BIBLE TOPICS · NEW TESTAMENT

The Parables of Jesus

Earthly Stories with Heavenly Meaning · Matthew 13:34

About forty parables	The first	The best loved	The call
Matthew, Mark, Luke	The sower	The prodigal son	Ears to hear

MATTHEW 13 · MARK 4

Why Jesus Taught in Parables

The Gospels tell us plainly why Jesus taught this way and how His hearers were to listen.

FORETOLD

Spoken by the Prophet

The Messiah would teach in parables.

"I will open My mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old"

PSALM 78:2

TO REVEAL

Given to the Disciples

Truth for those who come to Him.

"it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven"

MATTHEW 13:11

TO CONCEAL

Hidden from Hard Hearts

Those who refused the light lost it.

"because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."

MATTHEW 13:13

EXPLAINED

Opened in Private

He explained them to all who asked.

"and when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples."

MARK 4:34

TO REMEMBER

Pictures from Daily Life

Seed, sheep, coins and bread.

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow"

MATTHEW 13:3

TO OBEY

Ears to Hear

A parable calls for a response.

"Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

MATTHEW 13:9

KEY VERSE

"All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake He not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

Matthew 13:34–35 (KJV)

The Parables of Jesus Chart

MATTHEW · MARK · LUKE

The Parables of Jesus

Earthly stories with heavenly meaning

Thirty parables and their lessons · King James Version

The Kingdom of Heaven

1. **The Sower** — Four soils, four hearts — MATTHEW 13:3–23
2. **The Tares** — Wheat and tares until harvest — MATTHEW 13:24–43
3. **The Mustard Seed** — A small start, a great tree — MATTHEW 13:31–32
4. **The Leaven** — The kingdom spreads through all — MATTHEW 13:33
5. **The Hidden Treasure** — Worth everything we have — MATTHEW 13:44
6. **The Pearl of Great Price** — Sell all to gain it — MATTHEW 13:45–46
7. **The Net** — The angels sever the wicked — MATTHEW 13:47–50
8. **The Seed Growing** — God gives the growth — MARK 4:26–29

Grace and the Lost

9. **The Lost Sheep** — The shepherd seeks the one — LUKE 15:3–7
10. **The Lost Silver** — Joy over one who repents — LUKE 15:8–10
11. **The Prodigal Son** — The father runs to meet him — LUKE 15:11–32
12. **The Two Debtors** — Forgiven much, loves much — LUKE 7:41–47
13. **The Labourers** — The last shall be first — MATTHEW 20:1–16
14. **Pharisee and Publican** — The humble are justified — LUKE 18:9–14
15. **The Great Supper** — Compel them to come in — LUKE 14:16–24

Loving and Praying

16. **The Good Samaritan** — Show mercy to all — LUKE 10:30–37
17. **The Rich Fool** — Be rich toward God — LUKE 12:16–21
18. **The Unmerciful Servant** — Forgive as you are forgiven — MATTHEW 18:23–35
19. **The Unjust Steward** — Faithful in the least — LUKE 16:1–13
20. **The Friend at Midnight** — Ask, seek, knock — LUKE 11:5–10
21. **The Unjust Judge** — Always pray, never faint — LUKE 18:1–8

Be Ready: Judgment and His Return

22. **The Two Builders** — Build on the rock — MATTHEW 7:24–27
23. **The Two Sons** — Doing the father's will — MATTHEW 21:28–32
24. **The Wicked Husbandmen** — They killed the son — MATTHEW 21:33–44
25. **The Marriage Feast** — Many called, few chosen — MATTHEW 22:1–14
26. **The Barren Fig Tree** — Bear fruit while there is time — LUKE 13:6–9
27. **The Faithful Servant** — Found so doing — MATTHEW 24:45–51
28. **The Ten Virgins** — Watch and be ready — MATTHEW 25:1–13
29. **The Talents** — Use what God gives — MATTHEW 25:14–30
30. **The Pounds** — Occupy till I come — LUKE 19:11–27

KEY VERSE

"All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake He not unto them."

MATTHEW 13:34 (KJV)

BibleStudyForAll.com · Scripture quotations from the King James Version

THE PARABLES OF JESUS AT A GLANCE · PART 3 OF 5

Parables of the Kingdom and of Grace

MATTHEW 13

The Parables of the Kingdom

In one day by the sea Jesus told seven parables about the kingdom of heaven: how it comes, how it grows, and how much it is worth.

THE SOWER

Four Kinds of Ground

Only the good ground bears fruit.

"But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit"

MATTHEW 13:8

THE TARES

Wheat and Tares

Good and evil grow together until the harvest.

"Let both grow together until the harvest"

MATTHEW 13:30

THE MUSTARD SEED

Small Beginnings

The smallest seed becomes a tree.

