

The Parables Of Jesus



By John Chowning
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DEDICATION

This book is joyously dedicated to the beloved brethren of the Algood church of Christ in Algood, Tennessee. They were the initial listeners. As per their usual custom, God's Word received a reverent, attentive reception. Video recordings of nearly every sermon when each was originally preached can be watched on the Facebook page "It is Written".

FOREWORD

Many years ago, I read a statement which indelibly burned itself into my memory: The parables are not bedtime stories intended to put you to sleep; they are rousing calls to action. How accurate! After spending more than a year preaching through these exquisite, masterful illustrations of heavenly truths using common earthly realities, I stand in even greater awe of the matchless Master Teacher. Truly, the accuracy of the statement “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46) is undeniable.

I have always marveled at God’s creative forethought in which He intentionally constructed this world so that it would accurately reflect spiritual truths. Such foreknowledge and ability elude my feeble mind’s capacity of complete comprehension. Only One who knows the end from the beginning could so create such a physical environment for humanity!

An additional marvel to me is how each detail in every parable is so precise and purposeful. Though unauthorized by Scripture, it seems clear to me why some past interpreters of the parables fell prey to an allegorical approach for every parable. Not one illustration has any chaff or filler; there is an utter economy of words. What a matchless Master Teacher.

I pray that this volume of sermon outlines will be sufficient enough that everyone will benefit from attending to its contents. I claim no originality to the truths extracted and deserve all blame for its shortcomings.

Huge THANK YOUs are in order to the following people:

- Brother Ron and sister Carolyn Gilbert for their suggestions and encouragement to begin, continue, and complete this undertaking.
- Brothers Bobby Rothfus, Derek Crawford, and Deuel White — the elders of the Algood congregation — who served during the months this series of sermons was preached and continuously support the preaching and teaching of the Bible, nothing more and nothing less.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Parables of Jesus

Why Jesus Spoke in Parables -1	4
Why Jesus Spoke in Parables -2	5
Beware of Being Wayside Soil	6
Beware of Being Rocky / Shallow Soil.	7
Beware of Thorny Soil	8
Be Good Soil.	9
The Parable of the Sower: The Seed.	10
The Sower	11
The Parable of the Other Sower	12
Five Sobering Truths in the Parable of the Tares	13
The Parable of the Mustard Seed	14
The Parable of the Leaven.	16
Five Truths Illustrated in the Parable of Hidden Treasure	17
The Parable of the Merchant Man.	17
The Parable of the Dragnet	19
Jesus' Parable on Forgiveness.	20
Four Truths About Eternal Life	21
Jesus' Illustration of the Second Greatest Commandment	22
Jesus' Illustration of Prayer.	23
Jesus' Parable on Covetousness	24
Jesus' Parables on Preparedness	25
Jesus Parable on Repentance	27
Jesus' Parable on Humility	28
Jesus' Parable on Opportunity	29
Jesus' Illustration of Why He Receives Sinners	30
The Tragedy of the Far Country	31
Jesus' Illustration of Repentance	32
The Parable of the Father's Heart	33
Jesus' Portrait of the Self Righteousness	34
Jesus' Parable on Prudence.	35
Jesus' Illustration of What Money Can and Cannot Buy	37
Erroneous Doctrines	38
Jesus' Parable on the Essentiality of Prayer	39
Jesus' Illustration of Righteousness	40
Jesus' Parable on Misconceptions About His Kingdom.	41
Jesus' Parable on Service in His Kingdom.	42
Jesus' Parable on Spiritual Neutrality.	44
Jesus' Parable on the Essentiality of Righteousness.	45
Jesus' Parable on the Goodness and Severity of God.	46
Jesus' Parable on Watchfulness	48
Jesus' Parable on Faithfulness	49
Jesus' Parable on the Final Judgment.	50

“WHY JESUS SPOKE IN PARABLES” – PART 1

TEXT: Matthew 12:21-12:52; Mark 4:1-34; Luke 8:4-8

- I. Introduction
 - A. To introduce our study of the Parables, I want to consider the question: “Why Jesus Spoke in Parables?”
 - B. He was not the first or the last person to do so. -> cf. Balaam **Numbers 23-7**; Nathan in **2 Samuel 12:1ff**
 - C. Without a doubt he was the best preacher to speak in parables
- II. “Jesus Spoke in Parables” Because...
 - A. The wisdom of the Father Enabled It.
 1. “Parable” = “to throw beside”
 - a. It is “Heaven’s truth taught using earth’s tools”
 - b. The Scriptures are saturated with this fact
 - cf. “lion” (**1 Peter 5:8**) “light”(**Matthew 5:14**); “salt” (**Matthew 5:13**); reaping and sowing (**Galatians 6:7**); sheep and shepherds (**Psalm 23**; **John 10**); marriage (**Ephesians 5:32**)
 - cf. the “I Ams” in **John** -> bread (**6:35**); light (**8:12**); door (**10:7**)
 - cf. conversations of Jesus -> birth (**John 3**) water (**John 4**)
 - c. The parables -> sowing seed (**Matthew 13:3**); mustard seed (**Matthew 13:31**); leaven (**Matthew 13:33**); shepherds (**Matthew 25:32**); fig tree (**Luke 13:6**).
 2. Parables are meaningful because of how God created the physical world to reflect spiritual truths. **Romans 11:33-36**
 - B. The Mission of the Son Necessitated It.
 1. The parables of Jesus are concentrated in three specific times of Jesus’ ministry
 - a. #1= Intense opposition from enemies and family
 - cf. **Mark 3:6, 21-35** note **Matthew 13:53ff**
 - Jesus was not in league with Satan; He was in league with God
 - Theme = Kingdom parables **Matthew 13:24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47**
 - b. #2: Final six months of His ministry **Luke 10-18**
 - Peter’s confession **Luke 9:18-22** cf. **Matthew 16:21**
 - After transfiguration cf. **Luke 9:31**
 - After **Luke 9:51**
 - Note: **Luke 11:14 ff** -> possibly, a 2nd attack
 - Theme = purpose of cross and preparation of apostles
 - c. #3: Final week **Matthew 22-25**
 - After triumphal entry **Matthew 21**
 - Theme = Judgment
 2. In the first two occasions, Jesus’ time had not yet come for Him to discontinue teaching, nor for Him to be crucified cf. **Matthew 13:10-15**
 - He continued His public ministry of teaching and preaching while putting enemies in a holding pattern.
 - C. The Revelation of the Spirit required it.
 1. cf. **Matthew 13:34-35**; **Psalm 78:2**
 2. Note: **Luke 24:46**; **Matthew 5:17-19**
- III. Conclusion **John 7:46**

“WHY JESUS SPOKE IN PARABLES” – PART 2

TEXT: Mark 4:21-25; Luke 8:16-18

- I. Introduction
 - A. We began a study of the parables and why Jesus spoke in parables by noting that the wisdom of God enabled it, the mission of the Son necessitated it, and the Spirit of God predicted it.
 - B. Today, the Human Side of Why Jesus Spoke in Parables
- II. “Jesus Spoke in Parables, “Because...
 - A. The Urgency of Hearing **Mark 4:21-32**
 1. Each gospel records this exhortation at the close of the parable of the sower.
Matthew 13:9; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8
 2. This exhortation is recorded 16 times in the N.T. **Matthew 13:43; Mark 4:23; Matthew 11:15; Mark 7:16; Luke 14:35; Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9**
 3. Hearing Is Urgent Because...
 - a. Of the Essentiality of Faith **Hebrews 11:6** and **Romans 10:17**-> no other way!
 - b. **Matthew 13:13-15** is possible -> ever present threat/reality
 - c. There are four types of ears/hearts
 - 1) Hard
 - 2) Shallow } **Mark 4:4-8**
 - 3) Crowded
 - 4) Honest and Sincere
– only one is acceptable to God
 - d. Of the purpose of truth **Mark 4:21-32**
– Jesus spoke parables to try to stir ears to hearing -> “you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink;” however, you can put salt in its oats
– Increase *spoude* (diligence, motivation, earnestness) = a universal, personal, specific, essential, dynamic obligation!
 - B. You reap what you sow; therefore, WHAT a person hears is essential **Mark 4:24-31**
 1. “Doctrine is not Important” is a LIE! **John 8:44 cf. 2 John 9**
 - a. Why were there dull ears in Jesus’ day?
–**cf. Mark 3:22-30, 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12** Satan is a liar and the father of lies
 - b. Exposure to falsehood will harden your heart to the point of spiritual bankruptcy!
Mark 4:24-25
 - c. Note the importance of truth: **John 8:31-32; 1 Peter 1:22-23; 1 Timothy 2:3-4**
 2. “Continuously take heed to what you continuously listen to” (literal translation) — garbage in, garbage out
 - C. You reap more than you sow; therefore, HOW a person hears is essential. **Luke 8:16-18**
 1. “Continuously take heed to how (in what way) you are continuously hearing” **Luke 8:18**
 2. Note parable of soils
 - a. Do you guard God’s word from Satan’s birds? **Luke 8:5, 12**
 - b. Do you hold onto God’s word in time of difficulty? **Luke 8:6, 13**
 - c. Do you rid your heart of thorns, so God’s word is not choked out? **Luke 8:7, 14**
 3. How much *spoude* do you have? – You gotta wanna
 - III. Conclusion
Acts 17:11 is what Jesus is looking for!

“BEWARE OF BEING WAYSIDE SOIL”
TEXT: Matthew 13:4, 19; Mark 4:4, 15; Luke 8:5, 12

I. Introduction

A. There can be no doubt why Jesus spoke the parable of the sower-> **Mark 4:9; Matthew 13:9; Luke 8:8**

1. In this parable our Lord exposes the 4 types of ears/hearts that exist

2. In the first three soils, Jesus describes 3 things:

- a. The heart's spiritual defect
- b. Satan's plan of attack
- c. The spiritual disaster that results

B. Let's consider the wayside soil

II. “The Wayside Soil”

A. The heart's spiritual defect: Hardness

1. Background-> fields were planted outside the city walls with narrow paths between the fields

– Ground of the path could/would be fruitful if it had not been packed down by constant foot traffic

2. The world is used by Satan to pack down and harden your heart and mine; it seeks to fill our ears with noise that drowns out God's word

3. God's people must obey **Proverbs 4:23; Philippians 4:8**

a. Child-like heart disappears quickly if it is not guarded vigilantly

b. “O Be Careful Little and Big Eyes What You See; O Be Careful Little and Big Ears What You Hear!”

B. Satan's Plan of Attack = prevent/hinder understanding

1. Like Math, God's word ought to always make sense

2. Falsehoods:

a. Only an “ordained” (Catholic) priest can understand Scripture.

b. Only with Holy Spirit's guidance can Scripture be understood-> If Holy Spirit cannot make the Scriptures understandable when written, how can you be sure He can with a still small voice, goosebumps, or feelings?

3. **2 Timothy 3:14-15; Ephesians 5:17**

4. **cf. Matthew 13:14-15, 19** *sunio* = to send together, to comprehend, to perceive clearly = the grasping of the truth with the whole being

5. Note **Nehemiah 8:8**

C. The Spiritual Disaster that Results:

1. The Identification of the birds

a. Wicked one” *poneros*= hurtful, vicious, malicious one

b. “Satan” *satanas* = the accuser

c. “The devil” *diabolos* = the slanderer

2. “Straight way/Immediately the sown word is taken away” **Mark 4:15**

3. “Lest they should believe and be saved”

III. Conclusion: Beware of...

A. Satan's continuous effort to harden your heart

B. Satan's determined effort to hinder understanding

C. Satan's vigorous effort to immediately take God's word from you!

“BEWARE OF BEING ROCKY/SHALLOW SOIL”
TEXT: Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21; Mark 4:5-6, 16-17; Luke 8:6,13

I. Introduction

A. Jesus’ most frequent exhortation-> **Matthew 13:9**

1. This parable illustrates the 4 types of human hearts/soils
2. Each of the three soils had fatal spiritual flaws

B. “Beware of Being Rocky/Shallow Soil”

II. “The Rocky/Shallow Soil”

A. Its spiritual defects

1. Not:
 - a. Refusal to hear the word like the wayside soil
 - b. Lack of receptiveness like the wayside soil
2. Is: Lack of depth = “did not have much earth”
 - a. **Matthew 13:5** literally “on account of not having depth of earth”
 - b. Hardness of heart covered by good soil
3. Hardness of heart caused by unrealistic/unprofitable thinking about:
 - a. The fundamental nature of Christianity **2 Timothy 4:7**
 - b. The inevitable failure of a divided heart **Matthew 6:24**
 - c. The demands of godly living -> endurance (**Mark 4:17**) **Ecclesiastes 7:8;**
Revelation 2:10; cf. *hupomeno* in **Hebrews 12:1-3**
 - d. The necessity of sunshine-> tribulation, temptations/trials, persecution are essential to spiritual growth **cf: James 1:2-8, cf: Psalm 1:3**
4. “No root in themselves”
 - a. Lack of character = superficiality and shallowness of personality
 - b. Lack of earnestness, stick-to-itiveness/grit **James 1:2-4**
 - c. Failure to genuinely count the cost **Luke 9:57-62; John 6:53-66; Luke 14:25-26**

B. Satan’s Attack = Sunshine!

1. Affliction/Tribulation **Mark 4:17/Matthew 13:21** = suffering due to circumstances or the antagonism of people which burdens one’s spirit **cf. Matthew 4:1-2ff.**
2. Persecution (**2 Timothy 3:12**) = to be pursued, the object of another’s target
3. Temptations/Trials (**Luke 8:13**) = tests from God or by Satan which are divinely permitted **cf. Job; Matthew 4:3ff.**

C. The Tragic Results

1. A season of faith (**Luke 8:13**) that is followed by another season “Believed for a while” – cf. seasons in nature – faith ought **not** to be a “season” in one’s life!
2. “Are offended” (*skandalizo*)
 - a. “They are being put in a snare/trap” i.e. Satan’s trap
 - b. Present passive indicative pictures “a continuous action received by the subject in present time” = “fallen into Satan’s snare and remains there until deliverance occurs”
cf. Galatians 6:1-2
3. Apostasy *aphistemi* = “to stand away from”
 - a. “To depart, draw away” (**Acts 5:37**), “fall away, refrain, withdraw self” (**1 Timothy 6:5**), “depart from” (**1 Timothy 4:1**)
 - b. cf. Vine’s “Apostasy” **1 Timothy 4:1, Hebrews 3:12** = a loss of relationship with God, spiritual death

- III. Conclusion: **Matt 13:9**-> “He who has ears...”
- A. Take heed to “what you hear” **Mark 4:24**
 - B. Take heed to “how you hear” **Luke 8:18**
 - C. “Keep thy heart with all diligence” **Proverbs 4:23**
-

“BEWARE OF THORNY SOIL”

