun to lose heart? Has your faith weakened?
 - a. The state of your "prayer life" reveals the true condition of your faith!
 - b. If you do not pray "always" (cf. "*without ceasing*" **1 Th 5:17**), your faith is waning!
2. But the Lord has given us reason to believe in the power of prayer in this parable...

- a. Especially when we are persecuted for the cause of Christ
- b. For we do not serve an unjust judge, but a God who has made us His elect people!

May this parable of “**The Persistent Widow**”, along with “**The Friend At Midnight**”, encourage us never to lose heart and stop praying!

The Parables Of Jesus

The Pharisee And The Tax Collector (Lk 18:9-14)

INTRODUCTION

1. We've noted that in **Luke 18**, there are two parables that deal with the subject of prayer...
 - a. **"The Persistent Widow"** - Lk 18:1-8
 - b. **"The Pharisee And The Tax Collector"** - Lk 18:9-14
2. In **"The Persistent Widow"**...
 - a. Jesus encouraged us to ***"pray and not lose heart"*** - Lk 18:1
 - b. He taught the value of persevering in prayer
3. In the parable before us now, **"The Pharisee And The Tax-Collector"**...
 - a. Jesus illustrated the spirit that ought to pervade our prayers
 - b. He teaches us how and in what manner we ought to pray to be heard by God - **Lk 18:14**

[Without the proper spirit, our perseverance in prayer will be for nothing. This second parable on prayer is therefore very important, and worthy of our consideration as we begin with...]

I. THE PARABLE ANALYZED

A. IT IS ABOUT TWO DIFFERENT MEN...

1. They both go to the temple to pray - **Lk 18:10**
2. One is a Pharisee, the other a tax-collector
 - a. Pharisees were a religious sect, noted for their strict observance of the Law and the traditions of the elders
 - b. Tax-collectors were considered by the Pharisees to be extortioners and traitors
 - 1) Extortioners, because they collected more than was required, for personal gain
 - 2) Traitors, because while Jews they represented an occupying power (Rome)

B. IT IS ABOUT TWO DIFFERENT PRAYERS...

1. The prayer of the Pharisee - **Lk 18:11-12**
 - a. He thanks God that he is not like others
 - 1) Especially extortioners, unjust, adulterers
 - 2) or even the tax collector nearby
 -- Thus he reveals his disdain for others - cf. **Lk 18:9**
 - b. He recounts his good deeds
 - 1) ***"I fast twice a week"*** - the Law required only an annual fast - **Lev 16:29**
 - 2) ***"I give tithes of all that I possess."*** - The Law required only a tithe on certain items; this man gave tithes on ALL he possessed - cf. **Deu 14:22-23**
 -- Thus he reveals how he trusted in his self-righteousness - cf. **Lk 18:9**
2. The prayer of the tax collector - **Lk 18:13**
 - a. He expressed his repentance and humility in what he did

- 1) He stood “afar off”
- 2) He would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven (a common posture for prayer at that time)
- 3) He beat his breast in anguish over his sins
- b. He expressed his repentance and humility in what he said
 - 1) Calling himself a sinner
 - 2) Pleading God for mercy

C. IT IS ABOUT TWO DIFFERENT RESULTS..

1. The tax collector goes home **“justified” - Lk 18:14a**
 - a. The term as used in the forensic sense means “not guilty!”
 - b. He had received that wonderful blessedness described by David - cf. **Ps 32:1-2**
2. The Pharisee also goes home . . . with nothing!
 - a. He might as well stayed home
 - b. The most he might have gotten was the reward of being seen by men - cf. **Mt 6:5**

[The meaning and purpose of this parable are very clear, both from the introductory statement by Jesus in **Lk 18:9**, and the concluding remark in **Lk 18:14**...

“for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

But to reinforce the point, here are a few thoughts relating to...]

II. THE PARABLE APPLIED

A. JESUS WARNS AGAINST SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS...

1. The Pharisee trusted in his own good works, but it was to no avail
2. He should have recalled the words of Isaiah - cf. **Isa 64:6**
3. We should remember the words of Jesus and Paul - cf. **Lk 17:10; Ep 2:8-10; Ti 3:3-5**

B. JESUS WARNS AGAINST ARROGANCE...

1. The Pharisee despised others, including the tax collector
2. He should have recalled the words of Solomon - cf. **Pr 8:13; 16:18; 29:23**
3. We should remember the words of Jesus and James - cf. **Lk 14:11; Ja 2:1-9**

