

A Study of the **Parables** of Christ

*Mysteries
of the
Kingdom
of
Heaven*

Cody **Chesser**

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Questions on each parable originate from the book “Parables of Our Lord” By Jeff Asher. Lessons from that book have been reordered and condensed to a 12-week format.

For Jeff’s Full book, visit <https://www.padfield.com/>

Lesson 1: Why did Jesus teach in Parables?

The Parables of Jesus

Lesson Readings

Matthew 13:10–17, 7:7–12; 11:16–20; John 6:60–69; Mark 4:10–34; Isaiah 6:8–13; Luke 8:9–18

Thought Questions

1. How would you define a parable?
2. What does Jesus say is the purpose of speaking in parables in Matthew 13:10–17?
3. What should be our take away from Luke 8:16–18?
4. Jesus often finishes a parable or a teaching with the statement, “He that hath ears to hear let him hear?” What does this mean?
5. What characteristic must a man have in order to understand the parables of Jesus?
6. What things hinder understanding the parables of Jesus?
7. How does God give more to him who has and take away from him who has not?

Lesson 2: Parables on Evangelism – Part 1

The Parable of the Sower

Lesson Text

Matthew 13:3–8,18–23

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who is the sower?
3. What is the seed?
4. What do the four different soil types represent?
5. What do the birds represent?
6. What does the sun represent?
7. What do the thorns represent?
8. What are the characteristics of the good ground?
9. With what does the good ground produce?
10. Why do you suppose that all good ground does not yield the same?

Lesson 3: Parables on Evangelism – Part 2

The Parable of the Seed Growing of Itself

Lesson Text:

Mark 4:26–29

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who is the sower?
3. What is the seed?
4. What is the relation of the sower to the seed springing and growing up?
5. What does the statement, “the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself,” suggest?
6. What is the “fruit” that is in view in this parable?
7. What does the progression of “the blade” to “the ear” to “the full corn in the ear” describe?
8. Who is he that puts in the sickle?
9. Unto what “harvest” does the parable refer?
10. What is the relation of the seed to the harvest?

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Lesson Text:

Matthew 13:31,32

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Unto what is the kingdom of Heaven compared?
3. What striking characteristic of the mustard seed is emphasized in this comparison?
4. What does the mustard seed become? (Use a Bible dictionary to get a proper view.)
5. Unto what Old Testament prophecy is this parable similar?
6. What characteristic of the kingdom does the mustard seed portray?
7. How is the potential greatness of the kingdom illustrated in this parable?
8. How was the beginning of the kingdom like the mustard seed?
9. What do the birds of the air represent in this parable?
10. From what is the greatness of the church determined?

The Parable of the Leaven

Lesson Text:

Matthew 13:33

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. What does Jesus say the kingdom of Heaven is like?
3. Describe the kind of leaven used in Jesus' day?
4. How does this leaven work?
5. What does the leaven represent?
6. What does the woman represent?
7. Where does the woman place the meal? What may this signify?
8. What attribute of leaven does Jesus emphasize?
9. How does leaven work?
10. Why is leaven an appropriate symbol for both bad and good?

The Parable of the Drag Net

Lesson Text:

Matthew 13:47–50

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Unto what is the Kingdom of Heaven likened?
3. What kind of net is this?
4. Where is this net cast?
5. Who draws this net to shore?
6. When is this net drawn to shore?
7. What do those that draw the net to shore do?
8. To what does Jesus say this refers? (Matthew 13:49)
9. What do the vessels represent?
10. Who are the bad that are cast away?

Lesson 4: Parables On Saving The Lost

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Lesson Text:

Luke 15:3–7

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who does the shepherd represent?
3. Who does the lost sheep represent?
4. Who are the ninety-nine sheep in the fold?
5. What does the shepherd do? Why?
6. How long does the shepherd search? What does this signify?
7. When the sheep is found what does the shepherd do? What might this represent?
8. After finding the sheep and returning home what does the shepherd do? What is this?
9. In Matthew 18 Jesus tells this parable as an illustration of what truth?
10. What application of the parable is made that applies to the local church now?

The Parable of the Lost Coin

Lesson Text

Luke 15:8–10

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who does the woman represent?
3. Who does the lost coin represent?
4. What was the coin's real value? (see a dictionary)
5. What does the woman do when she realizes the coin is lost?
6. What does this imply about the coin's worth to the woman?
7. What does the woman do when she finds the coin? What does this represent?
8. What significance do the candle and the broom have?
9. Who in the audience is to be compared and contrasted with the woman in the parable?
10. What does the found coin represent?

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Lesson Text:

Luke 15:11–32

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who does the younger son represent?
3. Who does the father represent?
4. Who does the elder brother represent?
5. How came the younger son to be in the foreign land?
6. What thing was necessary for the young man to return home?
7. How does the father receive the younger son?
8. What do the robe, shoes, ring and merrymaking in the parable represent?
9. What is wrong with the attitude of the elder son toward his brother? What does this signify?
10. What did the elder son refuse to accept from the younger brother?