TEXT: Mark 4:7, Matthew 13:22, Mark 4:18-19, Luke 8:14-15

- I. Introduction
 - A. Jesus’ most frequent exhortation-> **Matthew 13:9**
 - 1. Parable of sower illustrates the 4 types of human hearts
 - 2. Each of the first three soils had deadly flaws
 - B. “Beware of Being Thorny Soil”
- II. “Beware of Being Thorny Soil”
 - A. Its spiritual defect: Crowded heart **cf: Acts 2:46** is not “all this and heaven too” – cannot grow corn and thorns
 - 1. Thorns...
 - a. Are a fact of life since the Fall **Genesis 3:18**
 - b. Grow easily and quickly
 - c. Are difficult to remove **cf: Rich Young Ruler**
 - d. Require drastic measures **cf: John 15:1-8**
 - 2. How to Grow Spiritual Thorns:
 - a. Believe that spiritual vigilance is optional **1 Peter 5:8**
 - b. Do not examine your priorities **Matt 6:33**
 - c. Consider faith in God’s providence as unimportant **Romans 8:28**
 - d. Never learn to be content **Philippians 4:11-13**
 - e. Look upon/view spiritual warfare as a weekend activity — Christ has an army, not a National Guard!
 - B. Satan’s Plan of Attack: Distraction via worldly concerns in daily life
 - 1. “Go out” (**Luke 8:14**) = a journey, walk-> Daily Life **John 17:15**
 - 2. Distractions:
 - a. Our needs – Cares of this world-> “Divide and Conquer” **cf. Matthew 6:25-34**
– Poor man = next meal; Rich man = How can I get more? Middle class = Am I keeping up with neighbors?
 - b. Our trust – Deceitfulness of riches -> “Deceive and Covet”
– Wrong thinking about material wealth **cf. Ecclesiastes 5:10-13; Luke 12:15**
 - c. Our likes – Pleasures of Life -> “Delight and Control”
– “nice things”
 - d. Our wants – Desire for other things -> “Distract and Consume”
– Life is full of exchanges
– Failure to discern between needs and wants
 - C. The Resulting Spiritual Disasters
 - 1. Suffocation “Choked” **cf. Luke 8:42**

- a. Who wants to die this way physically?
 - cf. asthma sufferers
- b. How many Christians die of spiritual suffocation?
- 2. Unfruitful = “of no profit” **1 Corinthians 14:14**
 - cf. **Ephesians 5:11, 2 Peter 1:8**
- 3. No mature fruit-> “Perfection” = to bring to complete end or an end in view

III. Conclusion:

- A. **Matthew 13:9** -> Use ears to hear
 - B. **Mark 4:24** -> Take heed to what you hear
 - C. **Luke 8:18** -> Take heed to how you hear”
 - D. **Proverbs 4:23** -> Keep your heart will all diligence
-

“BE GOOD SOIL”

TEXT: Mark 4:8; Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15

I. Introduction

- A. Jesus’ most frequent Exhortation: **Matthew 13:9**
 - 1. Parable of the sower illustrates why this is true!
 - 2. “Beware”: wayside, rocky, and thorny soils and their fatal flaws.
- B. Today the Good soil -> “Be Good Soil”

II. “Be Good Soil”

A. Things true about Good Soil

- 1. It does not have the spiritual defects of...
 - a. Hardness like wayside; has obeyed **Proverbs 4:23**
 - b. Shallowness like rocky soil; cf. **Matthew 6:24**
 - understands the necessity of sunshine = trials, tribulations, persecution;
 - has spiritual grit
 - c. Divided heart like thorny soil; cf. **Proverbs 4:23**
- 2. It has resisted Satan’s attacks
 - a. “Understands and receives” unlike wayside soil
 - b. “Keeps” = held onto tenaciously unlike rocky soil
 - c. “Brings forth fruit” unlike thorny soil
- 3. It has avoided the spiritual disasters of:
 - a. Unbelief like wayside soil
 - b. Apostasy like rocky soil
 - c. Fruitlessness like thorny soil -> cf. **2 Peter 1:8-9, 2:20-22**

B. Characteristics of Good Soil

- 1. **Proverbs 4:23** -> Good soil is cultivated, not discovered
 - a. “Honest” (*kalos*) = unbiased, teachable, wanting to learn; a right attitude toward God
 - b. “Good” (*agathos*) = desires to do what is right; right in character
 - c. Result – “Heareth” -> present active participle cf. **Psalm 1:2, 119:11; James 1:21; Acts 17:11, 16:30, 33**
- 2. **Mark 4:24** -> What

- a. NOTE: Heareth the word -> biblical faith vs unbiblical faith **Romans 10:17; 2nd Timothy 4:3-4**
- b. cf. **Acts 17:11** cf. **Matthew 15:13, 3-9**
- 3. **Luke 8:18** -> **How**
 - a. Accepting — “Hear and receiveth” **Mark 4:20** -> Present Indicative – “to admit with approval” cf. **Proverbs 3:12 (in Septuagint); 1 Timothy 5:15; Hebrews 12:6**
– God’s word is **not** a menu! – cf. **1 Thessalonians 2:13, 4:8** ->vv 1-7
 - b. Understanding — “hear and understandeth” (*sunemi*) Present Active Indicative = To bring together **Acts 8:30** cf. **Nehemiah 8:8 (in Septuagint)**
– God’s word makes sense
 - c. Possessive — “hear and keepeth” -> Present Indicative = Hold firmly, hold fast; possess **1 Timothy 5:21; Hebrews 3:6; 1 Corinthians 7:30; Romans 1:18**
– cf. Philadelphia **Revelation 3:8, 10**
 - d. Fruitful – “hear and bringeth forth (*karpophoreo*) – Present Indicative
– All 3 gospel writers include this trait = “Fruit bearing” -> Impacts and transforms conduct cf. **Acts 2:37; Romans 12:2; Acts 20:32**
– NOTE: “with patience” = endurance (*hypomone*) -> no resting on past accomplishments cf. **Luke 13:6-7**
 - e. Productive – “produceth” (*poieo*) -> Present Active Indicative = To make
– Repetitive harvests
– Harvests may vary in quantity, but there is always a harvest!

Conclusion: **Matthew 13:9**

“THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER: THE SEED”

TEXT: Luke 8:11

- I. Introduction
 - A. One of the challenges of “rightly dividing”/Correctly interpreting the parables of Jesus is determining when a simple parable or an allegorical parable is under consideration.
 - 1. Simple parable = focused upon illustrating one simple truth cf. **Luke 18:10-14, cf. v.9**
 - 2. Allegorical parable = each component of the parable illustrates something cf. **Luke 15:11-32**
 - B. Because the parable of the sower is an allegorical parable, we are going to study another component of the parable- The Seed **Luke 8:11** Oh, the wisdom of God the Father to design the physical world to teach profound spiritual truth!
- II. “The Seed is the word of God “Because....
 - A. It is essential to a harvest.
 - 1. **Romans 10:13-17** is true.
 - 2. Calvinism is false
 - B. Its harvest (amount) is determined in part by the amount of seed sown **2 Corinthians 9:6**
 - 1. **Mark 4:20** is true because **1 Corinthians 3: 6-7** is true!
 - 2. Numeral church growth is directly related to amount of seed sown.
 - 3. Soil analysis is not the same as sowing!

4. NOTE: Nowhere in the world does the soil come to the seed; the seed must be taken to the soil!!!
 - C. Its power is not seen in its appearance
 1. Seed is small and insignificant; not glamorous or ostentatious
 2. It is powerful -> **cf. Mark 4:15 –note Daniel 2:34-35, 44**
 - D. To produce fruit certain conditions are essential
 1. Conditions include:
 - a. Cultivation and continued attention to the soil
 - b. Broad casting of the seed = it must be planted **Psalm 119:11**
 2. If these conditions are not met, the lack of harvest is **not the seed's fault** cf. **Luke 8:18**
 - E. It does not produce instant results.
 1. No such thing as instant church growth or instant spiritual maturity.
 2. **Acts 8** was in large part the result of **John 4** – Note **2 Timothy 4:2**
 - F. Seed always produces after its kind. **Genesis 1:11-12**
 1. NOTE: **Acts 2:42**
 - a. It did not produce division **cf. Acts 2:44- 47**
 - b. It did produce saints (**1 Corinthians 1:2**)/Christians **Acts 11:26**
 - c. It did produce the church = “stone cut without hands” (**Daniel 2**) **Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:16**
 2. To grow watermelon in different states you don't need a huge plant; just the same seed.
 - G. It loses its identity if altered -> cf. GMOs (genetically modified organisms) Each variety of vegetable has a unique seed!
 1. NOTE: **Mark 4:24**
 2. cf. **Galatians 1:6-10**
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“THE SOWER”

TEXT: Mark 4:3, 14, 26-29

- I. Introduction
 - A. The parable of the Sower is not a “simple” parable; it’s an allegorical parable = each component part of the parable illustrates something
 1. Seed = word of God
 2. Wayside soil = hard hearts of Jesus’ critics
 3. Rocky soil = Fickle crowds cf. **John 6:66**
 4. Thorny soil = Disciples like Judas
 5. Good soil = Faithful disciples like other apostles
 - B. Remaining component is the Sower
- II. “Three significant truths about the Sower”
 - A. The sower went out to sow **Mark 4:3**
 1. He knows that there is no harvest where no seed has been sown -> cf. **Matthew 25:24** “no accidental harvest”
 2. He recognizes that action must be taken
 - a. “-er” ending indicates a doer of the root word -> **cf. “teacher”, “learner”, “preacher”**

- b. Impossible to be a “sower” “in name only!”
- 3. He understands that he must go to the field; the soil does not come to him
 - a. cf. “go and teach” **Matthew 28:19**, “go and preach” **Mark 16:15**; Not -> “go and build a building”
 - b. NOTE:
 - 1) Jesus was sent **John 17:8, 3:17, 34; 4:34**
 - 2) cf. **Mark 1:37-39**
 - c. **Romans 10:13-15**

B. The sower sows the word **Mark 4:14, 26-27**

- 1. He must have faith in the power within the seed **Hebrews 4:12 cf. Mark 4:26-27** — the sower’s job is not to explain but believe it!
- 2. He must take heed to what he sows **cf. 1 Timothy 4:16; Leviticus 19:19**
- 3. He ought to be unconcerned about a lack of seed supply = no famine or scarcity of supply **2 Corinthians 9:6-10; Matthew 24:35**

C. The sower and the harvest **Mark 4:28-29**

- 1. The harvest is not reaped on the same day as the sowing = Patience **Galatians 6:7-9, 10; 2 Timothy 4:2**
- 2. The sower is not blamed for the soil’s failings nor praised for the good soil’s success – sower’s attitude ought to be **Luke 17:10**
- 3. A poor harvest ought not to deter future sowing
NOTE: Paul in **Acts 13-14**
– cf. **13:50-51** in Antioch—Paul’s response **cf. 14:1**
– cf. **14:2-5** in Iconium—Paul’s response **cf. 14:7**
– cf. **14:19** in Lystra—Paul’s response **cf. 14:21**

Conclusion

- 1. “Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom brother?”
-

“THE PARABLE OF THE OTHER SOWER”

TEXT: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

I. Introduction

A. Matthew 13 actually records two parables about a sower

- 1. **Matthew 13:1-3-9, 18-23** really does not fully explain the accusation of **Matthew 12:22-24**
- 2. **Matthew 13:24-30** -> The parable of the other sower -> does explain the accusation leveled against Jesus **cf. vs 36** “Parable of the Tares”

B. “Jesus’ Description of the Other Sower”

II. “The Other Sower is... “

A. A lawless trespasser -> cf. “his field” vv. 24-25

- 1. The right of private property is Biblical -> **Exodus 20:15**
- 2. A person and a country has right to privacy and personal property without trespassers
- 3. **v. 38** -> Satan is a criminal/trespasser.

B. A covert operator-> v 25 “while men slept”

1. = under the cover of darkness cf. **1 Thessalonians 5:4-7**
 2. Excellent reason for curfews for all Christians!
 - C. A hostile enemy -> **vv. 25, 39**
 1. **Verse 25** -> “enemy” = foe; one who is hostile -> done out of malice and spite
 2. **Verse 38** -> “wicked one = one who causes increased labor, pain, sorrow, hardship cf. **Genesis 3:16-19**
 3. **Verse 39** -> “devil”= accuser, slanderer; the sowing of tares profited him nothing
 - D. A deceitful counterfeiter **vv. 26-27**
 1. Skilled and intentional imitation -> actions were not known until days later
 2. cf. **2 Corinthians 11:13-15, 2 Peter 2:1; Matthew 7:15ff**
 - E. A malicious poisoner **vv. 25-27** “tares”
 1. The seed of a tare is poisonous to any who consume it -> can cause sleepiness, nausea, convulsions, even death
 2. Illness and death are acceptable outcomes!
 - F. A crafty farmer **vv. 28-29**
 1. The root system of tares intertwines with the roots of the wheat! Impossible to uproot evil without destroying the good
 2. A “lose/lose” mentality = rock and a hard place – cf. **Genesis 3** -> God’s options: compromise holiness or lose fellowship!
 - G. A purposeful planner **v. 41** Purpose of his “crop”:
 1. “offense” (*skandala*) = to create spiritual hindrances which prevent active faith or encourages apostasy
 2. “iniquity” (*anomia*) = lawlessness; spiritual chaos and disorder anti - **1 Corinthians 14:40**
 - H. A doomed criminal **v. 42**
 1. NOTE: **Matthew 25:24**
 2. “wailing” = loud expressions of grief; “gnashing” of teeth = grinding of teeth caused by intense pain
 - III. Conclusion -> **Matthew 13:43!**
-

“FIVE SOBERING TRUTHS ILLUSTRATED IN PARABLE OF THE TARES”

TEXT: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

- I. Introduction
 - A. Last week’s consideration of “The Parable of the Other Sower”—Satan is a lawless trespasser, covert operator, hostile enemy, deceitful counterfeiter, malicious poisoner, crafty farmer, purposeful planner, doomed criminal
 - B. Today, “Sobering Truths Illustrated in the Parable of the Tares”
- II. “Five Sobering Truths Illustrated in the Parable of the Tares”
 - A. The essentiality and nature of worldwide evangelism **vv. 24-25, 38**
 1. Essentiality -> God’s Field = the world (**v. 38**) needs planted. cf. **Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15**
 - a. The enemy plants tares worldwide.