C. JESUS TEACHES THE VALUE OF HUMILITY...

1. He had taught the value of humility before others in the parable of **“Taking The Lowest Place” - Lk 14:7-11**
2. Now He teaches the value of humility before God!
 - a. An important principle espoused in Isaiah - **Isa 57:15; 66:1-2**
 - b. And extolled by Mary His mother in “The Magnificat” - cf. **Lk 1:46-55**

CONCLUSION

1. In this parable of **“The Pharisee And The Tax Collector”**, we have seen...

- a. The Pharisee pray as one who needed no forgiveness, and got none
 - b. The tax collector pray as one needed forgiveness, and he received it
2. Do we need forgiveness, even as Jesus' disciples?
- a. Of course we do! - cf. **1 Jn 1:8-10**
 - b. Then let us pray with the humility of the tax collector, who prayed like the man after God's own heart (David)...

*“Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your loving kindness;
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions.
“Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.
For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me.
(Psa 51:1-3)*

Let us not trust in our own righteousness, but in the mercy and loving kindness of God offered so abundantly in His Son Jesus Christ! As the beloved disciple wrote in his first epistle:

“And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” (1 Jn 2:1b-2)

The Parables Of Jesus

The Minas (Lk 19:11-27)

INTRODUCTION

1. With this lesson we come to the end of our series on **“The Parables Of Jesus”**...
 - a. We have covered most, if not all, of the parables taught by our Lord
 - b. In many lists, the last parable is the one before us now, the parable of **“The Minas”**
2. Found in **Lk 19:11-27**, we quickly find similarities with the parable of **“The Talents”**...
 - a. That parable is recorded by Matthew in **Mt 25:14-30**
 - b. It teaches basically the same lesson, that of faithful service as we await the Lord’s return
3. But there are some differences...
 - a. The setting in which Jesus told each parable is different
 - b. And the details vary slightly
4. In this study, my goal will be to...
 - a. Note some of the differences as we briefly review the parable of **“The Minas”**
 - b. Use this final study on the parables to review what we have learned about **“the mysteries of the kingdom”**

[With that in mind, let’s first consider...]

I. THE PARABLE OF “THE MINAS”

A. THE SETTING...

1. It was told on the way to Jerusalem - **Lk 19:11**
 - a. This would be shortly before His triumphal entry - cf. **Lk 19:28ff**
 - b. The parable of **“The Talents”** was told after His arrival and during His last week
 2. It was told to correct misunderstandings about the kingdom - **Lk 19:11**
 - a. Some thought that the kingdom would **“appear immediately”**
 - b. Jesus had already taught that the kingdom of God **“does not come with observation”** - cf. **Lk 17:20-21**
- Jesus therefore used this opportunity to explain that His kingdom would not be readily apparent, and there would be a need for faithful service in His absence

B. THE DETAILS...

1. Jesus used a historical incident as the basis for His parable
 - a. **“Apparently this parable has the historical basis of Archelaus who actually went from Jerusalem to Rome on this very errand to get a kingdom in Palestine and to come back to it. This happened while Jesus was a boy in Nazareth and it was a matter of common knowledge.”** (Robertson’s Word Pictures)
 - b. **“The historical background for the parable was the visit of Archelaus, son of**

Herod the Great, to Rome to secure permission to reign as a so-called client king, i.e., over a territory actually subject to Rome. This petition was opposed by a delegation of Archelaus' own subjects.” (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

2. In the parable, then...
 - a. A nobleman is going away to receive for himself a kingdom and to return
 - b. He calls ten of his servants...
 - 1) Giving them each one “*mina*” (about three month's wages, whereas in “**The Talents**” one talent would take an ordinary laborer twenty years to earn)
 - 2) Telling them “*Do business till I come*”
 - c. There are citizens who send a delegation to express their displeasure with having the nobleman reign over them
 - d. Having received the kingdom, the nobleman returns...
 - 1) He calls for his servants and asks for an accounting
 - a) One servant earned ten minas, and was rewarded with authority over ten cities
 - b) Another earned five minas, and was granted authority over five cities
 - c) Another simply returned his original mina, which angered the nobleman, and who then gave the one mina to him who earned ten
 - d) An objection is raised by some standing by, but is answered by the nobleman
 - 2) The enemies who did not want the nobleman to reign over them are killed