Lesson 5: Parables On Our Spiritual Work

The Parable of the Talents

Lesson Text:

Matthew 25:14-30

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who is represented by the businessman?
3. Who is represented by the three servants?
4. What is a talent? (use a Bible dictionary)
5. On what basis does the businessman bestow his goods upon each of his servants?
6. What do the businessman's servants do with his talents?
7. How is it that both servants were good and faithful?
8. Why was the one talent man condemned?
9. What is the description of Christ which the one talent man gives? Is it accurate?
10. What is the difference between Matthew's account of the Parable of the Talents and Luke's account of the Parable of the Pounds?

The Parable of the Unfruitful Fig Tree

Lesson Text

Luke 13:6-9

Thought Questions

1. What is the Background of this parable?
2. What does the fig tree represent?
3. What does the barrenness of the fig tree represent?
4. Who is represented by the man who owns the tree?
5. What is meant by the vine-keeper wanting to cut down the tree?
6. What is the significance of the year delay that the vineyard keeper requested?
7. What can we take away from this parable?

The Parable of the Two Sons

Lesson Text:

Matthew 21:28–32

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who is this “certain man” ?
3. What did he own? What does this represent?
4. What did he ask each of his two sons to do?
5. What did the first son say? Who does this represent?
6. What did the second son say? Who does this represent?
7. What did the first son do? The second son?
8. What question does Jesus ask his hearers?
9. What application does Jesus make of their answer?
10. Whom does Jesus say will enter the Kingdom of Heaven?

Lesson 6: Parables on Forgiveness

The Parable of the Two Debtors

Lesson Text:

Luke 7:41-43

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who does the money lender represent?
3. Who does the debtor owing five hundred pence represent?
4. Who does the debtor owing only fifty pence represent?
5. What is the significance of the difference in their indebtedness?
6. What did these two men have in common?
7. Is there any difference in the relative magnitude of their debts?
8. What did the money lender do for both of these men?
9. What was the difference between their indebtedness?
10. What was Simon's problem?

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

Lesson Text:

Matthew 18:21-35

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who is represented by the king in this parable?
3. Who is represented by the unmerciful servant in this parable?
4. Who does the other servant represent? How much did he owe?
5. What is the significance of the ten thousand talent debt owed to the king?
6. What does the king do for his servant? What does this represent?
7. What does the servant do to his fellow-servant? What does this symbolize?
8. What does the king do when he learns of the action of his servant?
9. What should the servant have done for his fellow-servant?
10. What punishment did the servant receive?

Lesson 7: Parables On Service To Others

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Lesson Text

Luke 10:25–37

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
3. "Who is my neighbor?"
4. What happened to the man of whom Jesus spoke?
5. Who happened to come by? What did he do?
6. Who next happened by? What did he do?
7. Who finally came by and helped the man? What did he do?
8. What word does Jesus use to describe this man's action? What does it mean?
9. What lesson was Jesus trying to teach the lawyer?
10. Who is a neighbor?

The Parable of the Sheep and Goats

Lesson Text

Matthew 25:31-46

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. What is the separation being discussed in vs 32-33?
3. What is the standard by which these individuals are separated?
4. Why did the righteous ask the question in vs 37-38?
5. Why do you think this parable followed right after the parable of the talents?

Lesson 8: Parables On Humility

The Parable of the Unworthy Servants

Lesson Text

Luke 17:7–10;

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who does the servant represent?
3. Who does the householder represent in this parable?
4. What is the obligation of the servant toward the master?
5. What obligation does the householder have toward the servant?
6. What will a master not say to his servant? Why?
7. To what does Jesus compare this truth about servant/master relations?
8. In what sense is this servant unprofitable? (cf. Matthew 25:23)
9. Is our service to God a matter for which He must be grateful? (Why or why not?)
10. Harmonize Luke 17:7 and Luke 12:37.

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Lesson Text:

Luke 18:9-14

Thought Questions

1. Who went up to the temple to pray?
2. Describe the Pharisee.
3. Describe the Tax Collector.
4. With whom did the Pharisee compare himself in his prayer?
5. To whom did Jesus say the Pharisee prayed?
6. What is the character of his prayer?
7. What did the Tax Collector pray?
8. What is the character of his prayer?
9. Who went home justified?
10. On what basis did Jesus make this determination?

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

Lesson Text

Luke 14:7-11

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. What does this wedding feast represent?
3. Why is the man in the parable being asked to change seats? (either time)
4. What are some things that this story may equate to for us?

Lesson 9: Parables On Jesus's Mission

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

Lesson Text

Matthew 21:33–45

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who does the householder represent?
3. What is the vineyard?
4. Who are the tenants?
5. Who are the servants whom the householder sent to the tenants?
6. What did these servants come seeking? What do these represent?
7. Who does the householder send last of all? Who is he?
8. What did the tenants want to seize? What is this?
9. What will the householder do to these wicked tenants? When will he do this?
10. Who is the nation unto whom the Kingdom will be given?

