

*11<sup>th</sup> Annual*

# **Back To The Bible**

*Lectures*

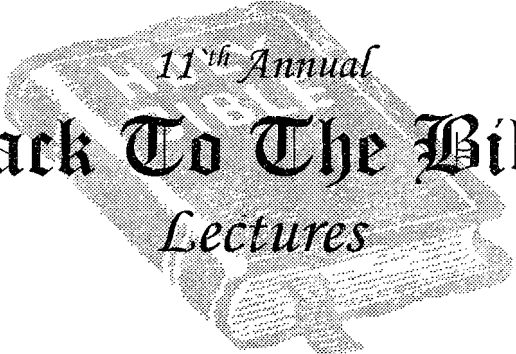
Theme:  
**Parables of  
Jesus**

September 26-28, 2008

**WEST JEFFERSON CHURCH OF CHRIST**



---



*11<sup>th</sup> Annual*  
**Back To The Bible**  
*Lectures*

Theme:  
**Parables of Jesus**

September 26-28, 2008

**Hosted By:**  
The West Jefferson church of Christ

**Director:**  
Doug Frazier  
(336) 846-5615

The material in this book is not copyrighted; however, it is bound by such Christian principles as, "Thou shalt not steal." The material may be used as long as proper credit is given. We pray this material may be used to glorify God and to assist in adding to the borders of His Glorious Kingdom!

---

## FORWARD

The theme for this year's lectureship is the Parables of Jesus. The Parables that Jesus spoke of are important for our learning and it should be our desire to diligently study them. Second Timothy 2:15, **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."** Every scripture of the Bible is vital to our learning, without them we can not be complete. Second Timothy 3:16-17, **"All scripture his giving by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God maybe perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works."**

Sometimes we over look the parables of Jesus but we can gain great knowledge from the things that Jesus spoke of. They will help us to become better Christians. Jesus often used everyday examples to help explain what He was teaching. The reason He did this was to help His disciples understand His teachings clearer. They are also to be used now for our learning and to help us understand His teachings clearer.

The Lord used the simple things to help the people understand and many of those things were what people commonly used. When Jesus taught parables to people He was not trying to teach over the individuals understanding but was trying to get what He was saying on their level. As we look at the study of the Parables of Jesus let have an open mind so that we can learn more form Gods word.

Doug Frazier

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	“Parable of the Wheat and Tare” Eddy Craft	4
2.	“Parable of the Dragnet” Josh Day	13
3.	“Parable of the Unforgiving Servant” Jonnie Hutchison	31
4.	“Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard” Jerry Pence	46
5.	“Parable of the Soil” Paul Kirkpatrick	54
6.	“Parable of the Two Sons” Tim Canup	59
7.	“Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers” Milton Mathers	70
8.	“Parable of the Wedding Feast” Steven Canup	78
9.	“Parable of the Talents” Doug Frazier	92
10.	“Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins” Michael Jordan	98

Chapter 1  
**“Parable of the Wheat and Tare”**  
Eddy Craft

Eddy Craft was born in Signal Mountain, TN. He graduated from the Memphis School of Preaching in 1972. He conducts a weekly Television Program, “Biblical Viewpoints” which is seen in Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, and Jackson, Mississippi. He also is involved in a weekly Radio Program, “Arise To Truth.” He has preached in Saltville, VA, Rogersville, TN, Abingdon, VA, Luray, VA, and Elizabethton, TN.

He has been involved in numerus Gospel Meetings and Lectureships. He is now a full-time instructor for the Tri-Cities School of Preaching and Christian Development and serves as the Dean of Students. He is married to Betty (Cook) and they have three children and four grandchildren.

**MATTHEW 13:24-30; 36-43**

**Introduction**

1. Theme: Judgment.
2. Main Lesson: It is hard to pinpoint some of the unconverted “in the kingdom,” (because of their good job of pretense), but that separation will be made on the last day.
3. This is a kingdom parable:
  1. Matthew 13:31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field.
  2. Matthew 13:33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.
  3. Matthew 13:44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.
  4. Matthew 13:45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls.
  5. Matthew 13:47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.
  6. Matthew 13:24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a

---

man which sowed good seed in his field.

1. If we are talking about the whole world, notice that the tares look like the children of God. Surely, you do not believe the children of Satan (out in the world) and the children of God look alike!

2. We are talking about a situation where tares look like wheat.

3. Notice, the separation at the end is made from within the kingdom. Matthew 13:41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

4. Why will not Bible students, and especially preachers and elders, interpret this kingdom parable like they would all kingdom parables and limit it to the realm of the kingdom?

5. The answer is, they feel that such an interpretation would do away with church discipline.

6. However, one of the rules for interpreting parables is that no interpretation of a parable can contradict any clearly taught principle in the Word of God: 2 Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

7. The disciples did not understand the parable, and they wanted Him to explain it for them. The Lord pointed out the following facts:

1. He that sowed the good seed --  
The Son of man (v37).

2. The field -- The world (v38).

3. The good seed -- The children of  
the kingdom (v38).

4. The tares -- The children of the

---

wicked one (v38).

The Devil (v39).

world (v39).

5. The enemy that sowed the tares --

6. The harvest -- The end of the

7. The reapers -- The angels (v39).

I. Matthew 13:24-26 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

1. The Lord's explanation. Matthew 13:37-38 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*;

2. He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man. Matthew 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? Acts 7:56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

3. The field is the world, not the kingdom. The field is where the gospel is preached. The kingdom grows out of that. However, among the kingdom, the seed of the evil one is sown.

4. The Lord said, the enemy came and sowed seed among the wheat.

5. Therefore, the children of the wicked one were sown among the children of the kingdom.

6. Thus, the thought of the tares - that which looked like the wheat.

7. "There can be little doubt that the ***zizania*** of the parable, Matt. 13:25, denotes the weed called "darnel." The darnel before it comes into ear is very similar in appearance to wheat; hence the command that ***zizania*** should be left to the harvest, lest while men plucked up the tares "they should root up also the wheat with them."



---

*Smith's Bible Dictionary, p 674.*

8. **Strong's:** 2215 zizanion;

1. AV - tares 8; 8

2. A kind of darnel, resembling wheat, except the grains are black.

9. Therefore, the tares look like God's people.

10. These are the unconverted sowed among the local congregations in the kingdom. They claim to be citizens in the kingdom, but they have never from the heart obeyed God. Here are some examples:

1. A person "obeys the gospel" because it will get his wife off his back.

2. A person who is married wrong declares that he is married right and "obeys the gospel." (Case in Saltville, VA.)

3. A young person comes forward with all his friends to "obey the gospel," but his heart is not in it.

4. A person becomes a member of the church just because mom and dad are members of the church.

5. A man becomes a member of the church because he has an agenda to push.

11. How many times have you heard a member of the church say relative to another member, "He has never been converted?"

12. How many times have you seen one obey the gospel ("be re-baptized") and make the statement, "I did not know what I was doing the first time?"