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field"

MATTHEW 13:31

THE LEAVEN

Quiet Growth

The kingdom works its way through all.

"till the whole was leavened."

MATTHEW 13:33

THE TREASURE AND THE PEARL

Worth Everything

Gladly give all to have it.

"and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

MATTHEW 13:44

THE NET

The Final Sorting

The angels will separate the wicked from the just.

"So shall it be at the end of the world"

MATTHEW 13:49

LUKE 15 · LUKE 18

Parables of Grace and the Lost

These parables show the heart of God, who seeks sinners, forgives freely and welcomes the humble.

THE LOST SHEEP

The Shepherd Seeks the One

He leaves the ninety and nine.

"and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"

LUKE 15:4

THE LOST SILVER

Sweep Until It Is Found

One lost coin matters.

"there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

LUKE 15:10

THE PRODIGAL SON

The Father Runs

A son comes home to a welcome.

"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

LUKE 15:24

THE TWO DEBTORS

Forgiven Much

The one forgiven most loves most.

"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much"

LUKE 7:47

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

The Humble Go Home Justified

God hears the sinner who asks for mercy.

"and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

LUKE 18:14

THE GREAT SUPPER

Come, for All Is Ready

The invitation goes out to all.

"Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in"

LUKE 14:23

> *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."*
>
> Luke 19:10 (KJV)

Loving, Praying and Being Ready

LUKE 10 · 11 · 12 · 16 · 18

Parables About Loving and Praying

Jesus used parables to show how His people should treat others, use their money and keep on praying.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Who Is My Neighbour?

Anyone who needs our mercy.

“and when he saw him, he had compassion on him”

LUKE 10:33

THE RICH FOOL

Rich Toward God

Life is more than possessions.

“So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

LUKE 12:21

THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

Forgive from the Heart

We have been forgiven far more.

“Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?”

MATTHEW 18:33

THE UNJUST STEWARD

Faithful in Little

Use earthly things with heaven in view.

“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much”

LUKE 16:10

THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT

Keep Asking

Bold, persistent prayer.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

LUKE 11:9

THE UNJUST JUDGE

Never Give Up

God will answer His people.

“that men ought always to pray, and not to faint”

LUKE 18:1

MATTHEW 21–25 · LUKE 19

Parables About Judgment and His Return

Many of Jesus’ last parables warn the proud and call His followers to be ready and faithful until He comes again.

THE TWO BUILDERS

Build on the Rock

Hear Jesus’ words and do them.

“I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock”

MATTHEW 7:24

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

The Rejected Stone

The leaders rejected God’s Son.

“The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner”

MATTHEW 21:42

THE MARRIAGE FEAST

Many Are Called

Come in the garment the King provides.

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

MATTHEW 22:14

THE TEN VIRGINS

Keep Your Lamp Burning

The bridegroom came at midnight.

“and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.”

MATTHEW 25:10

THE TALENTS

Well Done

Use what the Master has given you.

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant”

MATTHEW 25:21

THE POUNDS

Occupy Till I Come

Stay busy for the absent King.

“Occupy till I come.”

LUKE 19:13

> *“Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”*
>
> Matthew 24:46 (KJV)

What We Learn and Key Themes

FOR TODAY

What the Parables Teach Us Today

Jesus did not tell stories only to be enjoyed. Each one calls for a response.

1

Be Good Ground

Receive the Word and let it grow.

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only"

JAMES 1:22

2

Come Home to the Father

No one is too far gone.

"I will arise and go to my father"

LUKE 15:18

3

Seek the Kingdom First

It is worth more than anything.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness"

MATTHEW 6:33

4

Show Mercy

Be a neighbour to those in need.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

MATTHEW 5:7

5

Forgive Freely

As God for Christ's sake forgave you.

"forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

EPHESIANS 4:32

6

Watch and Be Faithful

Live ready for His return.

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

MATTHEW 24:44

KEY THEMES

Six Truths the Parables Teach

Jesus told many parables, but they return again and again to six great truths.

1

The Kingdom Grows

From a tiny seed to a great tree.

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed"

MATTHEW 13:31

2

Hear and Bear Fruit

The heart is the soil where God's Word grows.

"But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit"

MATTHEW 13:23

3

God Seeks the Lost

Heaven rejoices over one sinner who repents.

"there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

LUKE 15:10

4

Grace, Not Merit

The humble sinner goes home justified.

"God be merciful to me a sinner."

LUKE 18:13

5

Love Your Neighbour

Show mercy to anyone in need.

"Go, and do thou likewise."

LUKE 10:37

6

Be Ready for His Return

Watch, and be faithful until He comes.

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

MATTHEW 25:13