- b. Imagine having a 100-acre field of farmland and only 2 acres gets planted! cf. v. 25
“while they slept”
- 2. The Nature of evangelism is not carnal weapons (like Islam) – spiritual weapons (2 **Corinthians 10:3-5**) which convert and transform tares into wheat! cf. **2 Kings 4:38-41**
- B. The absolute necessity of sound doctrine v. 26
 - 1. “Tares” are poisonous; false doctrine is not harmless cf. “doctrine of devils” in **1 Timothy 4:1**
 - 2. “Sound” doctrine = healthy (*hugies/hugiano* cf. “hygiene”)
 - 3. Note: **Mark 4:24, 1 John 4:1, Galatians 4:16**
- C. The fundamental and fatal flaw of the social gospel vv. 27-29
 - 1. Modernism’s denial of Supernaturalism produces the social gospel of fighting poverty, disease, etc.
 - 2. Social gospel has morphed into cosmic social justice = “Fairness”
- D. The Certainty of the Harvest vv. 30, 39-43
 - 1. Cosmic Justice will occur but not before the harvest day!
 - 2. “The Harvest”
 - a. Separation of righteous and wicked v. 42
 - b. Oblivion but not extinction for the wicked v. 40 – “burned” is Present passive Indicative = “are being burned”
 - c. Punishment of spiritual criminals in kingdom v. 41
 - 1) Those who create spiritual hindrances for others cf. **Matthew 18: 6-7**
 - 2) Those who are spiritually lawless – cf. **Colossians 3:17, Romans 16:17**
 - d. Eternal reward of the righteous v. 43
- E. The glorious Triumph of the Kingdom of heaven v. 24
 - 1. Jehovah has a universal rule over all because of creation = Sovereignty of God; all creation is governed by His providence **Matthew 5:45**
 - 2. Jehovah has a unique rule over those who have willingly renounced their citizenship in the kingdom of darkness and been translated into His Son’s kingdom **Colossians 1:13-14**
 - 3. At the present time, God’s kingdom has both tares and wheat in it
 - 4. In His everlasting Kingdom (once the harvest is completed) there will only be voluntary citizens who will “shine forth” (*eklampto*) = to be resplendent; to beam, radiant brilliance.

“THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED”
TEXT: Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:31-32; Luke 13:18-19

I. Introduction

- A. In the life of Christ, there were 3 specific periods of time that His use of parables are recorded:
 - 1. **Matthew 13** in response to **Matthew 12:22-24**
 - 2. **Luke 10:19** -> after **Luke 9:51**
 - 3. **Matthew 21-25** -> after **Matthew 21:1** (final week)

- B. In **Matthew 13**, Jesus states 8 parables
1. Two are allegorical -> Sower and Tares
 2. Five are not allegorical.
 - a. Mustard Seed vv. **31-32** |
 - b. Leaven vv. **33** | **Kingdom**
 - c. Hidden Treasure vv. **44** | **of Heaven**
 - d. Merchant Man vv. **45-46** | **is like....**
 - e. Dragnet vv. **47-50** |
 - f. Scribe v. **52** |
- C. Mustard Seed and Leaven focus on external and internal power and influence of the gospel
1. Mustard Seed = phenomenal growth of the church
 2. Leaven = phenomenal transformative power of the gospel
- II. “Four Truths Illustrated in the Parable of the Mustard Seed”
- A. The significance of the church (kingdom of heaven) is not measured by its size → “least of all seeds”
1. A local congregation’s importance is not based upon its popularity or size.
 2. God’s ways are not man’s ways (**Isaiah 55:8-9**); God’s values are not man’s (**Luke 16:15**).
 - a. cf. **Isaiah 53:2, 11:1**
 - b. cf. the entire life of Christ **John 1:46**
 3. The church is significant because of what deity says and thinks about it, not humanity! Father calls it His family; Christ calls it His bride; Holy Spirit calls it His temple!
- B. The growth of the church demonstrates God’s wondrous power.
1. Trees were used in Old Testament to describe mighty kingdoms cf. **Ezekiel 31:7-9**; **Daniel 4:10-12, 21-22**
 2. Who but God can take the smallest seed and produce a giant herb?
 3. Who but God can take 12 men, 120 disciples (**Acts 1:15**) and fill Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the utter most parts of the earth with the gospel (**Acts 1:8**)? cf. **Acts 2:47**; **Mark 16:20**; **1 Corinthians 3:4-9**
 4. Who but God can do the same thing today in a world of over 8 billion people?
- C. Membership in the church is for the all “the birds”
1. No specific species of bird is named.
 2. The gospel is for...
 - a. Devout religious people **Acts 2:5, 10:2**
 - b. Idolaters **1 Thessalonians 1:9**
 - c. Immoral **1 Corinthians 6: 9-11**
 - d. Blasphemers, persecutors, et. al **1 Timothy 1:13**
 3. The Gospel is for all **Galatians 3:28**
- D. Focus of the Church is spiritual refuge – “lodge”
1. Not: social status, isolation from reality, fun and games, or entertainment.
 2. “The church is not a great exhibition hall for displaying perfect people; it is an educational institution for the development of imperfect pilgrims.”
 3. cf. **Hebrews 10: 24-25** “edification” = “building up”

“THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN”

TEXT: Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20-21

- I. Introduction
 - A. The third and fourth parables that Jesus spoke in **Matthew 13** focus upon the power and influence of the gospel.
 - 1. Mustard Seed portrays the phenomenal potential growth of the church.
 - 2. Leaven portrays the phenomenal potential for spiritual growth within the church.
 - B. “Five Truths Illustrated in the Parable of the Leaven”
- II. “Five Truths Illustrated in the Parable of the Leaven”
 - A. Size does not determine significance.
 - 1. Compare the amount of leaven with the amount of meal
 - 2. Yeast to dough ratio is 1 tablespoon to 4 cups
 - 3. Remember **Zechariah 4:10**
 - B. Leaven is intentionally distinctive and must remain distinctive to be effective.
 - 1. Note: **Matthew 16:6, 12** where leaven is used in reference to one’s doctrine and practices
 - 2. The doctrine that produces the church is intentionally distinctive, **NOT** denominational
 - a. Distinctive organization **Philippians 1:1; Ephesians 1:21-23**
 - b. Distinctive worship **John 4:24; Ephesians 5:19**
 - c. Distinctive authority **Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 4:6**
 - d. Distinctive fellowship **1 John 1:3; 2 John 9-11**
 - e. Distinctive lifestyle **Romans 12:1; Ephesians 5:3-4; Colossians 3:5-9, 12-17**
 - 3. Like salt, when leaven loses its distinctiveness it is good for nothing **Matthew 5:13**
 - Loss of distinctiveness changes the bride of Christ into a spiritual harlot.
 - C. Leaven must be purposefully placed for it to work -> “hid”
 - 1. Leaven does not grow in dough naturally
 - 2. The church is both called out and the sent back. **John 17:15; Ephesians 5:8-11**
 - 3. The doctrine and practices of the New Testament must be preached, taught, and lived (placed into) the measures of meal.
 - 4. God’s word does not automatically or accidentally end up in one’s heart cf. **Psalm 119:11; James 1:21; Hebrews 4:2**
 - D. Leaven does not work instantly or under all conditions.
 - 1. Instant church growth, personal spiritual growth does not occur.
 - 2. cf. **1 Corinthians 3:6**; Note **Acts 8:5-12** = Philip watered what Jesus planted in **John 4:40-42**
 - 3. cf. **Romans 12:1-2**
 - E. Leaven’s purpose is transformation -> “the whole was leavened”
 - 1. Leaven’s purpose is not beauty or ostentation; it is transformation.
 - 2. Jesus was not ostentatious cf. **Isaiah 42:1-2; Matthew 4: 5-7**
 - 3. Gimmicks, gadgets, and games do not transform; God’s word does **1 Thessalonians 2:13**
 - 4. God’s word needs to transform all of us **Matthew 22:37**

“FIVE TRUTHS ILLUSTRATED IN THE PARABLE OF HIDDEN TREASURE”

TEXT: Matthew 13:44

- I. Introduction
 - A. Next two Parables in **Matthew 13** illustrate the proper conception of the value and importance of the kingdom of heaven cf. vv. **44-46**
 - B. The Parable to the Hidden Treasure makes more sense when one learns that banks did not exist in Jesus’ day
 1. “How do I protect my wealth?”—Ways tried in first century:
 - a. Carry it with me **Luke 10:30**
 - b. Bury in the floor of my house **Mat. 6:19**
 - c. Bury in a field known only to me
 2. In this parable, the third option was the one chosen.
- II. “Five Truths Illustrated in the Parable of the Hidden Treasure”
 - A. The Kingdom of heaven is a treasure....
 1. NOTE: The reign of God in your life is not a philosophy, theory, et. al.
 2. A treasure -> cf. **Ephesians 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:16, 3:8;**
NOTE: **Ephesians 1:3 ff; 1st Peter 1:3-5**
 3. Each must decide to either be like Moses (**Hebrews 11:26**) or Esau (**Hebrews 12:16**)
– when looking at this field, most people saw dirt; somebody found treasure!
 - B. That can be found
 1. What value is a treasure if it cannot be possessed? cf. sunken ships
 2. This man’s discovery was accidental; unlike vv. **45-46** – cf. Ethiopian Eunuch in **Acts 8**
 - C. Which requires personal action -> “he”
 1. Could not be done proxy; could not be inherited
 2. Required personal responsibility
 3. Done lawfully -> the treasure was not stolen cf. un-Biblical plans of salvation
 - D. The action of Joyous Renunciation
 1. Counterfeit, fleeting treasures must be surrendered cf. **Matthew 6:19-21; 19:21**
 2. NOTE: “Joy” not begrudgingly **Luke 14:26**
 - E. The action of wholehearted pursuit
 1. “All”
 2. **Matthew 22:37** requires ALL
 3. Purpose, urgency, earnestness, focus, single mindedness **Matthew 6:33**

“THE PARABLE OF THE MERCHANT MAN”

TEXT: Matthew 13:45-46

- I. Introduction
 - A. Of all the parables in **Matthew 13**, the parable in vv. **45-46** has probably been misnamed the most often.
 1. Jesus says v. **45**
 2. Often this is called the parable of “the Pearl of Great Price” because of v. **46**

3. That is not what is done in naming the parables of vv. 31, 33 and 44!

B. This morning “The Parable of the Merchant Man” not “The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price”

II. “The Parable of the Merchant Man”

A. Three truths it illustrates:

1. The need for intelligent and accurate spiritual discernment within the kingdom of heaven.

a. Compare the merchant’s view of pearls with the pigs of **Matthew 7:6**

b. NOTE: Merchant was looking for “goodly” pearls but found one that excelled – cf. “good” vs. “better” vs. “best” **Philippians 1:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:31**

c. The Christian and excellence **Hebrews 1:4, 8:6**

– “good” is not good enough

– lackadaisical, mediocre, “good enough” worship and service by Christians is condemned in this parable

2. The Necessity of Zeal in Locating Spiritual Treasure

a. “Merchant” = “Journey-er”, pearls were imported into Palestine

b. “Seeking” (present tense) = passionate, urgent, focused, dogged single-mindedness; it is like..

– parents looking for a lost son **Luke 2:45-49**

– a shepherd looking for lost sheep **Matthew 18:12**

– Herod looking for a rival **Matthew 2:13**

– a woman seeking her lost coin **Luke 15:8**

– the enemies of Jesus wanting to find a way to kill Him

3. The sacrificial spirit needed in the kingdom of heaven to obtain spiritual treasure v.46

a. “of great price” cf. **John 12:3** = of extreme value; of great expense

b. “sold all that he had”

B. Who is the Merchant Man?

1. It is definitely true about Jesus.

a. His spiritual discernment **Matthew 16:26**

b. His zeal in locating spiritual treasure -> e.g. woman of Samaria, Matthew, Mary Magdalene, Zacchaeus, Saul of Tarsus, **Luke 15: 1-2**

c. His sacrificial spirit **Luke 19:10; Hebrews 12:2**

2. But Jesus says, “The Kingdom of Heaven” (i.e. the church) MUST:

a. Accurately see the genuine value of the lost – A lost person = pearl of great price

– Pearls are formed by God’s transforming power of sand in an oyster; the saved are humans who are being transformed by the gospel **Romans 12:2**

– Pearls are unique – the only gem that is formed within a living creature; humans are unique—only creature made in God’s image.

– cf. other Biblical portrayal of the lost ->a sheep, a coin, a son (**Luke 15**)

b. Zealously journey to seek the lost **Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15**

c. Willingly sacrifice to secure the purchased redemption of the lost

3. The parable of v. 44 illustrates the extreme value that the lost should place upon the gospel; the parable of vv. 45-46 illustrate the extreme value the church should place upon the lost.

III. Conclusion:

A. Are you seeking goodly pearls/pearls of great price?

- B. When time is no more all the pearls of Great Price will be brought together to adorn the God of Heaven **Ephesians 1:18**
-

“THE PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET”

TEXT: Matthew 13:47-50

I. Introduction

A. Jesus’ final parable of the day

1. Sower and other sower -> two forces of influence in this world
2. Grain of mustard seed and leaven -> phenomenal influence of the gospel within and without
3. Treasure and merchant man -> Intense passion within the church ->for gospel and for the lost

B. The Parable of the Dragnet -> How natural, given the setting -> cf. **Matthew 13:1, 36** and **Matthew 4:13**

II. “Five Significant Truths about the Church”

A. Jesus’ view of the evangelism of the church v. 47 -> “gathered every kind”

1. The net did not enclose every fish in the water – not everyone who hears the gospel will obey it
2. The net was intended to catch every kind of fish -> “kind” =family, race, kindred, nation **Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 3:25**

B. God’s perfect timing for the church, v. 48 “full”

1. NOTE: **Galatians 4:4** *pleroma* with v. 48 *pleroo* — Just as Jesus’ coming was at exactly the right time, so the calling of God’s family/the church home to be with Him will be at exactly the right time!
2. cf. **Matthew 24:36**

C. God’s authority over all things -> “Drew to shore” v. 48

1. While in the water the fish had freedom of choice and mobility -> no coercion or trickery to get into the net.
2. When the net was full, one with greater power and authority drew it to shore.

D. The imperfections and perfection of the church v. 48

1. Not every fish in the net was acceptable to God! **Luke 12:2-3**; cf. **1 Corinthians** setting
2. Being a member of the Church is the starting point of one’s salvation **1 Peter 2:2**; **Colossians 1:27; Galatians 4:19**
3. The perfection of the Church will be after the Judgment **Ephesians 5:27**

E. God’s Expectations of the Church

1. Do not be:
 - a. “Bad” = corrupt, rotten, poor quality, unfit for use cf. **Matthew 7:17-18; Ephesians 4:29**
 - b. “Evil” = something that causes labor, pain, sorrow; i.e. destructive, injurious
2. Be:
 - a. “Good” = *kalos* = beautiful; good, of excellent quality, useful, profitable
 - b. “Just/righteous” -> **Matthew 6:33**

“JESUS’ PARABLE ON FORGIVENESS”

TEXT: Matthew 18:21-35

I. Introduction

A. A fundamental fact about the Kingdom of Heaven is the essentiality of forgiveness.

1. Without forgiveness there is no church.
2. Without forgiveness there is no hope of heaven for any sinner.
3. Fallen humanity does not need any illustrations on justice or vengeance; we understand all too well “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”.