13. These are not like the man in 1 Corinthians 5 who had his father's wife. He could easily be identified and thus withdrawn from. 1 Corinthians 5:4-5 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

II Matthew 13:27-28 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said

---

unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

1. The Lord's explanation: Matthew 13:39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

2. For the sake of the parable, a distinction has to be made. Otherwise, we do not have a parable.

3. The point is the tares look so much like the wheat it would be hard to get rid of the tares without destroying the wheat.

4. We cannot judge some situations:

1. We do not know people's hearts.

2. We cannot judge their motives.

3. We cannot know some situations relative to marriage, divorce and remarriage, because some people will not tell the truth.

4. John 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

5. God expects us to give our fellowman the benefit of the doubt.

6. When a man declares himself to be a faithful member of the Lord's church and acting in harmony with God's laws as far as I can tell, all I can do is fellowship him. If he is a hypocrite and lying about his relationship with God, this will be taken care of in the judgment.

7. There are those in the kingdom based on conviction and conversion. There are those who are fellowshiped based on their claim.

8. I think that sometimes we believe that if we do not mark these individuals in this life, then they will have gotten by with their ungodliness. Those who fool us, God has identified.

9. 1 Timothy 5:24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some *men* they follow after.

10. 1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

---

III. Matthew 13:29-30 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

1. The Lord's explanation: Matthew 13:40-42 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

2. The tares will be gathered and burned.

3. The angels will be sent and they will gather out of His kingdom those that offend and those that do iniquity.

4. The "look-a-likes" did not get by with it.

5. It is not good enough to look like a Christian.

One must be a Christian from the heart. Matthew 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

6. There is a separation made of the good and the bad. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

7. Where is:

1. The rapture?

2. The Lord reigning for a 1,000 years in Jerusalem on the literal throne of David?

3. The battle of Armageddon?

4. The three or four resurrections and judgments spoken of by the premillennial people? John 5:28-29 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

8. The **C. I. Scofield Reference Bible** has been an important tool of the dispensationalists for propagating their brand of premillennialism. It has extensive footnotes and references to accomplish this. It is interesting to notice

---

his comments on this parable. Regarding verse 30 which says, "Gather ye together first the tares" he says, "at the end of this age (v 40) the tares are set apart for burning, but first the wheat is gathered into the barn." He switched "first" from "the tares" in the Bible text to "the wheat" in his comments! (From tract on the rapture by Joe Galloway).

IV. Matthew 13:43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

1. The righteous shall be clearly identified.

Proverbs 14:34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.

2. Psalm 73:24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

3. James 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

4. Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

5. Matthew 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

V. Lessons we can learn from this parable.

1. We all fall into one category or the other. (We have been converted out of a good heart by good seed, or else we are children of the wicked one).

2. We are obligated to keep the church pure, but we are not obligated beyond our abilities to discern. When the evidence is in, we must take a stand.

3. There are some things that we must leave to the Lord.

4. I do not have to sit in judgment on all cases, because I cannot know some things.

5. There will always be hypocrites in the church. Hypocrisy is real.

6. I cannot judge a man's heart. I cannot judge a

---

man's motives.

7. God will take care of the tares. We cannot judge every situation.

8. If I try to rip out the tares, I will destroy some of the wheat and I will have to answer to God for that. We are to give our fellowman the benefit of the doubt. One can become a professional "tare hunter."

9. The Devil will have his disciples claiming to be in the kingdom.

10. Some of Satan's people can be hard to identify because they will say, "I am this or that," when, in reality, they are not this or that.

11. You can fool me, but you cannot fool God.

12. A man will reap what he sows. The righteous will be rewarded.

13. Obedience is a must and not an option. We must obey from the heart.

14. We are not to interpret any parable to contradict a clear cut doctrine such as church discipline.

15. It takes the sowing of the seed to produce Christians.

16. We must be careful not to make rash judgments.

17. Sin in the church is the work of Satan. Satan is trying to destroy the church.

18. We must be careful not to cause others to stumble.

19. The church will never be free from sin while on earth.

VI. False doctrines exposed by this parable.

1. Faith only.
2. The rapture.
3. Premillennialism.
4. No Hell, No Heaven.
5. No angels.
6. Bible a dead letter.
7. No Devil.
8. No end of the world.

Chapter 2  
**“Parable of the Dragnet”**  
Josh Day

Joshua Day is a graduate of the Tri-Cities School of Preaching and Christian Development having completed both the Biblical Studies and Christian Apologetics courses. He is one of the preachers for the Stoney Creek church of Christ, as well as a full-time instructor with TCSOP. He and his wife, Andrea, currently live in Elizabethton, Tn.

**Matthew 13:47-52**

**INTRODUCTION**

Perhaps one of the greatest paradoxes ever to be contemplated by mortal mind is the fact that Jesus Christ was and shall remain the greatest teacher who ever lived. When one considers who He was—the Son of God—it seems a most natural thing; yet, when one considers the form He took—homeless son of a poor carpenter from a backwards town—it seems beyond comprehension.

He was born and reared in a narrow sphere, lived a brief life, wrote his message in the sand and not in a book, had no influence with the men of authority, was hated by his own people, betrayed by his own disciple, was condemned and killed by a mob, died the most ignominious death possible, and yet his life and power have touched all parts of the globe and transformed the lives of millions (Book, 52).

Why was He so effective in His teachings? This success can largely be explained by noting the Teacher's mastery of method. He was able to take a few simple words and with them paint a picture so vivid that the truth was both clearly understood and easily remembered. When one also considers the Teacher's perfect understanding of His audience and how they would relate

---

to His truths, the enduring relevance of His teachings is easily understood.

There is no record of His ever having *studied* psychology. Yet, as John's record states, "...he needed not that any should bear witness concerning man, for he himself knew what was in man" (John 2:25). He knew perfectly the thoughts, the longings, the imagined needs, the real needs, the motives, and the goals of every person.

...Jesus used various phases of such pursuits as farming, fishing, building, cooking, buying land (and a number of others) in order to make clear the various points in His spiritual lessons (cf.: Luke 8:4-15; Matt. 13:47-50; 13:33; 44-46; Heb. 12:1-2, et al.). Jesus adapted this method to the status and needs of the individual person or group which He wished to teach. By doing so, He established a point of contact with the student and wisely opened the way for the lesson which He wished to teach to a particular person who was to be taught (Warren, 20-21).

One of the best ways Jesus accomplished this was through the use of the parable. So beloved are these literary masterpieces that "[t]he teaching of Jesus Christ would have been immortalized, if nothing but his parables had been preserved" (Jackson, 113). Even two millennia after their telling, one can scarcely see a mustard seed, a sown field, or a lump of dough without envisioning the images painted by Christ in His parables.