The Parable of the Fig Tree

Lesson Text

Matthew 24:32-35

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. In the context of the parable, what are the tender branches and leaves indicating for you?
3. What is Jesus saying is "right at the door"?
4. What is this parable warning it's hearers about?

The Parable of the Bridegroom & His Attendants

The Parable of the New Cloth on Old Coat

The Parable of the Wine in Old Wineskins

Lesson Text

Matthew 9:14-17

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of these three parables?
2. Who is the bridegroom in the parable?
3. What is being spoken of when the bridegroom is taken away from them?
4. The second two parables mention something old vs something new. What is being alluded to?

Lesson 10: Ready for the Lord's Return – Part 1

The Parable of the Delaying Servants

Lesson Text

Matthew 24:45-51, Luke 12:35-48

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who is the master?
3. Who is the servant?
4. What is the coming of the master representing?
5. Why does the servant delay even though he knows the master will eventually return?

The Parable of the Ten Virgins (No Questions)

Lesson Text

Matthew 25:1-13

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who do the wise virgins represent?
3. Who do the foolish virgins represent?
4. What do the lamps of oil represent?
5. What does the shut door represent, when the foolish virgins return from the dealers?
6. When the foolish virgins return, why is the door not reopened for them?

Lesson 11: Ready for the Lord's Return - Part 2

The Parable of the Rich Man & His Barns

Lesson Text

Luke 12:16-21

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. What problem did this rich man have?
3. What was his solution to the problem?
4. What did this rich man forget regarding his life?
5. What did the rich man say to his soul?
6. Who spoke to the rich man? What did He tell him? What did He ask him?
7. What happened to the rich man?
8. Unto whom does Jesus compare this rich man?
9. What does Jesus teach men to do after giving this parable?
10. What sin was Jesus addressing in this parable?

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

Lesson Text:

Matthew 20:1–16

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. To what does Jesus compare the Kingdom of Heaven?
3. What does the vineyard owner do early in the morning, at the third hour, sixth hour, ninth hour and eleventh hour?
4. What did the lord agree to pay those hired first? What did he promise the rest?
5. What reason did the eleventh hour laborers give for standing idle all day?
6. What did the lord pay all the servants?
7. What did those who were hired first think they should receive?
8. What did they receive? How did they act concerning it?
9. What justification did one of them offer for his complaint?
10. How did the lord reply?

The Parable of the Great Banquet

Lesson Text:

Luke 14:15–24

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Who is the certain man? What does his supper represent?
3. Who are they that are first invited and expected at the feast?
4. What three excuses did these guests offer? What do these signify?
5. Who does the man next invite? Who are they?
6. Who does the man next send his servant to invite to the feast? Who are they?
7. What is the significance of there being room at the supper?
8. What judgment does the man pass upon those that were bidden and did not come?
9. What three other brief parables does Jesus give in this connection?
10. What is the main lesson of all three?

Lesson 12: Parables on The Kingdom of Heaven

The Parable of the Weeds

Lesson Text:

Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. What two seeds are involved in this parable? What do they represent?
3. Where did the sower sow the good seed? What does this represent?
4. What explanation is given for the presence of weeds in the field? Who is this?
5. Who is the Sower?
6. What solution is given for the removal of the weeds?
7. When will this be accomplished and by whom?
8. Who are the weeds?
9. Explain how Christ's kingdom has those who are wicked in it?
10. What does the rooting up of the weeds imply?

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

Lesson Text:

Matthew 13:44

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable? To whom is Jesus speaking?
2. Unto what is the kingdom of Heaven compared? (cf. Proverbs 2:4; Job 3:21)
3. Who is the man which finds the treasure?
4. What does the man do when he finds the treasure?
5. What does the man buy?
6. What significance does the field have in this parable?
7. What is the treasure which is in the field? What significance is there in its being hidden?
8. How does the man feel about selling all that he has?
9. Do the actions of the treasure hunter pose a moral problem? (Deuteronomy 22:1–3)
10. What is the one great lesson of this parable?

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

Lesson Text:

Matthew 13:45,46

Thought Questions

1. What is the background of this parable?
2. Unto what does Jesus liken the Kingdom of Heaven?
3. For what was this man seeking?
4. How is the emphasis of this parable different from that of the Hidden Treasure ?
5. Who is represented by the merchantman?
6. What does the goodly pearl represent in this parable?
7. What does the merchant man do in order to obtain the one pearl of great price?
8. What character traits are demonstrated in the merchantman which must be present in the one that would enter the Kingdom of Heaven?
9. What is the main lesson of this parable?
10. How does one accomplish what this merchant accomplished relative to the Kingdom?

Alternate Notes Section

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