B. Peter’s question and Jesus’ answer in **Matthew 18:21-35** is about forgiveness.

II. “Jesus’ Parable on Forgiveness”

A. The Parable

1. The King and his debtor vv. 22-27

- a. 10,000 = largest number in Roman numeration;
- b. Talents = largest weight used in business transactions
 - 29 talents of gold used in tabernacle **Exodus 38:24**
 - 3,000 talents of gold and 7,000 talents of silver used in temple 1st **Chronicles 29:4**
- c. The servant’s request (vs. 26) = refinance an IOU
- d. The King’s response v. 27 = “paid in full”

2. The forgiven debtor and his debtor vv. 28-30

- a. “Pence” = *denarius* in Greek = Day’s wage **Matthew 20:2**
- b. NOTE the similarity of pleas in vv. 26, 29
- c. Response is not forgiveness or even refinancing the IOU (I Owe You)

3. The King’s response to the unforgiving servant vv. 31-35

- a. v. 34 is the first time the King is angry!
- b. Who feels the least bit sorry for this servant?

B. Four Truths Illustrated

1. The incredible debt that sin incurs vs. 24

- a. Sin is a debt
- b. Sin is an enormous debt
- c. Sin is an un-payable debt
- d. “It is finished” (**John 19:30**) = “Paid in Full”

2. The manifold grace of forgiveness vv. 26-27; **1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 2:7**

- a. God does not refinance the debt of sin!
- b. “Forgive” = to send away so that one is completely released from its guilt **Micah 7:18; Psalm 103:12**

3. God’s unmistakable definition of wickedness vs. 32

- a. It is a heart without patience v. 26
- b. It is a heart without compassion v. 27
- c. It is a heart without mercy vv. 32-33

4. The horrific evil of an unforgiving heart vv. 34-35

- a. What callousness!
- b. If God’s manifold grace does not generate a merciful and forgiving heart in you, then nothing will transform your heart. Your case is hopeless!
- c. To be beggars of God for mercy and tyrants toward one’s debtors is the height of depravity!

III. Conclusion

- When you “forgive”, do you pardon others or simply refinance their debt?
-

“FOUR TRUTHS ABOUT ETERNAL LIFE”

TEXT: Luke 10:25-29

I. Introduction

A. One of the unfortunate results of illustrations is that people remember the illustration, but forget the point.

1. Jesus did not go around telling stories in a haphazard or mindless sort of way.
2. With the illustration of the Good Samaritan it is possible to lose sight of its context.

B. “Four Truths about Eternal Life” gleaned from **Luke 10:25-29**

II. “Four Truths about Eternal Life”

A. Eternal Life is inherited v. 25

1. It is neither unconditional nor earned.
2. NOTE: Jesus did not dispute this man’s belief that something must be done to receive inheritance from God.
3. *kleronoreo* implies a gift based upon a proper relationship with its benefactor – it is not a wage earned by a diligent employee
4. Inheritances are determined by a written will or testament.
5. God still has an offer of an inheritance **1 Peter 1:4**

B. God’s Inheritance of Eternal life is written about v. 26

1. Regardless of Old or New Covenant, God has written the terms of His inheritance cf. **Matthew 22:37-39** NOTE: **Acts 20:32; 1 John 5:13**
2. NOTE: sum of God’s word, not “some” -> cf. “and” v. 27; **Psalm 119:161** in ASV
 - a. Priest and Levite loved God
 - b. “Some” is not **all** of one’s heart, soul, mind, etc.
3. NOTE: the simplicity and conciseness of God’s word **vs. 27**
 - a. Even a lawyer could state it in one sentence!
 - b. Jewish lawyers were notorious for making the simple complex! cf. Mishnah’s complexity
 - c. NOTE: the accuracy of God’s word v. 28

C. Eternal Life requires love of God and fellow man v. 27

1. In **Luke 10:25ff.** the message is: “Do not be so heavenly minded that you are of no earthly good”; in **Luke 12:15ff.** the message is: “Do not be so earthly minded that you are of no heavenly good.”
2. Eternal life is a life-long investment
 - a. “do” (v.25) = one thing cf. **Matthew 19:16**
 - i.e. What is the least I can do and still Inherit eternal life?
 - b. “do” In **vv. 28, 37** = Present Active Imperative 2nd Person Singular – this means a continual pattern of behavior
 - knowing the right answer and doing the right thing are not the same **James 4:17**
 - c. “go” (v. 37) -> Present Imperative – eternal life = obedient sonship

D. Beware of minimizing God's words! v. 29

1. To the lawyer = "neighbor" = a Non-Gentile who lived near by
 2. To Jesus: "neighbor" = any human who is in need that I have a way to help
 3. Beware of misunderstanding, minimizing God's words ->e.g. repentance, faith, church, baptism, forgiveness, love, joy
-

“JESUS’ ILLUSTRATION OF THE SECOND GREATEST COMMANDMENT”

TEXT: Luke 10:30-37

I. Introduction

A. Because of pride, human beings do many foolish things.

1. We boast like Peter when we should be quiet (cf. **Matthew 26:33**).
2. We take extreme risks with our life or health when we should not. cf. **Acts 27: 9ff**
3. We ask questions when we should stop talking cf. **Luke 10:25-29**
4. By the time we reach v. 36, the lawyer probably wished he had kept his mouth shut!

B. Today, “Jesus’ Illustration of the Second Greatest Commandment”

II. “Jesus’ Illustration of the Second Greatest Commandment”

A. Its Shocking Content

1. Not completely possible to hear this with first century ears -> too familiar with it
2. Unfortunately, we easily can view this parable as a pleasant bedtime story, instead of a vivid, booming call to action!
3. 21st century edition:
 - a. Priest = elder in the Lord's church
 - b. Levite = deacon in the Lord's church
 - c. Samaritan = Muslim refugee on a business trip
4. NOTE: Lawyer's response in v. 37 did not include the word “Samaritan”

B. Its noteworthy features

1. “Down” v. 31 indicates direction (v. 30) -> Priest and Levite had been to Jerusalem to the temple and were now heading toward home to Jericho
– Note the Significance of “and” in v.27!
2. “Samaritan” v. 33 is emphatic in the sentence
3. “Two pence” = 2 denari = 2 days wages (**Matthew 20:2**)—about a 2 week stay
4. “Was” = “became” *ginomai*: cf. **John 1: 12, 19**
5. Its application v. 37
 - a. “Go” and “Do” are imperatives
 - b. “thou” is emphatic, personal
 - c. “likewise” = the same as; equally

C. Its Truths

1. It is impossible to separate love of God and love of fellow man.
 - a. You cannot be so “heavenly minded” that we are of no earthly good **Acts 10:38**
 - b. All Christians should be “good for nothing” **Ephesians 2:10**
 - c. NOTE: **Galatians 6:10; James 3: 9-12; 1 John 3:16-18, 4:20-21**
 - d. “Enter to worship; leave to serve” is good sign in a church building

2. Being vs. Becoming a neighbor -> Lawyer vs. Samaritan
 - a. Lawyer: What (one thing) can I do? Who is my neighbor?
 - b. Samaritan: What am I doing? Who can I become a neighbor to?
 - c. All of us either think like the Lawyer or the Samaritan!
 - d. Being a neighbor requires a tape measure. Becoming a neighbor requires a heart of compassion
 3. Loving one's neighbor requires:
 - a. Willingness to be inconvenienced v. **34**
 - b. Courage to act vv. **33-34**
 - c. Compassionate heart v. **33**
 - d. Generosity with one's resources v. **34 Ephesians 4:28**
 - e. The Samaritan's eyes, heart, hands, feet, donkey, and pursue were used in loving his neighbor.
 - f. Being a neighbor is someone who...
 - has compassion for someone in need
 - cares for his specific needs
 - has concern about his future needs
-

“JESUS’ ILLUSTRATION OF PRAYER”

TEXT: Luke 11:1-13

- I. Introduction
 - A. One of the hallmarks of Jesus' life was that He prayed without ceasing
 1. In His life, prayer was not a spare tire; it was the steering wheel.
 2. Because of the vital role that prayer played in His life, **Luke 11:1** occurs.
 - B. Jesus' response contains two parts:
 1. The verbal component of prayer vv. **2-4** – cf. **Matthew 6: 9-13**
 2. The spiritual component of prayer vv. **5-13**
 3. NOTE: To pray, both components must be found -> i.e. vv. **2-4** is not a magical incantation that is to be recited by rote.
 - C. Our focus is on “Jesus' Illustration of Prayer”
- II. Prayer is communicating with God...
 - A. Because of a desperate sense of need vv. **5-6**
 1. NOTE: the desperation arising from need
 - a. Time = midnight
 - b. Hindrances to help ->family in bed, door is locked
 - c. “Stop troubling me” v. **7**
 2. Genuine prayer arises from a sense of desperate need
 - a. cf. Jesus -> **Philippians 2:7,8**
 - b. cf. Woman **Matthew 15:21-28**
 - c. NOTE: “very strong” in **James 5:16**
 - B. That results in reverent shamelessness v. **8**
 1. “importunity” = shamelessness

2. No pretense, decorum; intent to impress; no sense of embarrassment
 3. NOTE: The intentional contrast between friend and heavenly Father
 - a. Friend/neighbor vs. father
 - b. Inconvenient time vs. no inconvenient time
 - c. Three loaves vs. great needs
 - d. Request granted begrudgingly vs. request granted lovingly vv. 11-13
 4. Importunity is a sign of great faith, not weak faith (cf. **Matthew 15:28**)
 - a. NOTE: Present active imperatives of v. 8
 - b. God does not tire of importunity –cf. **Genesis 18:23-33**
 - c. God does not have quotas **Mark 14:36-41; 2 Corinthians 12:8-9**
 - d. **James 1:5** “upbraideth not” = “cast into your teeth”
- C. And extreme boldness vv. 9-13
1. Vigorous faith in God’s love and generous providence should result in boldness, not reluctance.
 2. **Hebrews 4:16** “boldly” = freedom of speech
 3. NOTE: “everyone” of v. 10
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“JESUS’ PARABLE OF COVETOUSNESS”

TEXT: Luke 12:13-21

- I. Introduction
 - A. Wisdom is the ability to look at life the way God does -> to see sin for what it truly is, to value righteousness, godliness, and holiness for the eternal treasures they are.
 1. One significant purpose of scriptures is to make us wise unto salvation **2 Timothy 3:15**
 2. Throughout His ministry Jesus sought to turn people from the path of folly to the path of wisdom
 3. **Luke 12:13-21** is a pointed example of such
 - B. The situation
 1. The crowd v. 1
 2. The interruption vv. 13-14
 3. The warning v. 15
 4. The parable vv. 16-21 cf. v. 22 “disciples”
 - C. Jesus’ parable on Covetousness ->Two points
 1. The immense danger of covetousness v. 15
 - a. “Take heed” -> Present imperative = “keep continuous watch for”
 - b. “Beware” -> Present imperative = “continually be on guard against”
 - c. Covetousness is idolatry **Colossians 3:5**
 2. The utter folly of covetousness vv. 20-21
 - a. Fool” is not a frivolous word in scripture **Psalms 14:1**
 - b. “Fool” cf. **Ephesians 5:17**
 - D. This morning “Beware of Covetousness”
- II. “Beware of Covetousness’ Power...
 - A. To Dement My Mind

1. Farmer had wrong view of life's purpose **cf. v. 19** with **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**
– early retirement vs. eternal retirement
 2. Farmer had improper priorities **cf. v.18 vs. v.21**
 - a. Put his treasures in the wrong storehouses **cf. Matthew 6:19- 21**
 - b. “He who dies with the most toys still dies!”
- B. To Destroy My Heart**
1. Farmer had the cancer of self-centeredness; he had “I” and “my” trouble.
 2. Love of fellow man strangled by covetousness **vv. 17-18**
– **cf. Ephesians 4:28; 1 John 3:17-18; note Mark 14:7**
- C. To Blind My Eyes**
1. The farmer was blind to the limitations of possessions **v. 19**
 - a. “soul” cannot be satisfied with many goods
 - b. **cf. v. 15; Luke 4:4**
 2. The farmer was blind to his relationship to possessions **v. 20**
 - a. Ownership vs. Stewardship!
 - b. **cf. Ecclesiastes 2:18-19**
 3. The farmer was blind to truths about death **v. 19**
 - a. Death is inevitable
 - b. Death is followed by judgment **Hebrew 9:27**
 - c. Death is unpredictable **James 4:14**
- D. To Utterly Ruin My Soul v. 20**
1. He lived like an atheist.
 2. Therefore, he died a fool! **Psalm 14:1**
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“JESUS’ PARABLES ON PREPAREDNESS”

TEXT: Luke 12:35-48

- I. Introduction
 - A. Last week we considered Jesus’ Parable on Covetousness in **Luke 12: 13-21**
 1. Immediately following the parable, He deals with the two fundamental follies of covetousness **vv. 22-35**
 - a. Its misplaced treasure **vv. 22-34**
 - b. Its ruination of the soul **v. 35**
 2. In the Parable on Covetousness, the farmer was blind to the inevitability, certainty, and unpredictability of death (**v.20**)
 3. In **verses 36-40** Jesus tells a parable focused on the essentiality of being prepared for death
 4. This initial parable prompts a question by Peter **v. 41** which is answered by a second parable **vv. 42-48**
 - B. Both parables have the same message – > Be Prepared
- II. “Jesus’ Parable on Preparedness”
 - A. The First Parable **vv. 35-40**
 1. The Requirements of Preparedness **v. 35**

- a. Focused vigilance -> “girt loins” = ready for action cf. **1 Peter 1:13**
 - cf. **Ephesians 6:14** with **Revelation 1:13**
 - cf. **Hebrews 12:1** and **1 Kings 18:45-46**
- b. “waiting” for the certain, yet unheard, knock vv. **36, 38, 40** – cf. v. **20**
- c. “watching” (*gregoreo*) = vigilance
 - cf. **1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Peter 5:8; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; Revelation 3:2-3**
 - NOTE: **Acts 20:31, 28-30; cf. 6:4**
- d. Prompt action/diligence in duty ->v. **35** “burning lamps”
 - to keep a lamp burning continuously required diligence
 - NOTE: “immediately” in v. **36** is the expected response time
 - The King’s business requires haste cf. **1 Samuel 21:8**
 - cf. **1st Peter 4:10-11**
- 2. The Reward of Preparation v. **37**– Rest and nourishment v. **37**
 - a. NOTE: How unusual! cf. **Luke 17:7-10**
 - b. NOTE: The retirement party!! – unlike any other
- 3. The Ruin of the Unprepared – loss v. **39** cf. **12:20-21**

B. Second parable vv. 41-48

- 1. Same basic format, same basic message; one clear difference – servants (v. **37**) vs. steward (v. **42**)
 - a. servant vs. steward cf. Joseph in **Genesis 39:4**
 - b. First parable is a message for all Christians; second parable is focused upon all Christians who have been entrusted with additional responsibilities in church **Ephesians 4:11**
- 2. The Requirement of Preparation – Do your job! v. **43**
 - a. Shepherds need to shepherd. **1 Peter 5:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28, 31**
 - b. Deacons need to minister. **1 Peter 4:11**
 - Principle of **Acts 6:2** is still true.
 - c. Preachers need to preach. **1 Peter 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:2**
 - d. Members need to serve. **1 Peter 4:10; Romans 12:3-8**
- 3. The Rewards of Preparation vv. **42-44**
 - a. Promotion cf. **1 Corinthians 6:3** (?)
 - b. cf. Christ’s promotion for His faithfulness **Philippians 2:5ff.**
- 4. The Ruin of the Unprepared
 - a. Just punishment
 - b. Regret of the unprepared v. **47**

III. Conclusion

- A. Nothing more important than being prepared for Jesus’ coming! **Revelation 16:15**
- B. Are you prepared?