It is indeed unfortunate that we were not afforded the opportunity to sit at the feet of Jesus as He told these parables, drinking in the atmosphere, our senses intoxicated with the sights, sounds, and smells around us, as He revealed the most profound truths through the daily

---

surroundings of His disciples. The memory of the multi-sensory experience combined with the teaching would make them that much more effective and relevant. Despite the impossibility of this, however, we need not relegate the parables to the interminable list of long-obsolete illustrations no longer relevant to the twenty-first century church. On the contrary, because of their innate simplicity, they are well-tailored to the masses throughout history. Our duty as twenty-first century Bible students is to gather every scrap of available information and immerse ourselves in the context of the parable. Only then can we truly appreciate the beauty of the illustration and the relevance to our lives.

Perhaps one of the most notable examples of the need for this type of intensive study is the Parable of the Net (Mat. 13:47-50). The last of seven parables found in Matthew 13, it is hinged upon the most foreign concept to our Western mindset—fishing with a net. Fields of harvest, seeds, treasures, and leavened bread—all of which are more or less familiar to us—comprise the remainder of the illustrations discussed. For many in America, the only one of these we have not seen with our own eyes is fishing with a net. Many questions arise: “What kind of net is it?”; “How is the net used?”; “What do these foreign things represent?” etc. With a minimum of effort, however, we can transform our understanding of this parable immensely!

### **CONTEXT OF THE PARABLE**

As we lift our gaze from the parable itself and begin to peruse the greater context of chapter 13, we note that the location is that of a house at the seaside. This is most probably the Sea of Galilee, for some of His Galilean family were present earlier in the day (Mat. 12:46-50). He has spent the morning in healing the possessed (Mat. 12:22) and debating the scribes and Pharisees (Mat. 12:24-45), and, as the day has progressed, the multitude grows to such an extent that Jesus goes out to the shoreline and sits in a ship to teach the people gathered on shore



---

(Mat13:1-2).

He begins with the Parable of the Sower. The disciples are apparently surprised to hear Him teach in parables (v. 10). Perhaps they were recalling the authoritative discourses of the Sermon on the Mount with its oft repeated theme: "But I say unto you...." They are curious what has changed. Jesus informs them that the primary purpose of His sudden shift to parables is twofold: to reveal and to conceal the truth (Mat. 13:11-17). Those who desired to hear His words would easily be able to understand it; however, those who refused to hearken unto His teachings would readily be able to blind themselves to it. At face value this seems quite contradictory, but when one considers the eagerness of an honest heart to accept truth at all costs, contrasted with the readiness of a dishonest heart to overlook truth at all costs, it seems quite agreeable with the nature of man.

Ironically, this concept is perhaps best illustrated through a parable of its own.

There were these two farmers who got into an argument as to which one had the most rats in his barn. They argued and argued, and then they finally agreed to go to each other's barn and put their argument to the test. The first farmer stationed the second one at the side of his barn, and the first one went to the other side of the barn with a long pole and ran the pole up inside the barn and shook it very hard. He then called out to the other farmer, "Do you see any rats?" The other farmer said, "I'll admit, you do have a lot of rats, but I still maintain I have many more." So, the two farmers left and went to the second one's barn and went through the same procedure. The second farmer asked the first one if he saw any rats, and the first farmer said, "No, not a one." The other farmer shook his pole even

---

more vigorously, and he called out, "Do you see any rats?" The first farmer said, "No, not a single one." The second farmer was shocked by his answer, so he laid down the pole and came around the barn. There he saw the other farmer with his eyes tightly closed. Of course, he didn't see any rats because he wasn't looking. And that is why many folks cannot see certain truths today (Murphy, 24).

As simple a story as this is, it illustrates perfectly the willingness of some people to ignore clear truth. God in His wisdom has allowed each individual to choose for themselves whether they will glory in His truth or bask in their ignorance. Such is the essence of the parable.

Taylor has further divided the purpose of the parable in five distinctions:

1. To **veil** truth from enemies, scoffers and those fully apathetic to his cause.
2. To **unveil** truth for sincere searchers and seekers of truth.
3. To **elicit** a condemnation from his enemies of their evil course even before they realized what they were conceding by way of answer.
4. To **encourage** a deeper, more fascinating and more profitable study of eternal truth.
5. To **embellish** and **immortalize** truth by the nobility of these simply told and yet very sublime narratives (Taylor, 2).

Each of these distinctions can be noted quite readily in the Scriptures. Mat. 13 itself illustrates the

---

**veiling** of truths. In the previous chapter (i.e. earlier in the day), He has been accused of casting out devils by the power of Satan. Surely it is no coincidence that, after claiming the power of the Holy Spirit before His enemies (Mat. 12:28), He suddenly begins teaching in parables. He realized that they were already enraged at His statements from earlier that day. To then claim directly that He was going to establish a kingdom would have been too much for them to stand. Jesus was not trying to avoid His ultimate confrontation with His enemies, but He realized that such a direct method of teaching would bring His this confrontation to a head too quickly, before God's plan was complete. Because of these things, Jesus began to teach in parables, couching His teaching in terms that would conceal them from His enemies and reveal them to His followers.

The **unveiling** can be seen in the affirmation of the apostles at the end of this chapter that they do indeed understand what Jesus has taught (Mat. 13:51). The simplicity of the illustrations was revelatory in the eyes of His disciples. Once Jesus assisted them in understanding the first two parables He revealed ("The Parable of the Sower" [Mat. 13:18-23] and "The Parable of the Tares" [Mat. 13:36-43]), they seem to have picked up the skill quite quickly. "All that we have learned of any worth has been by the simplest of analogies—by parable, that is to say—and by the same path as the simplest and least learned of our kind" (Nicoll, 318). At face value, this statement seems to overreach its bounds, but, as we continue to contemplate the qualities thus set forth, we are struck by the absolute inability of humankind to learn an entirely new concept without the use of simplified analogy. From the fundamentals of mathematics, to the annals of history, to the improving of vocabulary—all we have learned or ever shall learn is mediated (i.e. unveiled) by analogy. Thus the parable shines as a medium for communicating new ideas.

The ability to **elicit** a self-condemnation is perhaps one of the most unique characteristics of the parable. The

---

parable could

present a truth to the mind, and yet keep the person for whom it was intended from seeing the point till the mind had assented to the truth that was taught thereby. To proceed by the use of statement and argument would cause the person to array himself against the force of the truth being presented. Nathan came to David with a very pitiful story about some man who went and took the ewe lamb, the only one his poor neighbor had, and killed it for the friend who stopped with him, while he had plenty of flocks of his own (II. Sam. Xii. 1-6). David could easily see the meanness of such conduct, and he became so enraged that he determined to have the man put to death—he was too mean to live. Nathan had not made the application. But when he said, "Thou art the man," David was soon made to see the force of the truth. He could not have been made to understand his sin in any other way—at least, not so clearly (Dungan, 228-229).

