

The Bulletin

Meeks Street Church of Christ

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"Parables"

By Jeremy W. Goen



Matthew 13:13, *"Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear; nor do they understand."*

During His earthly ministry, as Jesus went about preaching and teaching, He frequently used parables. Many of the most often remembered sayings of Jesus are His parables. This year for our Family Bible Study (June 6-10, 7pm) we will be studying: Spreading The Gospel - The Sower (Mt 13:3-9,18-23); Forgiveness - The Unmerciful Servant (Mt 18:21-35); Being

Prepared - The Wise And Foolish Virgins (Mt 25:1-13); Helping Others - The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37); Wasteful Living - The Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32).

THE DEFINITION OF "PARABLE"

A transliteration of the Greek "parabole" (para-bow-LAY) means: "to place beside, to cast alongside." As defined by Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, "signifies a placing of one thing beside another with a view to comparison." They have been described as "a story that places one thing beside another for the purpose of teaching." "It puts the known next to the unknown so that we may learn." A parable can usually be identified by the use of the word "like" (Mt 13:31-33).

AS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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

THE PURPOSE OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

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

Even though the primary purpose in telling parables was to conceal the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" from the multitude! Another purpose was to reveal! Once the disciples understood the basic meaning of the parables, the comparison of the "known" (earthly) truths with the "unknown" (heavenly) truths would shed further light on the unknown. Therefore, with the help of the Lord's explanation of His parables we can learn more about "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 13:34-35).

THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

As suggested by Matthew 13:11 the general theme of the parables of Jesus is "The kingdom of heaven. Several of the parables illustrate this for they start with, *"The kingdom of heaven is like..."* (Mt 13:24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47). Indeed, "the kingdom of heaven" was the theme of Jesus' itinerant ministry (Mt 4:17, 23) and His sermon on the mount (Mt 5:3,10,19-20; 6:10,33; 7:21).

There are three "sub-themes" stressed in the parables: (1) The character of the Kingdom found in The Parable of the Mustard Seed; The Parable of the Leaven; The Parable of the Hidden Treasure; and The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price. (2) The character of the King found in the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard and The Parable of the Lost Son. (3) The character of the King's subjects found in the parable of the Good Samaritan and the Parable of the Persistent Widow.

INTERPRETING THE PARABLES OF JESUS

Two extremes to avoid when studying or interpreting the parables of Jesus are (1) Seeking to find some spiritual truth in every little detail and (2) Saying that there is only ONE spiritual truth in each parable.

For proper interpretation we must learn from the explanations Jesus gave in those parables He explained. Understanding the parable of the sower helps us to understand other parables, "And He said to them, *"Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"* (Mk 4:13). Jesus therefore went on to explain that parable.

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For proper interpretation we must look for the central truth of the parable, making sure that any other truths gleaned from the parable are in harmony with it. We must consider carefully the context of Jesus words and that means we need to seek for an introduction or an application which may give insight as supplied by either the Lord Himself, or His inspired writers

For proper interpretation we **MUST NOT** use the parables to formulate new doctrine! We must remember, parables were originally told to conceal, so they are not always that clear in their meaning. Therefore, we **MUST NOT** try to build a case for a doctrine based solely on a parable.

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. As we study these parables for Family Bible study it is our hope we will appreciate more fully 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).

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!

"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" (Rom. 16:25-26).

Spotlight On A Bible Verse:

Ephesians 6:1

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."

After speaking of the responsibilities of husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul now turns his attention to children. Children need to obey their parents "in the Lord". This means according to the Lord's authority. The apostle Paul says they need to do it because "this is right"! God calls obedience "right" and it is "right" in every culture on earth.

However, long before the apostle was alive, obedience to parents was emphasized by the Lord (Lev. 19:3; Prov. 1:8, 6:20, 23:22). This is because disobedient children (of all ages) are repugnant in the eyes of men and of God.

Children, examine yourselves. Are you obeying your parents?

- Jarrod Jacobs

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Sam Johnson, J F Dancer, Robbie, Sheila, Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Sandra Oliver, Chad Harris, Randy Ferrell (Brandi's brother in law), Eli Johnson, Burt Ward, Jamie Jones, Janet Boren, David Boren, and Dianne Johnson.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Paul Johnson
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: *"Becoming Separated From The World Pt. 1"*

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Workbook: Jerry Kennemur
Colossians
Author: Donnie V. Rader
Starting Page & Question: *Page #40 Question #10*

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Fred Johnson
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Russell Briggs
Scripture Reading: *2 Corinthians 6:16-18*
Song Leader: Jerry Kennemur
Lord's Supper: Doug George
Assisting: — —
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: *"Becoming Separated From The World Pt. 2"*
Closing Prayer: Blake Briggs

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

May 24, 2023

Auditorium Bible Class: Russell Briggs
Workbook: Ezekiel
Author: Dan King
Starting Page & Question: *Page #8, Question #1*
Invitation: Brian Meade
Song Leader: Tim Harris Sr.
Closing Prayer: Nathan Meade



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And Our Facebook Page.