“JESUS’ PARABLE ON REPENTANCE”

TEXT: Luke 13:1-9

I. Introduction

A. The **13th** chapter of **Luke** is a continuation of **Luke 12**

1. In **vv. 1-5** Jesus rejects the popular notion that calamities proved the exceedingly sinfulness of the victims

2. According to **vv. 3, 5** such occasions should remind us that all of us need to repent in this life or we will perish in the life to come. – “Nay” = “not at all, by no means”

B. **Luke 13:6-9** is Jesus’ Parable on Repentance”

II. “Jesus’ Parable on Repentance”

A. Three Principle Characters

1. Landowner = “certain man” **v. 6** = God

2. Barren fig tree = those who need to repent

3. Vinedresser = Jesus

B. Lessons to be Learned = I must Repent or Perish...

1. Because God will accept no substitutes for repentance **vv. 3, 5; cf. Mark 11:13-14**

a. Repentance is a change of mind produced by biblical faith and godly sorrow that results in a reformation of one’s behavior and life

b. Like faith, it is a continuous fruit-bearing characteristic **cf. Matthew 3:8**

c. God accepts no substitutes **cf. Revelation 2:5, 16, 22; 3:3, 19**

2. Because God has the right to expect the fruits of repentance from me **v. 6; Acts 17: 30-31**

3. Impenitent people are spiritually useless; a hindrance in God’s vineyard **v. 7**

a. NOTE: location of tree **v. 6**

b. **cf. “cumbereth the ground”** = make ground useless; soil’s nutrients were being wasted

c. **cf. Ananias and Sapphira Acts 5:1-10**

4. God’s tolerance of evil and impenitent is not limitless **v. 7**

a. “Three years” **cf. Leviticus 19:23-24**

b. **cf. Acts 17:31** “appointed” (i.e. “fixed”) a day

c. When His tolerance ends, **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, Revelation 20: 12-15** will occur.

5. The Delay of Judgment is not an indication of forgiveness or forgetfulness; it is an opportunity to avoid condemnation **cf. vv. 8-9**

a. Intercession was not acceptance of barrenness; status quo was unacceptable

b. **cf. 2 Peter 3:9**

6. The Lack of repentance and its fruits in my life is not the owner’s (i.e. God’s) or vinedresser’s (i.e. Christ’s) fault!

III. Conclusion

A. What happened a year later is unknown; there is no “rest of the story” in Luke.

B. Each listener of Jesus’ parable determines the ending to it!

1. Repent or

2. Perish!

JESUS' PARABLE ON HUMILITY

TEXT: Luke 14:1, 7-14

I. Introduction

A. With the very first beatitude of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared the essentiality of humility (**Matthew 5:3**)

1. Our Lord never budged from that declaration
2. His insistence upon it made for some interesting conversations one Sabbath day **v. 1**
3. Because of its essentiality, Jesus spoke a parable to the guests (**vv. 7-11**) and had some somber words of warning for the host (**vv. 12-14**)

B. "Jesus' Parable on Humility"

II. "Jesus' Parable on Humility"

A. The Parable **vv. 7-11**

1. "Parable" indicates that this is intended to teach a spiritual truth; i.e. something greater than advice on polite behavior and rules of etiquette. NOTE: **vv. 16ff**
2. The custom of feasting
 - a. Not seated table; reclining on raised divans/table couches with cushions
 - b. Room arranged so the couches/"rooms" (KJV) were in a U shape
 - c. With this arrangement, some locations were considered highly valued
3. Being "fashionably late" was a way to be seen and given preferential treatment.
4. Because this is a wedding supper (**v. 8**) and intended to be a parable (**v. 7**), Jesus' point is: Be sure you attend (unlike **vv. 16ff**) and have a place at the feast and let the host do the rest (**vv. 10-11**)

B. Jesus' Words of Warning to the Host **vv. 12-14**

1. "Do not habitually invite only those who can invite you in return"
 - a. He is not forbidding: enjoying company of family and friends
 - b. Emphasis is on motive -> must be unselfish and genuine
2. Reward of genuine hospitality **v. 14**

C. Lessons to Be Learned

1. Beware of Self-promotion/the absence of humility **vv. 7-11**
 - a. No "I" in "team" or "church";
 - b. a self-promoter reveals his true character
 - c. **v. 11** -> note **Luke 18:14; Matthew 23:12**
 - d. Note: **Proverbs 25:6-7**
 2. Beware of Evil Motives **v. 12; Jeremiah 17:9**
 - a. The poison of self is a constant danger.
 - b. False humility is a distinct possibility.
 - c. Motives do matter! cf. **Matthew 6:1, 5, 16**
 - d. Evil motives corrupt good actions!
 3. Understand the extreme importance of humility **v. 11**
 - a. Not optional **Philippians 2:3-5 ff.**
 - b. Pride is a dead-end street **James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5**
 - c. True humility leads to exaltation **James 4:10; Isaiah 66:1-2**
-

“JESUS’ PARABLE ON OPPORTUNITY”

TEXT: Luke 14:15-24, 26

I. Introduction

A. The last parable that we considered ended with Jesus in the midst of a rather awkward social setting.

1. At a Sabbath feast (v. 1)
2. Stern criticism of guests (vv. 7-11) and challenging admonition of host (vv. 12-14)
3. v. 15 appears to be an attempt to lighten the dialogue to something we can all agree on!
4. This elicits another parable which ultimately is a rebuke of this man’s presumption – cf. v. 16 “him” and v. 24 “your” (plural)

B. This morning, “Jesus’ Parable on Opportunity”

II. “Jesus’ Parable on Opportunity”

A. Its Contents

1. The Invitation Extended vv. 16-17
 - a. A preliminary invitation v.16: “Save the date”
 - b. Day of the Feast Invitation v.17
 - cf. OT prophets, then John and Jesus **Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:15; Galatians 4:4**
2. The Invitation Rejected vv. 18-20 – possessions, property, and family prioritized above the invitation
3. The Invitation Expanded vv. 21-23 –cf. **Acts 1:8; Matthew 15:24, 10:5-6; Romans 1:16-17**
4. The Invitation Rescinded v. 24 “not one” cf. **Matthew 3:8**

B. Its Graphic Illustrations of...

1. The Kingdom of God is—a MEGA banquet v. 16 = the meal of the ages
 - a. “made”= “was making”—continuous preparation in the past **Ephesians 3:8-11**; cf. **Genesis 3:15** onward.
 - b. Great (i.e. MEGA) planning and preparation made.
 - c. Great (i.e. MEGA) need met. cf. **Matthew 5:6**
 - d. Great (i.e. MEGA) cost of meal **1 Peter 1:18-19**
 - e. Great (i.e. MEGA) love prompted it. **John 3:16**
 - f. Great (i.e. MEGA) provisions contained in it. **Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:4**
 - g. Great offer = free food; “come”; not a “bring a dish” potluck
 - Conclusion: Kingdom of God is not for admiring (v. 15) but for active involvement in it.
2. The Sweet Invitation of Jesus v. 17
 - a. “ALL things are ready” **Galatians 4:4**
 - b. “Come” is a command, not a suggestion
 - 1) How simple!
 - 2) No need to bring anything.
 - 3) Requires personal action
3. God’s Perspective on Humanity’s excuses vv. 18-20
 - a. His intelligence is insulted—Were you fooled by their excuses? God wasn’t either.
 - What pathetic excuses; ours are no better!
 - “There are circumstances beyond my control”, “It’s too inconvenient!”

- b. His response is indignation.
 - “angry” cf. its usage in **Matthew 18:34, 22:7**; note: **1 Thessalonians 1:10**
 - c. He clearly sees the perversity of one’s values. cf. v. 26; **Matthew 6:33**
4. The Peril of Presumption v. 24
- a. cf. v. 15; **2 Corinthians 13:5**
 - b. “Maybe later, at a more convenient time” is presumptuous **2 Corinthians 6:2**
 - c. You only get one shot at life. **Hebrews 9:27**

III. Conclusion:

- A. “Everybody talkin’ ‘bout heaven ain’t agoin’ there!”
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“JESUS’ ILLUSTRATION OF WHY HE RECEIVES SINNERS”

TEXT: Luke 15:1-32

I. Introduction

- A. No way of knowing for sure how soon the criticism of **Luke 15:2** occurred after Jesus’ criticism of **Luke 14** -> may have been a few hours, days, weeks
- 1. Human nature would suggest sooner, rather than later.
 - 2. The criticism of **Luke 15:2** was nothing new because the practice of Jesus was not new.
 - a. v. 1 “drew” and v. 2 “murmured” =>Imperfect = an ongoing practice in the past
 - b. v. 2 “Receiveth” and “eateth” present = an ongoing practice in the present
 - c. To a Pharisee there was no greater evil than to eat with publicans and sinners
 - d. Jesus received them (*prosdeiliomi*) = to receive to oneself favorably; to accept –cf. **Romans 16:2; Philippians 2:29**
- B. Jesus’ response was a parable v. 3
- 1. Note: Singularity of noun; not plurality
 - 2. Three illustrations designed to make the same points.
 - 3. Three illustrations designed to answer/defend His practice of doing **14:21, cf. 14:13**

II. “Four Extreme Reasons Why Christ Receiveth Sinners”

- A. Because of the Extreme Peril of Being Lost
- 1. Note: “Lost” (vv. 4, 8, 32), not “unchurched”
- Note the Perils of Being Lost
- a. The danger of predators (sheep) **1 Peter 5:8**
 - b. The danger of disuse (coin) – wasted resource
 - c. The danger of starvation vv. 14, 16
 - e. The danger of uncleanness v. 15 cf. **Romans 1:24ff**
 - f. The danger of lovelessness vv. 28ff; **1 John 4:20-21**
 - g. The danger of spiritual death v. 32
- B. Because of the Extreme Value God Places on each person who is lost
- 1. To God ratios really don’t matter -> cf. 1 out of 100, 10, 2
 - 2. The sheep and coin were prized far beyond their value as a possession
 - a. The sheep was known by its name **John 10:3**
 - b. The coin was valued because of its meaning/importance to the woman—possibly part of her dowry

3. What agony fills the heart when something of value is lost! A frantic, personal search. Note the pictures—like the agony of a shepherd, a woman, a father
 4. One of the most profound and humbling truths of the gospel is the personal value I am to God! **John 3:16**
- C. Because of the Extreme Joy in heaven when the Lost has been rescued
1. There is joy.....
 - a. In heaven, the house of God **v.7**
 - b. Among the angels, the hosts surrounding God **v. 10**
 - c. In the heart of God **cf. vv. 20, 22-24**
 2. cf. **Micah 7:18-19**
- D. Because of the Extreme Need for a Second Chance all of us have
1. Different ways to be lost:
 - a. Carelessness like the sheep
 - b. Neglect at home like the coin
 - c. Rebelliousness and self-will like younger son
 - d. Self-righteousness and pride like older son
 2. Common Fact: **Romans 3:10, 23; John 3:3**
 3. All of us have an Extreme Need for a second chance **Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:17**
- III. Conclusion – Christ receiveth sinners!
-

“THE TRAGEDY OF THE FAR COUNTRY”

TEXT: Luke 15:11-16

I. Introduction

- A. Though **Luke 15:2** was meant as a blistering criticism and rebuke, it endures as a blaze of hope in a dark world
 - B. In previous sermon, we considered the four Extremes found in **Luke 15**
 1. The Extreme Peril of Being Lost
 2. The Extreme Value God Places on Each Person
 3. The Extreme Joy in Heaven
 4. The Extreme Need for a Second Chance
 - C. Today, I want to begin examining each section of the third portion of this parable that our appreciation of the fact of **v. 2** is improved!
- II. “The Tragedy of the Far Country “: Sin Personified
- A. The Origin of Sin is Selfishness **v. 12** “the Big I of sIn”
 1. “Give me” = my rights **Genesis 3:6**
 - a. Implies a desire for His father’s death
 - b. Complete focus upon his “rights”, utter disregard for his responsibilities **Ephesians 6:2**
 2. Claimed he wanted freedom, but really what he sought was license!
 - B. First Consequence of Sin: Separation (**v. 13**) **Isaiah 59:1-2; James 1:14-15; Romans 6:23; cf. Genesis 3**

1. Note: The son knew he could not plunge into sin and remain at home/in fellowship with God – cursedness of **Isaiah 5:20**
 2. Note: Son had no intentions of living in a pig pen. This is the seduction of sin -> “It takes you farther than you want to go, keeps you longer than you want to stay, and costs you more than you want to pay”
- C. Second Consequence of Sin: Waste (v. 13)
1. “Prodigal” does not mean “immoral”; it means “wasteful”
 2. He used his money on things with no eternal returns and no abiding satisfaction; **Matthew 26:24** is true about all those who die in a lost state!
 3. Ultimate outcome = Bankruptcy v. 14
- D. Third Consequence of Sin : Famine (v. 14) “want” = “to come up short”
1. There is a high cost to low living!
 2. The Son was starving
 - a. Physically -> the hogs were not hungry; he was
– sin takes better care of pigs than sinners cf. **Proverbs 23:29ff.**
 - b. Socially –> he was alone
 - c. Financially -> he had to get a job; left home to avoid responsibility, now he is in desperate need of a job, any job.
 - d. Spiritually
– character can be sold, but it cannot be bought.
– sin promises so much and delivers so little **Hebrews 11:25**
- E. Fourth Consequence of Sin: Filth (vv. 15-16)
1. What would NEVER happen to him happened!
 2. cf. **2 Peter 2:20-22** to read of sin’s filth
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JESUS’ ILLUSTRATION OF REPENTANCE

TEXT: Luke 15:17-24

- I. Introduction
 - A. “A picture is worth a thousand words.”
 1. In **Luke 13:1-9**—Jesus’ parable on the Essentiality of Repentance cf. **Acts 17:30-31**
 2. What does repentance look like?
 - B. No clearer portrait of what repentance looks like can be found in Scripture than in **Luke 15:17ff.**
- II. “Jesus’ Illustration of Repentance”
 - A. A change of mind v. 17 “he came to himself”
 1. Means “he came to his right mind”
 2. Sin is spiritual insanity—He had separated himself from his father; he had wasted everything; he was famished; he was filthy; his father’s servants were better off than he was
 3. Reality is NOT what you believe it is!
 - B. A determination of the will v. 18—“I will go”
 1. Note the resolution. Halfway measures will not get anyone out of sin.

2. Determination to get as far away from sin as possible.
 - a. NOT a sinless life
 - b. It is a life that sins less and less.
3. Determination to do whatever it takes to be reconciled to the Father.