A New Testament example can be found in the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (Mat. 21:33-46). Jesus told the parable proper to the chief priests and Pharisees in verses 33-39. In verse 40, He asks them a question about the parable which they readily answer in the next verse, never realizing the implications of the parable dealt with their own lives and actions. Jesus reveals this to them in verses 42-44, after which they are greatly angered (vv. 45-46); however, He has used nothing to condemn them but the principles which they themselves readily admitted.

The parable's ability to **encourage** a deeper zeal for study can be quickly recognized in the apostles' question of Mat. 13:36, where they come to Jesus privately and ask Him about the Parable of the Tares. He has

---

peaked their curiosity and they desire to further their knowledge in this area. Certainly, any teaching method that has such positive results is a wonderful method indeed!

Lastly, the parable's penchant for preservation (i.e. **immortalization**) in the mind of the hearer is evident in the very existence of this volume. The fact that mankind is still reading, studying, and discussing these parables is highly indicative of their ability to secure themselves comfortably in the memory. "These story illustrations of the Saviour were not only a means of making truth to be understood, but to cause it to be remembered. Those who heard His stories of illustration never forgot them" (Dungan, 228).

Having explained to a degree the reasoning behind His teaching in parables, Jesus then teaches the disciples to decipher a parable by giving the interpretation of the Parable of the Sower (Mat. 13:18-23). To this He adds the parables of the Tares (vv. 24-30), Mustard Seed (vv. 31-32), and Leaven (v. 33). After the multitude is dispersed, Jesus returns to the house and His disciples question Him concerning the Parable of the Tares (vv. 36-43). Having given the interpretation Jesus gives three more parables: The Hidden Treasure, The Pearl of Great Price, and The Net. Here, with a proper understanding of its context, we pick up the narrative of The Parable of the Net.

### CONTENT OF THE PARABLE

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Mat.*

The net here described is not an ordinary fishing net. It is not the net handled by one or two men as described in Mat. 4:12. This

casting net (Gk. *amphiblestron*) was...circular and had weights on its perimeter. A fisherman would drape the net over his shoulder, walk up to the shore, and throw the net. The net would hit the water as a large, open circle, and the weights on the outside edges would bring the net down over any fish that were in the area. Then the fisherman would pull a cord attached to his wrist that closed the net into a sack, and bring his catch up onto the shore (MacArthur).

On the contrary, the net of the parable is a much larger net and is designated by a different Greek word, *sagene*.

When used, one end of the net was attached to the shoreline, and the other end was attached to a boat. The boat would then go out on the water and stretch open the net. After the net was opened, the boat would begin to move in a circle. Because the top edge of the net had floats and the bottom edge had weights, it moved through the sea like a vertical wall. As the circle was being completed and the boat made its way back to where the net was attached to the shoreline, all the sea life that was inside the circle the boat made was caught inside the walls of that net (MacArthur).

Given that this parable is most likely given toward the end of the day after the people of left and the main teaching is done, it is entirely possible that, as the disciples sat in this seaside house listening to this parable, they

---

could look out the window and see fishermen separating the catch of the day. What a poignant picture this would have made, and what an indelible impression it must have left!

### CONCEPT OF THE PARABLE

Having seen the straightforward content of the parable, how then do we decipher its meaning? In his still eminent textbook on hermeneutics (the science of interpretation), Professor Dungan lists six rules for the interpretation of parables. In abbreviated form, they are as follows:

**Rule 1**—Many of the symbols have been interpreted, in whole or in part, by their authors.

**Rule 2**—Other symbols have been interpreted by other inspired authors.

**Rule 3**—Sometimes the symbol has been given in a manner that is difficult, but another writer or speaker has used the same illustration in such a way that there is no doubt as to its meaning.

**Rule 4**—The names of symbols are to be understood literally. The words used should be subjected to the same rules as if they were found in other composition.

**Rule 5**—There must be found a resemblance, more or less clear, between the symbol and the thing signified.

**Rule 6**—The condition of those to whom the symbol was given must be known, if possible, for the meaning which they would be most likely to get out of it is the meaning that the author intended to put into it (356-

As this is the only occurrence of this particular parable, Rules 1-3 do not apply to our interpretation. The concept of Rule 3 can be adapted for our use, however, when we realize that the same wording used in verses 49-50 is used in verses 40-42 with regards to the Parable of the Tares. Such would seem to indicate a similarity in the main thrust of the parables. Rules 4-5 are excellent guidelines for shaping our interpretation, but they do not bring us any closer to initially gaining the interpretation. This leave only Rule 6 to help us discover the interpretation, but with the background research we have already done, such a help could be very beneficial indeed. Realizing their location on the seashore, the prior events of the day, the individuals present, and so on we can begin to grasp the intended interpretation.

We should also keep in mind that we need not assign every detail of the parable a specific or profound meaning.

It will much help us in this determining of what is essential and what not, if, before we attempt to explain the particular parts, we obtain a firm grasp of the central truth which the ramble would set forth, and distinguish it in the mind as sharply and accurately as we can from all cognate truths which border upon it; for only seen from that middle point will the different parts appear in their true light (Trench).

Aside from being unnecessary, the effort to determine a meaning for even the smallest details can very easily lead one to doctrinal error, or at the best, weak support of otherwise sound doctrine. "Details in the narrative of a parable need to be carefully handled to avoid teaching indefensible doctrines; it is also indefensible to teach truth from a passage which does not treat that axiom"



---

(Rushmore, 395).

Understanding these guidelines, what truths can we glean from the Parable of the Net? Again noticing that the wording of the conclusion of this parable is nearly identical to the conclusion of the Parable of the Tares, we note that the thrust of this parable is virtually identical as well. Judgment is coming at the end of the world.

First, we note that God will initiate **judgment**. Judgment will absolutely be coming, of this all mankind can be certain. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). "... [I]t is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil" (Ecc. 12:13-14).

Second, we note that God **will** initiate judgment. Fortunately for millions of lost souls, the judgment is still future. It is certain, but we still have time to "rescue the perishing." "When the Lord spoke of a casting net, He referred to it in a positive way: He used it as a picture of the disciples catching men for Christ (Mt. 4:19). When He spoke of the dragnet, He was talking about the gathering of men for judgment." Thus we have a contrast between our current time of reprieve, wherein we fish for men with our small nets, catching them individually or in small groups, and the future time of judgment, wherein God will fish through the kingdom with His all encompassing net and separate the good from the bad.

Third, we note that **God** will initiate judgment. This seems to be the main difference between this parable and

---

that of the Tares. In the Parable of the Tares, the emphasis seems to be placed on warning men against imperfect, human judgment in situations where we cannot determine what the correct judgment is. In the Parable of the Net, the emphasis seems to be placed on warning men that perfect judgment is coming and that none can hide. One may be able to deceive the members of the kingdom, but they will never deceive the King.