C. THE INTERPRETATION...

1. It explains how the kingdom of God would not appear immediately
 - a. The Lord would be going away to receive His kingdom
 - b. This He did when He ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God - cf. **Ac 2:30-36; Ep 1:20-23; 1 Pe 3:22; Dan 7:13-14**
 - c. While His reign began (cf. **Re 1:5; 17:14**), it would not be readily apparent
2. It portrays the rejection of the Lord's reign
 - a. There are many who do not wish to submit to the authority of the Lord
 - b. It was prophesied that the Messiah's rule would be “*in the midst of Your enemies*” - **Psa 110:1-2**
 - c. Such rejection does not mean His reign has not yet begun!
3. It reveals the role of a disciple between the Lord's departure and His return
 - a. The disciple is to be productive (“*Do business until I come*”)
 - b. The disciple is to be faithful while awaiting the return of his King
4. It describes the reckoning that awaits all Christians
 - a. A reckoning which takes into consideration our service
 - b. A reckoning in which some are blessed and others are not
5. It alludes to the punishment awaiting those who do not submit to the King
 - a. As mentioned before, some do not wish to have Christ as king
 - b. When He returns, it will be to render judgment upon them - **2 Th 1:7-9**

[Like so many of the parables, this one helps us “*to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*” (cf. **Mt 13:10-11**). At this point, let's review...]

II. WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE PARABLES

A. CONCERNING THE KINGDOM ITSELF...

1. The kingdom will spread despite Satan's efforts, and it is both present and future (**The Wheat And The Tares**)
2. It would start small, but spread throughout the earth (**The Mustard Seed**)
3. It's influence may not be readily apparent, but it grows throughout the earth (**The Leaven**)
4. It's growth may be beyond our ability to comprehend, but it is directly related to the seed, i.e., the Word (**The Growing Seed**)
5. It's value is great, whether we find it after a long search (**The Pearl Of Great Price**), or happen to stumble upon it (**The Hidden Treasure**)
6. The spread of the kingdom draws in many, but the wicked will be separated from the just (**The Dragnet**)
7. The kingdom will be taken from those who should have received it, and given to those who will appreciate it (**The Wicked Vinedressers, The Wedding Feast, The Barren Fig Tree, and The Great Supper**)

B. CONCERNING THE DISCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM...

1. Those with ears to hear, having good and noble hearts, will bear the sort of fruit intended by the word of the kingdom (**The Sower**)
2. Those instructed in the ways of the kingdom have treasure both old and new (**The Householder**)
3. They are merciful, as God is merciful (**The Unforgiving Servant**)
4. They are free from an mercenary spirit in their service (**The Laborers In The Vineyard**)
5. They do the will of the Father (**The Two Sons**)
6. They prepare themselves for the Lord's return, and are watchful (**The Wise And Foolish Virgins**)
7. They are productive while they await their Lord's return (**The Talents and The Minas**)
8. Their gratitude for salvation is related to the understanding of their forgiveness (**The Debtors**)
9. They love their neighbor, helping those in need (**The Good Samaritan**)
10. They are persistent in their prayers (**The Friend At Midnight and The Persistent Widow**)
12. They are aware that one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions (**The Rich Fool**)
13. They are humble, both in their relations with others (**Taking The Lowest Place**) and in their prayers to God (**The Pharisee and The Tax Collector**)
14. They make proper use of material things (**The Unjust Steward**), knowing that now is the time to make things right with God (**The Rich Man And Lazarus**)
15. Yet through it all, they know they are not worthy of the grace received, they have simply done that which was their duty to do (**The Unprofitable Servants**)

C. CONCERNING THE KING...

1. We know of the great love He has for the lost, and how heaven rejoices when they are saved (**The Lost Sheep and The Lost Coin**)
2. We know how quick His Heavenly Father is to receive us unto Himself when we return with a repentant heart (**The Prodigal Son**)
- Yet many of the parables also reveal the King to be one Who will one day call us into

judgment to give an account for our service!

CONCLUSION

1. What wonderful lessons we learn from our Lord as we consider His parables!
 - a. They involve things that many prophets and righteous men desired to hear, but did not hear
- **Mt 13:16-17**
 - b. We have truly been privileged to know *“the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”*!
- **Mt 13:10-11**

2. What shall we do with what we have learned?
 - a. When Jesus first began teaching in parables, He taught the importance of utilizing what we have been given - cf. **Mt 13:12**
 - b. Even in the last parable we have considered in this lesson, He made the same point once again
- cf. **Lk 19:26**
-- Will we be found faithful in our use of what we have been given by Christ in His parables?

My prayer is that with God’s grace and the encouragement provided in this study on **“The Parables Of Jesus”**, each one of us will indeed be found faithful, and one day hear these wonderful words from our Lord:

“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”