C. Humility in the heart **vv. 18-19**

1. From “Give me” (v. 12) to “Make me” (v. 19).
2. Unworthy—complete surrender of pride and “rights”—at the total mercy of the offended—i.e. poverty of spirit **Matthew 5:3**

D. Action in one’s body v. 20 “he arose”

1. Plan must be carried out.
2. What is decided in the mind must affect the movement of one’s feet.
3. When we have offended a brother, our feet should take us to our brother’s presence in addition to the throne of God (cf. **James 5:16**).

E. Confession on one’s lips v. 21

1. *homologeō* means “to say the same thing as”
2. “I have sinned”
 - a. No buck passing
 - b. No minimizing of one’s actions.

III. Conclusion

A. Repentance is the reason Jesus receives sinner v. 2

B. Repentance is the reason God runs

“The fatted calf, the shoes, the robe, the ring
 All for me, unworthy son.
 But sweeter to me, the most wonderful thing,
 God ran to meet me. I saw God run!”

“THE PARABLE OF THE FATHER’S HEART”

TEXT: Luke 15:11-24

I. Introduction

A. One of the great travesties of human history is the common name given to the illustration of **Luke 15:11 ff.**

1. The main character in the illustration is NOT the younger son; it is the Father.
2. “The Parable of The Father’s Heart” does better justice to this passage than “The Parable of the Prodigal Son.”

B. Thus far we have considered the illustrations of sin and repentance.

C. Today, Consideration of the main character—The Father.

II. “The Parable of the Father’s Heart”

A. God’s love and compassion v. 20

1. A searching love **cf. vv. 4, 7** – Only a parent could recognize a child from far away
2. A compassionate love – Unlike the older brother, the Father did not mentally begin writing a lecture for his son.
3. A running love – “Will God Run?”

– The feet of love and forgiveness move faster than the burdened feet of repentance.

4. A passionate love

a. Not the kiss of a formal greeting. cf. **Romans 16:16, Luke 7:45**

b. *kataphileo* = kiss of deep affection; to kiss fervently – cf. Judas’ kiss (**Matthew 26:49**)

5. A ready to pardon love **Psalm 86:5, Nehemiah 9:17, Micah 7:18**

a. also a ready to forget love cf. elder brother vs. **Ephesians 4:32-5:1**

b. NOTE: **Romans 2:4**

B. God’s Mercy v. 21

1. Note: the interruption of the son’s confession. vv. 18-19 with v. 21

2. Note: what was eliminated – “Make me as one of your hired servants.”

a. Menial service was not God’s aim.

b. This is a fundamental difference between the god called “Allah” and the God of the Bible (Jehovah)—Allah desires slaves; Jehovah desires sons!

c. The Father wanted his son back; not another servant! **Ephesians 2:4**

3. Note that Tomorrow’s service cannot atone for yesterday’s sins.

C. God’s Grace vs. 22-24—In addition to forgiveness, the son received gifts

1. The restoration of sonship v. 22

a. Best robe cf. **Zechariah 3:3-4** (the tatters of sin were replaced with an emblem of honor.

b. Ring—emblem of honor and wealth cf. **Genesis 41:42, 39-40**

c. Shoes—emblem of service and status **1 Corinthians 3:9; 1 Timothy 1:12-16**
– slaves and orphans were shoeless cf. **Mark 5:18-20**

d. NOTE: God’s solution to sin is not “Clean up your act” or “Try a little harder”; it is “Come home”.

2. The Feast of Grace vv. 23-24

a. A starving son is fed.

b. The father feasts/fellowships richly and deeply with those He forgives.

3. NOTE: God does NOTHING halfway. **Ephesians 1:3; cf. Ephesians 1:7, 2:7**

III. Conclusion

A. God’s love, mercy, and grace are not:

1. Theory, hypothesis, mirage, dream

2. Fake news, fairy tale, or fable

B. It is the challenge of a lifetime. cf. **John 3:16** “so”

C. **Ephesians 3:14-19**

“JESUS’ PORTRAIT OF THE SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS”

TEXT: Luke 15:25-32

I. Introduction

A. The climax of the chapter

1. Apart from the context, it would probably be vv. 18-24

2. In its context, the climax is vv. 25-32

B. Reason for the parable is to teach that sins of the spirit are just as wrong as sins of the flesh
cf. Colossians 3:5, 8, 12

1. Possible to be out of fellowship with Father while at home, in the field, not just in the far country.
2. Neither state is acceptable to the father.

C. “Jesus’ Portrait of the Self-Righteousness”

II. “Jesus’ Portrait of the Self-Righteousness”

A. Outwardly, he had many virtues:

1. He was hardworking and conscientious.
2. He was not living in open hostility to his father.
3. He was morally upright.

B. Inwardly, he was spiritually bankrupt.

1. He had perverted values **v. 28**
 - a. Anger, laughter, and tears reflect values.
 - b. Assets—calf and goats—valued over his brother.
 - c. Grace was despised, not prized.
2. He was proud in heart **v. 29**
 - a. Father’s pleading (**v. 28**) fell on deaf ears.
 - b. Envy is a fruit of pride.
 - c. Note his “I”s and “my”s
3. He was pathetic in spirit **vv. 29-30**
 - a. He was religious but not righteous.
 - b. Incredibly self-righteous – cf. “many years”, “never transgressed”, “at any time”, “you never”
 - c. What spiritual blindness! **Matthew 9:11-13**
 - d. A slave, not a son **cf. vv. 29, 31**
 - e. Never had any real fellowship with his father
4. He was presumptuous in judgment **v. 30**
 - a. He assumed the worst **cf. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7**
 - b. He lacked brotherly love. **1 John 4:20**
 - c. **v. 30** reference to his own brother—“Your son”

III. Conclusion

A. The gospel is for all

1. God runs to meet returning prodigals.
2. God walks to meet and reason with pathetic older brothers.

B. Christ receives sinners.

“JESUS’ PARABLE ON PRUDENCE”

TEXT: Luke 16:1-13

I. Introduction

A. As recorded in the gospels, the parables of Jesus came in clusters/bunches.

1. **Matthew 13**—seven parables in one day
 2. **Luke 14:7-16:31**—parables may have been spoken in one day
 3. **Matthew 21-25**—all spoken between Monday and Thursday of Jesus’ final week.
- B. Important to know because of **Luke 16:1** “also”
1. **Luke 15** is directed to Pharisees/critics.
 2. **Luke 16:1-13** is spoken to disciples; note **v. 14**
 - a. Focus: Prudent stewardship
 - b. Something that neither the younger son nor elder son practiced!
 - c. A truly wise person:
 - believes in the final judgment.
 - views the issues of life with the final judgment ever in mind.
 - wisely determines what is truly important.
 - acts decisively.
 3. Point of His parable:
 - a. NOT: I applaud the shrewd servant because he acted dishonestly.
 - b. Is: I applaud the dishonest servant because he acted shrewdly.
- C. “Jesus’ Parable on Prudence”
- II. “Jesus’ Parable on Prudence”
- A. The parable **vv. 1-8**
1. Steward (**v. 1**) is not his slave **cf. Luke 12:42-46; v. 3**
 2. “wasted” (**v. 1**) **cf. 15:13** – unnecessary expenses, carelessness
 3. “I am resolved” (**v. 4**) = a bright idea
 4. “wisely” = “shrewdly, prudently”
- B. The Point of the Parable **vv. 8-9**—Be prudent with material possessions
1. Unjust steward/children of this world who focus is on earthly treasures are more prudent with their money than the children of light whose focus is to be upon heavenly treasures.
 2. Material wealth is either invested in the junk bonds of time or in God’s IRA
 3. Jesus’ investment advice—**v. 9**
 - a. NOTE: “of” = “by means of the mammon...”
 - b. NOTE: “when!”, not “if”
 - c. What you are doing with heaven’s paving material?
 - **vv. 19ff** illustrates a man who failed to heed **v. 9**
 - **cf. Matthew 25:31-46**
 4. NOTE: Pharisees’ response **v. 14**
- C. The Principles of Prudent Stewardship **vv. 10-13**
1. Stewardship is measured by faithfulness **v. 10; 1 Corinthians 4:2**
 2. Stewardship with earthly treasure determines allotment of heavenly riches **vv. 10-12**
 - a. “Least” = smallest or least in size, amount, or importance
 - b. “Least” in **v. 10** = “unrighteous mammon” of **v. 11**
 3. Stewardship determines ownership **v. 12**
 4. Matters of stewardship are black and white/no gray areas **v. 13**
- III. Conclusion
- A. Pharisees viewed wealth as an indication of divine favor; a reward of righteousness – note their reaction in **v. 14**
- B. Jesus declared that wealth is a vehicle of investment **cf. Matthew 6:19-21**

“JESUS’ ILLUSTRATION OF WHAT MONEY CAN AND CANNOT BUY”

TEXT: Luke 16:19-31

I. Introduction

A. Master Card’s contention—“There are some things that money cannot buy; for all the rest, there’s Master Card.”

1. That is easy to believe.
2. It could not be more wrong.

B. “Jesus’ Illustration of What Money Can and Cannot Buy”

II. “Jesus’ Illustration of What Money Can and Cannot Buy”

A. Its Context

1. Jesus’ parable on prudence **vv. 1-8**
2. Jesus’ application of the parable **vv. 9-13**
3. Pharisees’ response **v. 14**
 - a. “derided” = “turned up their noses”
 - b. Rolled their eyes and LOL (laugh out loud) or ROTFL (rolling on the floor laughing)
4. **vv. 19-31** is hybrid between a parable and a historical reference (**cf. Luke 13:1-3**)

B. The Illustration Itself **vv. 19-31**

1. Act One—before death **vv. 19-21**
 - a. Scene One—the rich man = the ideal Pharisee **v. 19**
 - expensive clothes, daily feasts, ornate surroundings (**cf. v. 20** gate)
 - law abiding citizen (unlike **v. 1**)—no obvious faults or vices
 - b. Scene Two—Lazarus = abject poverty
 - “beggar”, not “poor”
 - no health
 - constant hunger, malnutrition
2. Act Two—Death **v. 22**
 - a. Lazarus—no funeral or burial
 - b. Rich man “was buried”
3. Act Three—after death **vv. 23-31**
 - a. Lazarus—banquet **v. 24**
 - b. Rich man—in Hades, not Gehenna
 - c. The requests **vv. 25-31**

C. Lesson: What Money Can and Cannot Buy

1. What it can buy:
 - a. Expensive clothes
 - b. Lavish, scrumptious meals
 - c. Ornate property
 - d. Grand funeral and posthumous memorials
2. What it cannot buy:
 - a. A compassionate heart or merciful spirit for the needy **vv. 20-21**
 - b. The prevention of death **v. 22**
 - c. Mercy from God after death **v. 24**
 - d. Relief from the torment of Hades **v. 24** – Not even one drop of water!
 - e. Amnesia **v. 25**
 - f. Passage over the great gulf in Hades **v. 26**

g. A messenger to brethren sent from the dead vv. 27-31

III. Conclusion: Are you investing in time or eternity?

“ERRONEOUS DOCTRINES”

TEXT: Luke 16: 19:31

I. Introduction

A. A continuous challenge of studying Jesus’ parables and illustration is to not abuse them

1. Fundamental purpose = illustrate
2. Allegorical method is to be avoided, unless there is compelling reason for it.

B. Distinctiveness of Jesus’ Parables and Illustrations = Accuracy

1. Unlike Fables = talking animals
2. Unlike myths = Fiction treated like fact
3. Every parable and illustration is true to nature and rooted in fact (**Luke 13:1-3**).

C. When examining Jesus’ illustration of the Rich man and Lazarus, you easily discover that it does not correspond to popular doctrines taught and believed today.

II. “Popular Doctrines Contradicted by Jesus’ Illustration”

A. Atheist’s/Humanist’s Doctrine of Materialism

1. Belief = there is no life/existence after death = Death is a cessation of existence
2. **Luke 16:19-31 teaches:**
 - a. Personality and consciousness continue after death for righteous and unrighteous **vv. 24, 25**
 - b. Death is a separation (**James 2:26**), not a cessation

B. Catholic Doctrine of Purgatory

1. Belief -> sins are classified as venial and mortal; venial sins are atoned through suffering and payment after death
2. **Luke 16:19-31**
 - a. The rich man’s lack of mercy is not classified as a mortal sin.
 - b. cf. v. 26

C. Hedonist’s Doctrine of Healthy, Wealthy and Prosperity

1. Belief -> God wants you to be blessed....
2. **Luke 16:19-31**
 - a. Rich man **vv. 19, 23-24**
 - b. Lazarus **vv. 20-21, 22**

D. Hinduism’s Doctrine of Reincarnation

1. Belief = the recycling of the human soul
2. **Luke 16:19-31**
 - a. No second chance offered
 - b. **vv. 22 ff** happened immediately after death **cf. Hebrews 9:27**

E. Occultist’s Doctrine of Spiritualism

1. Belief = ability to communicate with the dead through séances, ouija boards, etc.
2. **Luke 16:19-31**
 - a. Request denied **vv. 27-31**

b. Faith comes by hearing God's word **Romans 10:17**

F. Denominationalists' Doctrine of Insufficiency of God's word

1. Belief = denial of **2 Peter 1: 3** -> necessitates, a pope, creed, a Holy Spirit nudge

2. **Luke 16:19-31** see v. 31

III. Conclusion.

a. The truth is you continue to exist after death;

b. Your eternal destiny is settled at death;

c. The material blessings of this life do not indicate your eternal state;

d. You get one shot at life, and

e. God's word is the all-sufficient guide to get you to heaven.

“JESUS’ PARABLE ON THE ESSENTIALITY OF PRAYER”

TEXT: Luke 18:1-8

I. Introduction

A. Number of ways Prayer is found in the lives of people

1. Fire insurance Policy = only needed on rare and extraordinary occasions

2. Traditional Ritual -> cf. prayers prior to meals

3. Church custom -> “we sing a lot, preach a lot, and pray a little.”

4. Spiritual duty/obligation -> cf. Muslim's seven prayers a day

B. None of these harmonized what Jesus lived and taught cf. **Luke 18: 1-8**

II. “Jesus’ Parable on the Essentiality of Prayer

A. Spiritual Victory Necessitates It v.1

1. Akin to **Luke 13:3** -> Pray or faint

2. “Faint” = “Not to give into evil” -> to turn coward, lose heart, behave badly

– cf. **Mark 14:38**

– cf. **Galatians 6:1** -> Satan ambushes Christians

– the Christian race and “the wall” that runners hit when running **Hebrews 12:1**

3. Note: “Ought” is a logical necessity.

a. Runners must run with patience/endurance to win a race.

b. Soldiers must fight with patience/endurance to win a battle/war.

c. Relationships require endurance/commitment to be successful ->cf. bride of Christ

B. The Facts of Life Requires It vv. 2-5

1. Fact # 1: Life, especially lived as Christian, is not fair!

a. Judge = A person of civil authority and power – abject selfishness; no sense of duty; completely irreligious, disinterested in fellow man

– cf. **Deuteronomy 16:18-20; 27:19** to see what he ought to have been

b. widow = child of God

– utterly vulnerable = without husband and possibly family

– Adversary exploiting her cf. **Exodus 22:22**

– Her plan of attack = Be a squeaky wheel =

1) “Came” Imperfect—came and kept coming

2) “Avenge” = bring justice -> aorist imperative

- her persistence paid off **v. 5**
- How many times -> **Matthew 18: 21-22**
- 2. Fact # 2: The state of society increases its Importance **Luke 17: 26-37**
 - a. Note: **vv. 25, 26-27, 28-29, 37**
 - b. Why not just throw up hands and quit?
- C. The Character of God Encourages It **vv. 6-8**
 - 1. God is exactly opposite of the Judge—God vs. Judge:
 - a. Willing vs. unwilling to help
 - b. Ready vs. reluctant to avenge
 - c. Does not need to be persuaded to care vs. had to be persuaded
 - d. Loves man vs. loves self
 - e. Avenges speedily vs. avenges tardily
 - 2. If woman could be persistent with an unjust Judge, we can be persistent with a loving, just Father!
 - 3. Note:
 - a. **v. 7** -> God will by no means not avenge his own
 - b. God does avenge his elect cf. **Revelation 6:10-11**
 - c. **v. 8** -> Who will answer the call?