Scrutinizing more closely the individual elements of the parable, we note the net, the sea, the fish (both good and bad), and the vessels into which the fish are separated. The net is the one thing which we are explicitly given the meaning of—"the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net" (v. 47). On this point, there can be neither question nor compromise. Jesus identified the net as the kingdom (or church); therefore any interpretation we put forth must have the net representing the kingdom. Understanding the net to be the kingdom, the sea must of necessity be the world, for it is into this that the kingdom is cast and out of it that the kingdom draws the fish. Understanding the kingdom to be drawing the fish out of the world, the fish must then be representative of those disciples within the kingdom. Understanding the fish to be the members of the kingdom, the vessels into which the fish are separated must represent the places into which members of the kingdom will be separated upon the judgment. Given the interpretation of the net as being the kingdom of heaven (which Christ Himself set forth), these other concepts or interpretations must follow.

The question that naturally arises is "Why are there bad members in the kingdom?" Keeping in mind the similarity with the Parable of the Tares, the bad members are representative of those who outwardly appear to be Christians, but who inwardly are children of Satan. We cannot necessarily distinguish between the good and bad, but God will separate them in the final judgment. As the net drew both good and bad fish out of the sea, so the church draws good and bad people out of the world. "The fishermen cannot stop to sort while they are drawing the

---

net. Nor can the preachers of the gospel always distinguish" (Johnson, 81). The fishermen know only that the net is filling with what appear to be good fish. Until the catch is brought completely out of the sea and inspected, the difference may not be distinguishable. Likewise, Christians can sometimes know only that the church is filling with what appear to be good Christians. Until the church is brought completely out of the world at the end of time, the difference may not be distinguishable.

### CONCLUSION

Having a proper understanding of the parable, what will we then do with this understanding? To quote Franklin Camp, "The important thing then in connection with this parable is this: 'Now what do I represent in this parable?' Do I belong to the good fish or the bad fish? Am I the kind that God will accept?"

In a very real sense, this parable is one of the more disconcerting to the Christian, because it tells us we cannot simply say, "I am in the church, so I am a good fish." The bad fish were "in the church" as well! We can most certainly be "Bible-totin', Bible-quotin' members" and yet be as lost as the heathen who lives in open rebellion to God. In fact, the Bible tells us that the one who is in the church and knows the truth, yet still rebels against God is worse off than the one who has never heard the truth in the first place.

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb,

---

The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again;  
and the sow that was washed to her  
wallowing in the mire (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

The Lord told Ezekiel that Israel had surpassed the wickedness of the heathen nations around her because she had ignored the holy statutes given her by God, to follow after their false gods (Eze. 5:7). In a vision shortly thereafter, God shows Ezekiel that the Israelites have even turned the temple into a place of pagan worship! No, friend—just because we are in the church does not guarantee us a spot with the good fish. We must take care that we do not become “again entangled” in the bondage of sin.

Despite this sobering thought, the parable as a whole is greatly encouraging to the faithful child of God. First, it assures us that we can be separated from the world. Of the sea in the parable, Lockyer says: “What a dark abyss of sin, error, and ignorance men live in, yet they can be drawn out of it by the Spirit of God, as the terms of the Gospel are accepted.” Second, it assures us of a righteous judgment. God is not going to make a mistake—the good fish will be recognized for what they are, as will the bad fish. This gives us confidence in our salvation, and allows us to have peace in our inability to judge perfectly in all matters. What sweet relief to know that we do not have to be the ones to make sure everyone else is living exactly the way they should be! We may rest assured—no one will slip past God. Third, to the disciples, this was one of the first pictures they were getting of the kingdom. How joyous to realize that the organization by which we can be saved is at hand! No more imperfect, animal sacrifices—now we can have true atonement.

This must surely have been the reason for verses 51 and 52 of Matthew 13.

*Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore*

---

*every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old (Mat. 13:51-52).*

The disciples are here referred to as scribes “instructed unto the kingdom of heaven,” a state compared to having a treasure to be shown to the world. Certainly these men, in whose care the Gospel would be entrusted, had the greatest treasure of all—salvation. They would be able to bring forth things new and old, i.e. the New Covenant from the fulfillment of the Old. Whether they realized it at the time or not, this was indeed the greatest and most encouraging news they could have been given, and will remain so for all mankind until our Lord returns.

The Parable of the Net continues to be a treasure for the Bible student, one containing gems both new and old. May we find excitement in the new, instruction in the old, and, in all such treasures, may we discover the “patience and comfort of the scriptures” that brings hope (Rom. 15:4).

## WORKS CITED

Book, William Henry. *Sermons for the People*. N. p.: n. p., n. d.

Camp, Franklin. *Redemption Through The Bible*. Compact Disc. Brother's, Inc., n. d.

Dungan, D. R., Prof. *Hermeneutics*. Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Company, n. d.

Jackson, Wayne. *Biblical Figures of Speech*. Stockton, California: Christian Courier Publications, 2005.

- 
- Johnson, B. W. Notes. *The People's New Testament*. Vol. 1. Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Company, n. d.
- Lockyer, Herbert. *All the Parables of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1963.
- MacArther, John. "Hell—The Furnace of Fire." Bible Bulletin Board. Online. 9 May 2008.
- Muphy, Paul D. *Timeless Sermons for Now and Eternity*. Vol. 2. Pulaski, Tennessee: Sain Publications, 2003.
- Nicoll, W. Robertson, ed. *The Sermon Outline Bible*. Vol. 5. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 1988. 12 vols. Rpt. of *The Sermon Bible*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, n. d.
- Rushmore, Louis. "Preaching the Parables of Jesus." *Jesus Christ, the Gift of God's Grace and the Object of Man's Faith*. Ed. Curtis A. Cates. Pensacola, Florida: Austin McGary and Company, 1992. 388-399.
- Taylor, Jr., Robert R. "Introduction Of The Saviour's Parables." *The Parables of Our Lord*. Ed. Fred Davis. Lebanon, Tennessee: Sain Publications, [c. 1983].
- Trench, Richard Chenevix. "Notes on the Parables." DCox Online Library. Online 22 May 2008.
- Warren, Thomas B. "Jesus, The Master Teacher of the Ages." *Great Lessons from New Testament Characters*. Ed. Curtis A. Cates. N. p.: Firm Foundation Publishing House, inc., 1991. 17-27.

Chapter 3  
**“Parable of the Unforgiving Servant”**  
Jonnie Hutchison

Jonnie Hutchison has been preaching the gospel for 32 years. He has done local work in Arkansas, Virginia, Missouri, Texas, and North Carolina. He is a 1976 graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching. He is presently in his 15<sup>th</sup> year of labor with the Liledoun Road church of Christ in Taylorsville, North Carolina. Jonnie is married to Gail Bishop his helpmeet of 32 years who is an elementary school Media Coordinator. Jonnie and Gail have three married children (all faithful Christians) and two grandsons.

