



Introduction to Parables

- A parable is like a diamond – a diamond has many faces. Depending on how I hold the diamond it has many views.
- A parable has one primary meaning – one main thrust. But it will have many faces.

A parable is like a prism – one light going in, but many coming out. The various colors are not really different lights, but one light, but refracted differently. That's the way a parable works.



The Kingdom of God

- For Jesus, the white light that shines through the diamond is the Kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is wherever God intersects in human life.
- In Luke it is called the "Kingdom of God", but in Matthew, it is the "Kingdom of heaven." Matthew uses "circumlocution" – using one word for another. Whenever you see "heaven" in Matthew you should read "God." You are being taught about God, not heaven.

The Kingdom of God

- In Matthew, the “Kingdom of heaven” is not referring to some place you go to when you die. The Kingdom of God is not something that will happen in the future. It is right now. It’s in your face. It is amongst us. It is wherever God intersects us in life. “The Kingdom of God is at hand.” It is a right now reality.
- Illustration – Attending a symphony and going early. You see the glimpses of the players warming up. So with the Kingdom of God now. We get glimpses. We experience it right now. It is whenever love is shared, forgiveness is granted.

The Kingdom of God

- The Kingdom of God comes from God, but it also comes from us. It is fueled by passion and passionate living? The passion of the kingdom is what brings light into the darkness.
- Jesus is trying, in his parables, to teach you some God consciousness – to see God in the mundane things of life.
- God is everywhere and in everything and especially in the mundane things of life.

Some basics behind the parable

- Teaching with a parable is like teaching in a one-room school house. You have many different levels of learners before you.
- You start by raising a question, then explore that with more questions, urging your hearer to dig deeper. Then give them a parable, some handles, to grab a teaching.
- Each learner will be able to learn at his or her level. So the parable allowed Jesus to teach the masses, and teach them with a story that will hit them on their level.

Immediate Context – Matt. 20:1-16

- There are times when Jesus wants people to question what they are doing based on Scripture. Or He would challenge them to reconsider the traditional way idea on the basis of Scripture.
- This parable is grounded in the teaching of David. We see Jesus’ love of the outsider in the way he challenges the insider.

Immediate Context – Matt. 20:1-16

- The hiring of day laborers – a common practice even to today.
- The parable is not really about money. Jesus spoke about money because we desire it so much.
- Peter has asked the question: “What’s in it for us?” (19:27)
- Jesus says: Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.” The Kingdom of God is a great reversal. What matters here won’t matter in the Kingdom.

Immediate Context – Matt. 20:1-16

- The setting for the parable would have been familiar. The owner agrees to pay the workers a denarius for a 12 hour day. Both agreed.
- He hired others at different times of the day. The times are significant because they are times of prayer.
- When evening came he paid the workers. Those who worked an hour received a denarius. Naturally, the all-day workers quickly calculated what they would receive.

Immediate Context – Matt. 20:1-16

- Their complaint: “You have made them equal with us.” But he did them no wrong.
- The parable emphasizes the right of the land owner to do what he sees fit. He can demonstrate grace to whoever he chooses.
- Our problem is whether we think the person receiving the same is “worthy.”

Immediate Context – Matt. 20:1-16

- The Gospel message of Jesus is: “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven (God) is at hand”
- Imbedded in the parable is the concept of repentance. It means to ‘turn around’. Return back to the divine image in which you were created.
- Are we prepared to operate in a world where there are no people of privilege, where people did not receive more or less kindness, where there are no favors, no insiders, but all receive the exact same grace of God?

Immediate Context – Matt. 20:1-16

- The employer – God
- Laborers who worked all day – the insiders; those who have privilege connections.
- The one hour workers – they are the outsiders, who have no previous connection.
- The wages are the rewards we receive in the Kingdom. In the Kingdom there is equality.

Jesus is using Scripture

- Jesus’ teachings, especially in Matthew are connected to Israel and to King David.
- Genealogy of Matthew is in sets of 14.
- DVD (David’s name in Hebrew) = 14 in Hebrew numbers. David is the prototype of the Messiah.
- 1 Sam 30:21-25 – The spoils of battle went to all the warriors, even the ones who guarded the baggage.
- King David made an eternal reference.

The salvation message: equal pay for unequal work.

- What does it mean for us? Either we see ourselves as one who worked all day or as a short timer.
- What is just? What is fair? What is God really like?
- Where does this actually affect your relationship with other people?
- It helps us understand God, but it also heightens the reality of accepting others into the family of believers.

What secrets about the Kingdom are being revealed?

1. When you came to faith, it doesn’t matter when you did, or how much you did.
2. When God is shining more favor on someone else, it doesn’t matter.
3. When Jesus is more generous with others than he is with me, then it doesn’t matter, but our reward is all the same.

Word Play– Mine and Thine

- 1 What is mine is mine, and what is thine is thine. This is reality
- 2 What is mine is thine and what is thine is mine. He is ignorant
- 3 What is mine is thine and what is thine is thine. He is the saint
- 4 What is mine is mine and what is thine is mine. This is the crook.

Jesus: What is mine is thine, and what is thine is thine.