III. Conclusion

“JESUS’ ILLUSTRATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS”

TEXT: **Luke 18: 9-14**

- I. Introduction
 - A. Being right with God has been the quest of humanity since **Genesis 3**
 - 1. Only two possible ways:
 - a. Obey God on His terms and He reckons/considers you right with him
 - b. Devise your own plan
 - 2. **Romans 10:1-3, Matthew 5:20** demonstrate the folly of devising your own plan.
 - B. In Jesus’ day, there was an entire section of Jewish society that focused on devising their own plan. Because of this, Luke records **18: 9-14**
- II. “Jesus’ Illustration of Righteousness”
 - A. Counterfeit vs. Genuine –View of God
 - 1. Pharisee’s Theology
 - a. God had to be reminded of his many virtues **v. 11**
 - b. God’s standard of holiness was living slightly better than moral reprobates.
 - c. God’s greatest concern was with the amount of extra credit one did! **v. 12**
 - 2. Publican’s Theology
 - a. Exalted View of God -> Holy cf. **Ezra 9:6** vs. **Timothy 2:8**
 - b. God’s standard of holiness far beyond human attainment -> the number of words in his prayer is six.
 - c. God’s greatest concern was with internal matters -> **Matthew 23:23; Psalm 138:6, Isaiah 57:15, 66:1-2**

B. Counterfeit vs. Genuine -> View of self and others

1. Pharisee's View of self and others

- a. He was one of a kind = a unique category of humanity
 - "stood" = struck a pose
 - "prayer" = prayed on and on (Imperfect tense)
- b. Therefore, everyone else was inferior to them **cf. v. 9**
- c. God was his equal -> he made no requests made of God!

2. Publican's View of self and others

- a. One of a kind = "the sinner" -> "smote breast" **cf. Luke 23:48**
- b. Better than/equal to no one else
- c. Made only one petition (of that which was most important)

C. Counterfeit vs. Genuine View of Righteousness

1. Pharisee's View = righteousness is merited

- a. Brownie points -> **v. 12**
 - Fast on Day of Atonement (commanded by God) vs. Mondays and Thursday (practiced by Pharisees)
 - Tithe of all agricultural products **Deuteronomy 14:22-23**
- b. Twisted view of thanksgiving

2. Publican's View = Righteousness is reckoned

- a. "Be merciful" = "Be propitious"
 - passive = done by God (i.e. done because of God's grace, not human merit)
- b. **cf. Romans 4:3-11**
- c. Eternal life is inherited, no merited!

III. Conclusion

"JESUS' PARABLE ON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT HIS KINGDOM"

TEXT: Luke 19:11-27

I. Introduction

A. From the beginning of His life on earth to its conclusion (and beyond!), Jesus faced a constant barrage of misconceptions about the Messiah, His mission and His kingdom.

1. At His birth, Herod found Jesus to be a threat (**Matthew 2**)
2. The temptations of **Matthew 4** were founded upon misconceptions
3. After feeding the 5,000, we read: **John 6:15**
4. It is quite likely that the misconceptions about Him and His Kingdom reached their zenith in **Luke 19**.
 - a. Note: **Luke 18:31-34**
 - b. **cf. Luke 18:38 cf. Matthew 22:42**
 - c. cf. Zacchaeus = wealthy patron **cf. v. 9**
 - d. Going to Jerusalem = throngs of people -> first recorded time during His ministry
 - e. Passover = Independence Day/July 4th -> high patriotic feelings
 - f. So high were expectations, He had a triumphant entry! - Note **vv. 29 ff**
5. This is what makes **Luke 19:11ff** so important!

- B. “Jesus’ Parable Concerning Misconceptions about His Kingdom”
- II. “Jesus’ Parable Concerning Misconceptions about His Kingdom”
- A. Misconception #1: Jesus will be in Jerusalem when He receives the Kingdom of God **v.12**
1. Note the historical background -> Herod and others in his family had to go to Rome and receive permission before ruling as king of Judah
 2. Truth: Christ will be in heaven when this occurs!
 - a. Prophets predicted it **Daniel 7:13-14**
 - b. Jesus declared it **John 18:36**
 - c. Apostles preached it **Acts 2:32-33**
- B. Misconception #2: Jesus’ servants will engage in carnal warfare for His Kingdom **v. 13**
1. Note: master gave money = pounds, not swords – pound = 3 month’s wages
 2. Truth: They will be engaged in spiritual warfare, supported by God’s providence
 - a. Entrusted with the faith **Jude 3; 2 Corinthians 4:7**
 - b. The war is against wickedness **Ephesians 6: 12-13**
 - c. Note: **2 Corinthians 10:2-5**
- C. Misconception #3: There will be universal acceptance of Jesus and His kingdom **v.14**
1. Note: Historical parallel with Archelaus **cf. Matthew 2:22-23**
 - a. Jesus has universal authority (**Matthew 28:18**) but there is not universal acceptance
 - b. **cf. John 1:11; cf. John 19:15** Jewish rejection
 2. Truth: Jesus’ authority will be rejected and opposed **cf. 2 Timothy 3:12; Matthew 5:10-12**
- D. Misconception #4: Jesus’ servants will be richly rewarded in this life. **cf. vv.15 ff**
1. Note: **Matthew 20:21**
 2. In this life Christ’s servants have the abundant life spiritually (**John 10:10**); **cf. 2 Peter 1:3, 11**; not necessarily physically **cf. Mark 10:29-30**
- E. Misconception #5: Jesus is an austere, harsh master
1. “Austere” = sour, unpleasant, harsh; the taste of an unripe fruit
 2. Truth -> Hardly! **cf. vv. 17, 19**
- F. Misconception #6: Climatic overthrow of God’s enemies was imminent in first century.
1. The Jews’ envisioned another Jericho-type victory
 2. Truth: Overthrow will occur at Christ’s return from far country **vv. 15-17**
 - a. “Slay” = slaughter, cut down, cut in pieces
 - b. **cf. 2 Timothy 1:7-9; Revelation 20:10-15**
- III. Conclusion -> Focus on being active and faithful in master’s service!
-

“JESUS’ PARABLE ON SERVICE IN HIS KINGDOM”

TEXT: **Matthew 19:16-20:16**

- I. Introduction
- A. “Any text taken from its context becomes a pretext”
1. Any parable taken from Its context can easily stray from Its intended illustration
 2. **Matthew 20:1ff.** is a great example of such
 3. **2 Timothy 2:15** -> “rightly dividing” = cutting a straight furrow

B. "Jesus Parable on Service in His Kingdom"

II. "Jesus' Parable on Service in His Kingdom"

A. Its Context

1. The Rich young ruler and the discussion it generates **19:16-26**
2. The Rich young ruler and the question it caused Peter to ask **19:27**
3. Jesus' answer to Peter's question **19:28-30**
 - a. Apostles' doctrine will be the standard for behavior in the Kingdom v. **28**; cf. **Acts 2:42**
 - b. v. **29** Everyone will be compensated in the Kingdom:
 - With fellowship and family
 - With persecutions **Mark 10:30**
 - With eternal life -> Note: It is inherited, not earned!
 - Inheritances are determined by three things:
 - 1) The generosity of the Benefactor
 - 2) The written/expressed will of the Benefactor
 - 3) Human/Heirs compliance to the Benefactor's terms
 - Therefore, v. **30** is true in reference to the Kingdom of heaven

B. Its Significant Illustrations

1. The Nature/Need of the Kingdom v. **1**
 - a. Work, not entertainment or amusement
 - b. Note: **Matthew 9:36–10:4, Luke 10:1-2; Acts 1:1**
 - c. Working in a vineyard is not glamorous
2. The Urgency of Its Task vv. **2-7**
 - a. Householder could not get enough help; willing to generously reward all his workers **vv. 8-9**
 - b. Note: **John 9:4, 4:35-38**
3. Its Compensation Plan vv. **8-16**
 - a. The hiring date/seniority does not matter -> the first and last are rewarded the same **v.16**
 - The apostles' compensation is the same as everyone else's
 - Apostle Paul's compensation is the same as Peter's **1 Corinthians 15:8**
 - b. Fidelity to one's opportunities is what matters, not length of service
 - Willingness and desire to labor is what matters!
 - Therefore, beware of supposing v. **10; Isaiah 55:8-9**
 - c. **ALL** workers are overcompensated!
 - Eternal life is inherited, not earned, it is impossible to be earned cf. **19:23-26; Luke 17:10**
 - Eternal life is given to the members of the Kingdom because God is gracious and keeps His word

III. Conclusion -> We have no laurels to rest on!

A. What are you going to do in the Kingdom?

B. What are we going to do in the Kingdom?

Note: The 12th hour has not yet come!

“JESUS’ PARABLE ON SPIRITUAL NEUTRALITY”

TEXT: Matthew 21:23-32

I. Introduction

A. Just as true as **Matthew 6:24** is the impossibility of spiritual neutrality. cf. **Matthew 12:30; Revelation 3:15-16**

B. Today we begin studying the parables Jesus told during His final week; today’s parable was told by Jesus because He would not accept “No comment” or “I don’t know” for an answer!

II. “Jesus’ Parable on Spiritual Neutrality”

A. The Text and Its Context

1. **Matthew 21:1-22**

a. Sunday’s Triumphal Entry = Declaring His Kingship **vv. 1-11 cf. Mark 11:11**

b. Monday’s cleansing of the Temple = Declaring His authority over it (i.e. His priesthood) **vv. 12-22**

c. Tuesday’s teaching in the temple = God’s prophet **vv. 23 ff.**

d. NOTE: By declaring Himself God’s king, priest, and prophet, He is openly declaring that He is the Messiah/Christ.

2. The Context **vv. 23-27**

a. **v. 23** questions designed to imply that Jesus was trespassing, an unauthorized loiterer who ought to be arrested.

b. **vv. 24-25** NOT a dodge; it is a common procedure among rabbis – Jesus’ ministry intertwined with John’s; the focus of John’s ministry was preparing people for Jesus.
– Note: **Luke 7:29-30**

– No collusion between John and Jesus **cf. John 1:31-33**

c. **vv. 25-26** their dilemma **cf. Luke 20:6**

d. **v. 27** their response “tell” = “know” = “knowledge that is the result of a process of gathering information/evidence”

e. **vv. 27ff.** Jesus’ response

– **Matthew 7:6** in practice

– **vv. 28-32** will bring them to make a public decision

3. The Text

a. The Father’s command **v. 28**

b. The First Son’s response **v.29**

– “repent” not *metanoia* = a change of mind; is *metamelethisis* = a change of attitude; the rethinking a single decision **cf. Matthew 27:3**

c. The Second Son’s response **v. 30**

– “I” emphatic = “I” (in contrast to him)!

– “Sir” = respect

– i.e. = “You can depend upon me to do and be better”—reeks with arrogance and belief of superiority over the other son

d. **vv. 31-32**

B. Lessons to Be Learned About Spiritual Neutrality

1. It is the course pursued by cowards **vv. 25-27**

a. cf. Pilate with Jesus

- b. Spiritual truths are not so arcane and difficult that you cannot understand them
Ephesians 5:17
 - 2. Its cause is NOT a lack of evidence, but a lack of honesty v. 27
– Inability to “tell/know” is false. cf. **John 20:30-31, 21:25**
 - 3. It is profoundly/fundamentally hypocritical vv. 27, 31
 - a. These same men could do **Matthew 23:15, 16-22** but not figure out v. 25!
 - b. These same men claimed they could figure out v. 31!
 - 4. Its root cause for rejecting God is a refusal to submit to God’s authority vv. 28-30
 - a. Kind of authority is absolute. -> cf. **Colossians 3:20, 16**
 - b. Practicality of His authority:
 - “Go” and “Work” = Present Active Imperatives
 - “Today”
 - c. Specificity of His authority -> “In the vineyard”
 - d. Conclusion: Father had authority to command when, where, and what was to be done.
 - 5. It is a genuine hindrance to faith and salvation cf. vv. 31-32; **Revelation 21:8**
-

“JESUS’ PARABLE ON THE ESSENTIALITY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS”

TEXT: Matthew 21:33-46

- I. Introduction
 - A. A tremendous truth about a parable is that it has the ability to both hide and reveal the truth.
 - 1. cf. Nathan with David in **2 Samuel 12:1-7**
 - 2. cf. Jesus in **Matthew 21:23-46**
 - a. v.25 -> v.27
 - b. First parable -> v.31
 - c. Second parable -> vv.40-41, 45
 - B. “Jesus’ Parable on the Essentiality of Righteousness”
- II. “Jesus’ Parable on the Essentiality of Righteousness”
 - A. Its Context **Matthew 21:1ff.**
 - 1. Sunday -> Triumphal Entry vv. 1-11; cf. **Mark 11:11**
 - 2. Monday -> Cursing of fig tree and cleansing temple vv. 12-17
 - 3. Tuesday -> Cursed fig tree and questions in temple **21:17-25:46**
 - B. Its Contents vv. 33-41 -> Allegorical parable
 - 1. Behold: God’s generous provisions v. 33
 - a. Note: Personal planting of the vineyard -> “he planted”
 - b. Provisions—hedge to keep animals out; winepress to make juice; tower to live in and watch for armies/threats
 - c. Arrangement -> “leased” = sharecroppers:
 - **1 Corinthians 9:13** vs. **Matthew 21:13** and **John 2:16** -> cf. **1 Samuel 15:14**
 - d. Every provision necessary for success was given.
 - 2. Behold: The Singular Purpose of the Vineyard v. 34
 - a. Note: **Isaiah 5:1-7**

- Play on words in Hebrew: “Looked for *mishpat* (“judgment”) but behold *mispah* (“oppression”); “for *sedakah* (“righteousness”) but *seakah*” (“wailing”)
- “Judgment” = justice, discernment which conforms to God’s sovereignty **Hebrews 5:14 cf. Matthew 23:16ff.**
- Righteousness = conformity to God’s revealed will
- **cf. Matthew 5-7, 6:33**; the barren fig tree had leaves but no fruit (**Matthew 21:18-21**)

3. Behold: The Incredible Patience and Mercy of the Householder **vv. 35-37**
 - a. Servants = prophets
 - b. “Last of all” (**Mark 12:6**) = final one of a series
4. Behold: The Right of the Son, not the sharecroppers, to the vineyard **vv.38-39**
 - a. Son of God had every right to cleanse temple!
 - b. Yet, the sharecroppers demand **v. 23** of son!
5. The Amazing Ability of Jesus’ Parable **vv. 40-41**
 - a. In **v. 31** the Jews’ render a guilty verdict on their rejection of Jesus = Jury
 - b. In **v. 41** the Jews’ pronounce a sentence on their guilt = Judge

C. Application/message **vv. 42-44**

1. Rejection of the Son does not thwart God the Father **v. 42**
 - a. Quotation of **Psalm 118:22-23**; not **Matthew 21:9** and **Psalm 118:25**
 - b. Not surprising, because even the gates of Hades will not prevent Christ from building His church! **Matthew 16:18**
 - c. Sharecroppers do not overrule the Householder
2. Neutrality toward Christ is impossible -> He is either a rejected stone in your life that you stumble over (**v. 44**) or the cornerstone of your life!
3. Spiritual fruitfulness is essential **v. 43 cf. Matthew 24:35**
 - a. **v. 41** “which” = “that of a different character”
 - b. **cf. Romans 14:17; 1 Peter 2:5-9**
4. Rejection of the Son guarantees personal destruction **v. 44**
 - a. In this life = brokenness is reparable **cf. Isaiah 8:14-15**
 - b. In the life to come = winnowed, scattered as dust, irreparable
 - c. Note: **vv. 45-46** The warning of **v. 44** went unheeded by them; what about you?