**Matthew 18:21-35**

**Introduction**

The parable before us is about forgiveness, both giving and receiving. Forgiveness is a wonderful term which brings joy to those who receive it and equal joy to those by whom it is granted. Robert Muller has said, “To forgive is the highest, most beautiful form of love. In return, you will receive untold peace and happiness.” The poet Alexander Pope wrote: “To err is human; to forgive, divine.” The Bible speaks of the forgiveness that God extends to mankind and the forgiveness that we humans are to extend to one another. The parable of the unforgiving servant speaks to both of these aspects of forgiveness.

**DEFINITION OF FORGIVE**

---

Before we begin an exposition of the text, consider a definition of the word “forgive.” One standard dictionary defines forgive as: “**1 a:** to give up resentment of or claim to requital for <forgive an insult> **b:** to grant relief from payment of <forgive a debt> **2:** to cease to feel resentment against (an offender): PARDON <forgive one's enemies>.” Of course, these definitions are the common usages of the word “forgive” in our English language regarding the forgiveness of one human to another. Consider the Bible uses of the word forgive.

In the Old Testament there are three Hebrew words translated forgive: “Kaphar (Deuteronomy 21:8; Psalms

---

78:38; Jeremiah 18:23) and calah (Numbers 30:5,8,12; 1 Kings 8:30, 34, 36, 39, 50, etc.) are used only of Divine forgiveness, while nasa is used in this sense (Exodus 32:32; Numbers 14:19; Joshua 24:19; Psalms 25:18; 32:1,5; 99:8; Isaiah 2:9), and also of human forgiveness (Genesis 50:17; Exodus 10:17; 1 Samuel 25:28)."

In the New Testament, there are two relevant words translated by the English, "forgive." The word *aphesis* literally means "to send away." It is used thirty-six times in the New Testament and is always associated with the "pardon of sins." Examples of the use of *aphesis* include Matthew 26:28 and Acts 2:38 where it is translated "remission" in the King James Version.

"A second term used for 'forgiveness' is *charizomai*, which signifies 'to bestow favor' or 'to show kindness.'" In Colossians 3:13 inspiration uses this word twice. "*Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*" NKJV. Notice that the first use of the term is a reference to the forgiveness we are to extend to one another as brethren in Christ and the second use refers to the forgiveness the Lord has extended to us. As the Lord has mercifully extended forgiveness to us we should likewise be willing to forgive one another. This is also the teaching of the parable of the unforgiving servant.

## **FIGURES OF FORGIVENESS**

---

There are several instances of the use of figurative language in the Bible which helps us to understand the meaning and the extent of the forgiveness that God grants to those who accept His gracious and merciful offer of pardon. The inspired Psalmist beautifully described the forgiveness of God in the words, "*As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.*" (Psalms 103:12 NKJV). The prophet Micah used the unreachable depths of the sea as an illustration of the forgiveness of sins declaring, "*He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*" (Micah 7:19



---

NKJV). The prophet Jeremiah spoke of a new covenant in which the Lord promised, "... *For I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more.*" (Jeremiah 31:34 NKJV). This passage assures us that when God forgives our sins He forgets them. In other words, forgiven sin will never be charged to the one to whom it is forgiven either in time or eternity.

In the New Testament, sinners were told to "*repent and be converted*" so that their sins "*may be blotted out*" (Acts 3:19). The phrase "blotted out" (See also Psalm 51:1, 9) was commonly used in reference to wiping away or erasing tears. Strong says the Greek word (*exaleipho*) means "to smear out, i.e. to obliterate." In a sermon on Acts 3:19 C.H. Spurgeon stated, "Many Oriental merchants kept their accounts on little tablets of wax. On these tablets of wax, they indented marks which recorded the debts, and when these debts were paid, they took the blunt end of the stylus or pencil, and just flattened down the wax, and the account entirely disappeared. That was the form of 'blotting out' in those days. Now, he that repents and is pardoned, is, through the precious blood of Christ, so entirely forgiven, that there is no record of his sin left. It is as though the stylus had levelled the marks in the wax, and there was no record left. What a beautiful picture of the forgiveness of sin! It is all gone, not a trace left. If we blot out an account from our books, there is the blot: the record is gone, but there is the blot; but on the wax tablet there was no blot—it was all gone, and the wax was smooth. So is it with the sin of God's people when removed by Jesus' blood, it is all gone and gone for ever."

When Ananias instructed Saul as to what the Lord required of him for salvation he said, "*And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" (Acts 22:16 NKJV). It is the blood of Jesus that "washes away" sin (Rev. 1:5). Jesus shed His blood in His death on the cross (John 19:34). Those who deny that baptism has any connection with salvation must ignore the fact that when one is baptized (immersed in water) he is baptized into the death of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-5) and thus, into the blood of

---

Jesus. Yes, we understand that no one today **physically** contacts the literal blood of Christ which was shed over 2,000 years ago. The alien sinner contacts the blood of Christ spiritually. In baptism one contacts the death and thus the blood of Jesus, thereby having his sins spiritually "washed away" which is exactly what Saul was instructed to do. It is not the waters of baptism that wash away sin but the blood of Christ spiritually contacted when one obeys the Lord's command as a penitent believer to be immersed in water.

The wonderful truth is that God is not only willing but able to remove the stain of sin from every precious soul who is willing to submit to those commands which allow him to come in contact with the precious blood of Jesus. (John 6:45; 8:24; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:9-10; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21). Once removed by the blood of Christ the stain of forgiven sin is gone forever.

### **SYNONYMS FOR FORGIVENESS**

---

There are two terms used in scripture which are synonymous with the word "forgiveness." One term is "redemption." This term was once used in reference to buying back a slave from captivity. In the New Testament it suggests the offer of freedom from the bondage and consequences of sin. There are several passages in the New Testament which picture the sacrifice of our Lord as a paid ransom or price. Jesus "**purchased the church with His own blood**" (Acts 20:28). We are "**bought at a price**" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Christ has "**redeemed us from the curse of the law**" (Galatians 3:13). When the time was right God sent His Son "**to redeem those who were under the law**" (Galatians 4:4-5). "**In Him we have redemption though His blood, even the forgiveness of sins ....**" (Ephesians 1:7). Jesus, our Mediator, "**gave Himself a ransom for all**" (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Finally, the inspired Peter writes, "**knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,** **19** **but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish**

---

*and without spot.”* (1 Peter 1:18-19 NKJV).

In our English translations of the New Testament, the term forgiveness (Gk. *aphesis*) is sometimes translated “remission.” “Remission is exemption from the consequences of an offence ... Sins are remitted when the offender is treated as though the offence had never been committed.” John the immerser preached a “*baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*” (Mark 1:4). Jesus said “*that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*” (Luke 24:47-48 NKJV). Remission of sins is equivalent in Bible usage to forgiveness of sins.