For sermon videos, articles, and announcements.

“Becoming Separated From The World” Pt. 1

Lesson Text: **Leviticus 20:22-26.**

I. God Has Called His People To Be Separated From Others.

- What Separated Noah From Others? **Hebrews 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5.**
- God Called Abraham To Leave His Family & Land- **Gen. 12:1-5; Heb. 11:9-10.**
- God Called Israelites to Separate From Egypt- **Deuteronomy 5:15.**
- **Deuteronomy 7:1-11 (vs. 9-11).** Commanded To Keep Separated.
- When Israel Lost Their Distinctiveness.... **2 Kings 17:15.**
 - Being Like Other Nations: Sin, Idolatry, Not Keeping God’s Commandments....
- Jesus Sanctified (Set Apart) His Disciples- **John 17:17.**

II. Christians Are Called To Be Separated From Others.

- We Are Separated Or Sanctified To Christ- **Colossians 1:12-14.**
- **1 Peter 2:9.** We Are To Live Differently- **1 Peter 2:1-2.**
- **Titus 2:11-14.** Deny Ungodly And Worldly Lusts....
- **Ephesians 2:1-7.** No Longer Walk The Path Of The World...
- **James 1:27 (ESV)** We Are To Be *“Unstained From The World.”*

III. It Is An Intentional Decision Every Christian Must Make.

- We Must Decide To Be *“In The World, But Not Of The World...”* **John 17:14-17.**
- Do We Let God’s Word Really Transform Us? **Romans 12:1-2.**
- Or Does The World Dictate Our Thinking & Behavior? **2 Peter 1:4.**
- We Cannot Escape The World By Withdrawing From It— Monasticism.
 - Simeon Stylites (390-459) Lived 37 Years On Top Of A Platform In Syria.
- But Rather, We Should Be Distinct Enough To Influence It- **Matthew 5:13-16.**
 - Why? If The World Sins, And We Sin— No Separation! No Good Influence.
- We Must Still Be Converting Honest Souls From The World.
 - **Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16.**
- Christians Make A Conscious, Intentional Decision To Live For Jesus.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:15.** This Makes Us Separated From The World...

“Becoming Separated From The World” Pt. 2

Lesson Text: **2 Corinthians 6:14-18.**

IV. How Do We Become Separated From The World?

- When The World Uses Corrupt Speech? Do We Separate Ourselves?
 - Christians Will Use Clean Speech- **Ephesians 4:29.**

- When The World Dresses Immodestly? Do We Separate Ourselves?
 - Christians Will Wear Modest Dress- **1 Timothy 2:8-10.**

- When The World Obsesses With Sports? Do We Separate Ourselves?
 - Christians Will Not Get Too Involved In Worldly Matters- **2 Timothy 2:4.**

- When The World Gets Mean-Spirited In Politics? Do We Separate Ourselves?
 - Christians Will Not Act With Animosity Toward Others- **1 Tim. 2:1-4; Phil. 3:20.**

- When The World Only Pursues Sinful Pleasures? Do We Separate Ourselves?
 - Christians Will Pursue Righteousness- **2 Timothy 2:22.**

V. Why Is It So Difficult To Be Separate From The World?

- It’s Not Easy To Be Different From The World!
 - We May Feel Like: *“Why Should I, When Everybody’s Doing It?”*
 - **Exodus 23:2; Matthew 7:13-14.**
 - We May Feel Like We Are Missing Out On Things Others Enjoy.
 - The World Places Strong Pressure To Conform To Its Ways! **Romans 12:2.**
 - And When We Genuinely Become Separated, The World Hates Us.
 - **John 15:19; Luke 6:22.**

VI. Become Separated For Now— Be Separated For Judgment!

- Separation From Sin Allows God To Use Us- **2 Timothy 2:21.**
- Separation From The World Means God Saves Us From Punishment.
 - **Colossians 3:5-6; Matthew 25:31-34.**
- We Become Separated For Our Good- **Deuteronomy 6:24.**