“JESUS’ PARABLE ON THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD”

TEXT: Matthew 22:1-14

I. Introduction

A. In the real world, life is a combination of responsibilities and privileges.

1. In the home, a husband, wife, and children have both.
2. In a nation, Christian citizens have both.
3. The same is true about the kingdom of heaven.
 - a. Responsibilities = righteous living -> **Matthew 21:33-49**
 - b. Privileges = spiritual feast (**Ephesians 1:3**) -> **Matthew 22:1-14**
4. The same people who are laborers in God’s vineyard are also guests at the King’s table.

B. Today, “Jesus’ Parable on the Goodness and Severity of God.”

II. “Jesus’ Parable on the Goodness and Severity of God.”

A. The Parable

1. Its context **v. 1** -> **cf. Matthew 21:23 ff.**

2. Its contents

a. The setting **vv. 2-3** = Royal wedding/marriage festival **cf. John 2**

b. “Would not come” -> Imperfect = persistent refusal **v. 3**

– Note: It is not “could not” -> not a lack of opportunity or ability, but “would not”—a lack of desire.

c. King’s Invitation = honor and a command **vv. 3-4**

d. Responses to Invitation **vv. 5-6**

– Indifference **v. 5** because of material concerns

– Hostility! **v. 6** -> Who kills a messenger who invites you to a royal wedding feast?!?!?

e. King’s response **vv. 7-10**

– Jesus’ prediction **v. 7**

– **v. 8 cf. Acts 13:45-46**

– The wedding was furnished and guests were furnished with garments => usually white robes

f. The Ill-Clad wedding guest **vv. 11-13**

– **v. 11** “Not” = the “Not” of observation, fact

– **v. 12** “Not” = the “Not” of thought; i.e. the guest had deliberately chosen not to wear the garment => egregious violation of King’s hospitality **cf. Esther 6:7-8**

3. Its Conclusion **v. 14**

a. *kletos* (“called”) vs. *ekletos* (“chosen”)

b. Why “few”? Because of:

– Complete rejection of the gospel (**vv. 5-6**)

– Failure of Christians to be adorned as per God’s expectations (**vv. 11-13**) **cf. Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:9-10, Revelation 19:8-9**

B. The Point: Behold the Goodness and Severity of God **Romans 11:22**

1. God’s Goodness

a. His extensively extravagant preparations **v. 4**

– “Prepared” => Perfect Active Indicative = the result at the end of a process over time

– Note: the expense -> oxen, fatlings **cf. 1 Peter 1:18-19**

b. His generous Invitation **v. 10**

– The past did not matter -> God fearers (i.e. Jews) vs. Idolaters (i.e. Gentiles)

c. His Wondrous Provisions **vv. 10, 11**

– Our garment of salvation has been personally woven by Jesus’ hands and dyed red by his blood!

2. God’s Severity

a. Jerusalem’s utter destruction **v. 7**

b. Hell’s horrors await every Christian who rejects God’s provisions **v. 13 cf. Romans 10:1-3**

3. Conclusion

a. **Romans 11: 20-22**

b. **2 Thessalonians 1:5-9**

III. Conclusion -> Are you among “the called” or “the chosen”? (v.14)

“JESUS’ PARABLE ON WATCHFULNESS”

TEXT: Matthew 25:1-13

I. Introduction

A. According to the gospel records, the public teaching ministry of Jesus ends with four parables.

1. They are found in **Matthew 24:42-25:46**

2. The first two parables are focused upon spiritual preparedness/watchfulness cf. **24:42, 25:13**

3. The first parable is almost identical in content to the parable of **Luke 12:42-48**; the second parable (**Matthew 25:1-13**) has some similarities with **Luke 12:35-40**-> readiness in the context of a wedding.

a. We will not consider **Matthew 24:42-51**

b. We will consider **Matthew 25:1-13**

B. “Jesus’ Parable on Watchfulness”

II. “Jesus’ Parable on Watchfulness”

A. Its Context

1. The final day of Jesus’ public ministry begins in **Matthew 21:23**.

a. The interruption of **21:23 to 22:14**

b. The attempt to entrap **22:15-46**

c. The public condemnation of Scribes and Pharisees **23:1-36**

d. The public condemnation of Jerusalem **23:27-24:35** = those who obey not the gospel

e. The final coming/2nd appearing of Christ **24:36 – 25:46** = condemnation of Christians who fail to adequately prepare for it.

2. Note **25:1** “then” -> continuation from **chapter 24**

B. The Parable vv. 1-12

1. Jewish weddings were not performed in the temple, synagogues; were performed in the home of either the bride or the groom.

a. Most marriages were pre-arranged by parents = betrothal

b. Once betrothal was made, both parties began making preparations. cf. **John 14:2-3**

2. Wedding festivities begin at bride’s home in the day; later in the day there is a procession to the home of the groom.

a. Servants of the groom were expected to enthusiastically welcome the couple.

b. If it was after dark, servants were expected to help light the way for the procession.

– “lamp” = torches with rags that need periods of dousing with oil to keep burning

c. “Wise” servants made sure they had their torch and sufficient oil; “foolish” did not.

C. The Parable’s Point: “Watch!”

1. Personal/Individual preparation is required.

a. Each virgin was expected to be prepared.

b. cf. **Romans 14:12**

- c. **Revelation 2-3** prove that Jesus knows the state/condition of every congregation, but being a member of a congregation does not eliminate personal responsibility.
 - 2. Thorough preparation is imperative **vv. 3-4, 7**
 - a. “Wise” = lamps and oil; “foolish” = lamps
 - b. “Foolish” were not necessarily wicked, mean, unconcerned, or lazy; just unprepared!
 - 3. Preparation is non-transferable **vv. 8-9**
 - a. I cannot borrow from your preparation; you cannot borrow from mine.
 - b. **Galatians 6:5**
 - 4. Immediate action is imperative when the bridegroom comes ->no “two minute warning” **v. 6**
 - 5. Preparation is a life/death matter! **vv. 10-12**
 - a. Eternal fellowship/Eternal separation is irreversible—“the door was shut”
 - b. Note: the extraordinary danger of neglect!
-

“JESUS’ PARABLE ON FAITHFULNESS”

TEXT: **Matthew 25:14-30**

- I. Introduction
 - A. One of the final commands of Jesus’ public ministry is **Matthew 24:42-44**
 - 1. “Watch” **v. 42**
 - 2. “Be ready” **v. 44**
 - B. **Matthew 25** illustrates what watchful readiness looks like.
 - 1. Virgins = prepared for the coming bridegroom **vv. 1-13**
 - 2. Servants = vigorously attending their master’s business **vv. 14-30**
 - 3. The Righteous – loving their Neighbors as themselves **vv. 31-46**
- II. “Jesus’ Parable on Faithfulness”
 - A. Differences Between this Parable and Parable of Pounds in **Luke 19:12ff.**
 - 1. Ten Servants (**v. 13**), not three (**Matthew 25:15**)
 - 2. Each servant received same amount to steward (**vv.16-18**), not differing amounts.
 - 3. Pound (**v. 16**) vs. Talent (**Matthew 25:15**)
 - Pound = 3 months wages; talent = 20 years’ worth of wages.
 - 4. **Luke 19:11ff.** told to deal with misconceptions about Christ’s Kingdom; **Matthew 25:14ff.** illustrates what watchful readiness looks like.
 - B. The Parable’s Lessons ->Lessons learned from five and two talent servants
 - 1. Watchfulness implies activity, not passivity
 - cf. **v. 16** “went”, “made” and **v. 17**’s “gained”
 - cf. **1 and 2 Thessalonians** were written to correct misconceptions about Jesus’ second appearing/final coming.
 - “Playing church” is passive; being the church is active
 - 2. Good stewardship seeks what is the master’s best interest, not servant’s.
 - a. First two servants were focused on master; last servant focused on self.
 - b. The church of the New Testament is about Christ, not self!
 - 3. Good stewardship requires prudent risk taking i.e. spiritual ambition. **Mark 9:50**

- The “infallibly safe course” is a course of many dead congregations
- 4. Being a good and faithful servant is determined by effort **vv. 21, 23**
- C. Lessons to be learned from the One Talent Man
 - 1. BEWARE of erroneous theology and rationalizing inactivity **vv. 24-25**
 - a. There are no acceptable excuses on Judgment Day.
 - b. One talent servant given a talent yet says **vs. 24** that he did not squander talent; truly he was not overtly disobedient or immoral.
 - 2. Lack of zeal is caused by wicked heart and lazy hands **vv. 26-27**.
 - 3. Use it or lose it **vv. 28-29**
 - 4. Unprofitable servants are eternally discarded **v. 30**
- III. Conclusion -> the size of the gift to each servant is not the focus of the parable; the size of each servant’s heart and zeal are.
 - A. Note: the praise, reward, and the joy of the faithful **vv. 21, 23**
 - B. Note: the place and punishment of the unfaithful **v. 30**

“JESUS’ PARABLE ON THE FINAL JUDGMENT”

TEXT: Matthew 25:31-46

- I. Introduction
 - A. “Parables are not bedtime stories to help us sleep; they are robust illustrations to rouse us to action.”
 - 1. True of our study of the parables
 - 2. Especially true of the final parable spoken by our Lord – within three days of His death
 - B. “Jesus’ Parable on the Final Judgment”
- II. “Eight Sobering Truths About the Final Judgment”
 - A. It will be a Regal Judgment **v. 31**
 - 1. As the Son of Man on this earth, Jesus’ glory was veiled; He humbled himself – Lamb of God
 - 2. As the Son of Man in Judgment, His glory will be unmistakable—Lion of Judah
 - a. All the Holy Angels
 - b. Sitting upon the throne of His glory **cf. Isaiah 6:1-5, Revelation 1:13-17**
 - B. It will be a Universal, Inescapable Judgment **v. 32**
 - 1. “all nations” = *ethne* **cf. Matthew 28:19**
 - 2. Each citizen of all nations will be there individually **cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10**
 - C. It will be a Discerning Judgment **vv. 32b-33**
 - 1. First century custom – pasture sheep and goats together during day and separate at night **cf. Matthew 13:29-30**
 - 2. Shepherd/Son of Man can discern between sheep and goats **cf. Exodus 9:6, 24, 26; 10:22-23**
 - D. It will be Self-Determined Judgment **vv. 34, 41**
 - 1. “Blessed” and “Cursed” -> perfect passive = a resulting state of being that exists because of the actions prior to that point

2. This state is not determined by the Judge but by the individual; Jesus simply recognizes which life you lived for. cf. **Matthew 16:27, 6:19-21**
- E. It will be an Evidence Based Judgment vv. 34 ff.
1. “Inherit” implies Sonship v. 34 cf. **John 3:3, 5** – “Inherit” is not “earned”
 2. What did you do? (**Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15**)
 - a. cf. **Ephesians 2:10** -> standard of behavior expected
 - b. Note: scope of help -> physical, social, moral, spiritual, medical, emotional needs
 3. Why did you do it?
 - a. cf. **1 Corinthians 13:1-3**
 - b. cf. **Matthew 6:1, 5, 16**
 - c. The forgetfulness of the sheep indicates that their motive for doing good was their love for fellow man; their motives were pure.
- F. It will be an Impartial Judgment vv. 35ff.
1. Same criteria used on both sheep and goats
 2. No respect of person with God **Romans 2:11; Acts 10:34 James 2:1ff.**
- G. It will be a Consequential Judgment vv. 34, 41
1. For Sheep v. 34
 - a. Invitation to come
 - b. Praise -> “ye blessed” = “well spoken of “
 - c. Inheritance of the Kingdom cf. **Revelation 1:5; 1 Peter 2:9**
 - d. Note the preparation **Ephesians 1: 9-14, John 14:3**
 2. For Goats v. 41
 - a. Rejection -> “Depart”
 - b. Curse -> “Ye cursed”
 - c. Condemnation -> Everlasting Fire
 - d. Suffering -> “Punishment” v. 46
 - e. Eternal/Everlasting/Unending company with the devil and his angels
- H. It will be Irrevocable Judgment v. 46
1. “The door was shut” (v. 10)
 2. “Everlasting” = “Eternal” v. 46
- III. Are You Ready for the – Regal, Universal, Inescapable, Discerning, Self-Determined, Evidenced –Based, Impartial, Consequential, Irrevocable Judgment day?
-

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

HEAR the word of God, the Gospel, the New Testament: Romans 10:13-17; John-6:44-45; Matthew 11:15; Acts 2:22; Acts 3:23; Acts 7:37; Acts 10:22,33; Acts 11:14.

BELIEVE the Gospel and that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior, the Son of God: Mark 1:15, John 1:12, John 3:16, John 6:29,69, John 8:24, John 11:27, Mark 16:16, Acts 8:37, Acts 13:39, Acts 19:4.

REPENT of your sins: Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; Acts 26:20.

CONFESS faith in Jesus, that he is the Christ the Son of God: Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32-33; Philippians 2:11.

BAPTISM (immersion) into water for the forgiveness of your sins: Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38,41; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-6,17-18; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21; John 3:1-5.

LIVE FAITHFUL to the Lord all your life, even if it costs you your life: Matthew 10:22; 1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:2; Revelation 2:10.

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