### ***EXPOSITION OF THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT***

---

The parable was spoken by Jesus in response to a question asked by Peter about the subject of forgiveness. Peter asked, “*Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?*” The question Peter asked may have been prompted from the previous teaching of Jesus regarding the sin of one brother against another and how such an offense was to be handled (Matthew 18:15-18). It may also have been in response to His teaching on the matter of forgiveness as recorded by Luke (Luke 17:3). Peter’s question was not about receiving forgiveness from God. His question concerned what his response should be to a series of offenses committed against him by the same person. Peter recognized the necessity of extending forgiveness but he seemed unclear as to how many times forgiveness was to be extended to one who continues to sin against him. A part of Peter’s query included his willingness to forgive that person up to seven times (See Luke 17:3). To Peter this was a very generous offer for it exceeded the “maxims of the rabbis who admonished forgiveness three times but not four times, basing their position upon the Word of God to Amos, ‘For three transgressions of Damascus and for four, I will not revoke the punishment’ (Amos 1:4).” However, the generosity of Peter paled in comparison to that of our Lord.

---

Jesus answered Peter's question in the words, "*I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*" When Jesus said up to seventy times seven did he mean a literal number of four hundred and ninety times? Did he mean that each person should keep a written record in order to keep tabs on the number of times he is offended by others and then extends forgiveness? How could such a record be kept over a lifetime? What Jesus was actually teaching Peter is that there is no limit placed upon the number of times that one should forgive the brother who sins against him. Can one imagine the God of heaven refusing to forgive us after just four hundred and ninety times? Most of us would have used up our quota a long time ago. No, the meaning of Jesus' statement is simply that one should forgive an unlimited number of times. To illustrate the necessity of forgiving others, Jesus tells the parable of the unforgiving or unmerciful servant.

Jesus begins the parable with the words, "*Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.*" (Matthew 18:21 NKJV). It is obvious that the king in the parable represents God the Father for Jesus makes this very application in verse thirty-five. The servant, with whom the king is settling accounts, represents all of mankind. The settling of accounts emphasizes that each of us are accountable before God for our actions while we live upon this earth (Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

In the next verse (24) Jesus tells of one of the servants who had accumulated an enormous debt of ten thousand talents which he owed the king. This debt was so huge that it was impossible for the servant to repay it. Burton Coffman, in his commentary on Matthew, quotes William P. Barker as saying, "To give some idea of what a colossal debt this was, the total tax income of the five provinces of Palestine (Judea, Perea, Idumea, Samaria, and Galilee) was only eight hundred talents. In other words, the servant's debt was over ten times the amount of the national budget." It is obvious that the indebted servant did not understand the extent of what he owed. After the king commanded that the servant be sold together with his

---

wife and children, the servant begged for patience from the king declaring, "... *have patience with me and I will pay you all.*" (verses 25-26). The truth is it was impossible for him to ever pay the entirety of the debt he owed.

The indebted servant clearly represents every unredeemed sinner upon the face of the earth each of whom has a debt of sin so enormous that it is impossible for him to ever pay it. No amount of material wealth can pay the debt of sin. No amount of human merit can pay the debt of sin. Neither ones nationality nor his genealogy has anything to do with paying the debt of his sins. Yet, tragically, many, like the indebted servant in the Lord's parable, do not even realize the extent of the debt of sin they owe nor their inability to pay it on their own terms. Many reason that the debt of sin they owe is not all that important. Somehow they believe that they will never be held accountable for the debt of their sins. To them sin is a joke, a figment of the imagination. Like mother Eve many are deceived by the devil's lie about the consequences of sin that "*You will not surely die*" (Genesis 3:4 NKJV). Yet, God declares, "*The soul who sins **shall die***" (Ezekiel 18:20) and "*the wages of sin **is death***" (Romans 6:23). Who are you going to believe, God or the devil? Facing the Lord in judgment with your debt of sin unforgiven will result in eternal punishment in the fires of hell (Matthew 25:31-46).

There are others, not realizing the extent of their debt of sin, who believe that over time they can actually repay the debt by just being a good person. However, just being a good person does not result in relieving the debt of sin. Cornelius, the Gentile centurion, was a very good and religious person. He was a devout man who believed in God and prayed to Him regularly. He led his family to fear God and gave alms to those in need. (Acts 10:1-2) Yet, Cornelius and his family needed to hear words whereby they could be saved (Acts 11:14). Cornelius was a good man but his sins were unforgiven until he obeyed the will of God (Acts 10:48). Just being a good person is not

---

sufficient to repay the debt of sin.

Some believe that if the good outweighs the bad in their lives that they will not be held accountable for the bad. The Hebrew writer describes sin as a *"weight"* which *"so easily ensnares us"* (Hebrews 12:1). The weight of sin is so tremendous that doing more good than bad will fail in shifting the weight of the scales to the good. The Bible teaches that God will bring *"every work into judgment, including every secret thing, Whether good or evil."* (Eccl. 12:14). Sin can only be removed by the blood of Jesus not by simply being good morally or doing more good deeds than bad (Romans 5:8-9; Rev. 1:5). Until ones sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus they remain an incredible weight and stain upon ones soul and cannot be removed by any other means. The Bible tells us, *"knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."* (1 Peter 1:18-19 NKJV). The Hebrew writer declared, *"And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission."* (Hebrews 9:22 NKJV). One may only receive the benefits of the shed blood of Jesus when, as a penitent, confessing believer, he is baptized into the death of Jesus (John 8:24; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38).

When the king in the Lord's parable saw and heard the pleas from his indebted servant he was moved with compassion, released him and forgave his debt (verse 27). "Such an act finds a parallel only in the forgiveness of God to sinners." Clearly this is descriptive of the grace of God (His unmerited favor) which He has extended toward sinful man through Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11; Romans 5:8-9). The poet declared, "Marvelous grace, infinite grace, The fathomless depths of His love, Wonderful grace, glorious grace, sent from the Father above, Christ, my dear Lord, taking my place. Someday forever I'll sing, Marvelous

---

grace, Infinite grace, Jesus, my Lord and King.”

When the Psalmist wrote of the history of God’s chosen people in the Old Testament he declared, *“But He, being **full of compassion**, forgave their iniquity, And did not destroy them. Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, And did not stir up all His wrath.”* (Psalms 78:38 NKJV). Again the pen of inspiration states, *“But You, O Lord, are a God **full of compassion**, and **gracious**, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.”* (Psalms 86:15 NKJV). God overflows with compassion and love. God is love! (1 John 4:8, 16). God wants to forgive the sins of every person. *“For You, Lord, are good, and **ready to forgive**, And **abundant in mercy to all** those who call upon You.”* (Psalms 86:5 NKJV). The Lord is *“not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”* (2 Peter 3:9). This is the very reason that the Lord sent faithful men to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15-16).

The grace of God is extended toward every sinner. *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”* (Titus 2:11-14 NKJV). This passage clearly implies that in the absence of God’s grace man has absolutely no hope of salvation. The inspired Paul wrote, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,”* (Ephesians 2:8 NKJV). Sadly, the grace of God has been cheapened and demeaned by false teaching. Many view the grace of God as a magical unconditional cure even for those rebels who refuse to turn from the practice of sin. But the Bible makes it clear that in order to benefit from the grace of God one must turn from the practice of unrighteousness and ungodliness to live soberly,

---

righteously and godly. Yes, the grace of God is extended to all but only those who are willing to meet God's conditions of salvation will receive its marvelous benefits. While grace is the "gift of God" no one receives the benefits of a gift unless the gift is received, opened and used. So it is with the gift of God's grace. To open the gift of God's grace one must exercise his faith in obedience to the instructions for salvation given by God. The lost are saved *"by grace ... through faith."* Grace is God's part in the matter of salvation but faith is man's part. Until man does his part in opening and using the gift of grace by the exercise of his own faith he remains unforgiven and lost in sin.

*"But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' 29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' 30 And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt".* (Matthew 18:28-31 NKJV). The first servant owed his King the equivalent of more than the ten million dollars. In comparison, his fellow servant owed him only a very small debt, the equivalent of around twenty dollars. One would think that the first servant would see himself in the plight of the second. Burton Coffman writes, "The spectacle of his fellow-servant falling down before him in supplication for mercy was a very similar thing to what he himself had done only a little while before. How strange it is that he felt no mercy, no little touch of pity, no forgiveness for one whose plight must surely have reminded him of his own. He could have alleviated the distress of his fellow-servant with such trifling cost to himself that one can only wonder at a heart so calloused."

Note the violent reaction of the unforgiving servant toward the one who was indebted to him. The Bible tells us that *"he laid hands on him and took him by the throat."* This man was willing to resort to physical violence in an effort to



---

obtain what he wanted. There is implied in his extreme efforts an inordinate craving for money. He loved money more than he loved his fellow servant. His greed and avarice resulted in violence. Inspiration warns, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness." (1 Timothy 6:10-11 NKJV).

Every child of God needs to learn a valuable lesson from the unforgiving servant as to how not to react toward one who has wronged us but then is penitent and seeks our forgiveness. Some Christians are often incensed at the slightest perceived wrong done them by their fellow servants. They are quick to condemn and react without mercy even refusing to forgive those who express penitence and seek forgiveness. And sometimes, even when forgiveness is extended it is not sincere and a grudge is held against the offender. This writer has observed instances where brethren have genuinely repented of wrongs done to others only to have those same wrongs brought up years later by the original offended party. Jesus said that forgiveness must be "*from your hearts*" (Matthew 18:35). We are to forgive one another as God has forgiven us. Inspiration instructs us, "*And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*" (Ephesians 4:32 NKJV). Genuine forgiveness holds no grudges and seeks no personal vengeance (Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30). Remember, when God forgives, He forgets! If we truly forgive others as God has forgiven us we will never bring up again any personal offense for which we have granted forgiveness to a penitent person.

The greater debt owed the King when compared with the lesser debt owed to the servant demands the question of how can the seriousness of personal offenses against me even begin to compare with the sins I have

---

committed against God? If God is willing to show us mercy and forgive our sins against Him then surely we should be more than willing to extend forgiveness for personal offenses by others without considering the number of times such infractions may occur.

*“So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.”* (Matthew 18:31 NKJV). “When recipients of God’s mercy become themselves bitter, vindictive, and unforgiving, all who behold it, in heaven or upon earth, are shamed and grieved by it. One of the most tragic circumstances that may exist among Christians is the failure to show love and mercy to one another. How many congregations have been divided and torn asunder because of just such failures? How many souls, that would otherwise have been saved, are even now lost because brethren refused to be merciful and forgiving toward one another? The Bible warns, *“But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”* (Galatians 5:15 KJV). The church in Corinth experienced this very thing. They are described in the words, *“For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?”* (1 Corinthians 3:3 NKJV). Consider the last phrase of this passage - “behaving like mere men.” The point is they were not behaving like Christians ought to behave but like those in the world behave. James 3:14-16 declares, *“But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”* NKJV. The unforgiving servant stands as a warning to each of us not to be self-seeking but always possess an attitude of love and mercy toward others.

*“Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt*

---

*because you begged me. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.”* (Matthew 18:32-34 NKJV). Notice that the Master of the unforgiving servant refers to him as a “wicked servant.” This is how the God of heaven views Christians who refuse to show mercy to those who seek their forgiveness. We should show compassion toward others as God has shown compassion to us in forgiving us of our sins against Him.

The Master in the parable was angry with the unforgiving servant. There are several instances in the scripture when God has been said to be angry. He was often angry with His chosen people as they rebelled against Him and embraced idolatry (Psalm 78:21-22, 58; Isaiah 1:1-4). The writer of the Psalms declares, “*God is a just judge, And **God is angry** with the wicked every day.”* NKJV. Though God is said to be “*slow to anger*” (Psalm 103:8; 145:8) He “*avenges and is furious*” and will “*not acquit the wicked*” (Nahum 1:2-3). When one considers that refusing to extend forgiveness to others makes God angry with us it should cause us to tremble with fear and repent of such wickedness.

In the parable the unforgiving servant was given to the tormentors until “*he should pay all that was due him.*” Since it is obvious that he could never repay the debt he owed, the implication is that the servant would never be freed from his tormentors. Here is a horrible picture of the eternal destiny of those who refuse to practice forgiveness. To put it plainly, one who refuses to forgive others will exist eternally in the torment of hell. “*For the wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23). The Bible descriptions of hell as a “furnace of fire” (Matthew 13:50), a place of punishment (Matthew 25:46), a place of eternal fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 21:8), a place where the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:43-48), a place of everlasting shame (Daniel 12:2), a place of eternal separation (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9), a place of outer darkness where there is weeping and

---

gnashing of teeth (Matthew 25:30) and a place prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41) should strike extreme fear in the hearts of any person who exhibits in their relationship with others the characteristics of this unforgiving servant.

Jesus ends His parable with the words, *"So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."* (Matthew 18:35 NKJV). Jesus taught His disciples to pray, *"And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors."* (Matthew 6:12). After teaching them **what** to pray Jesus told His disciples **why** He included the condition of "as we forgive our debtors." He said, *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* (Matthew 6:14-15 NKJV). Mark's account reads, *"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."* (Mark 11:25-26 NKJV). Receiving forgiveness from God obviously depends upon ones willingness to forgive others. If one has an unloving, unforgiving, grudge holding attitude then God will not forgive him of his sins. Therefore, he stands condemned and lost. We must be willing to forgive others as God has forgiven us.

One question that comes to mind in relation to the teaching of the parable before us is whether or not one can forgive a brother or sister who refuses to acknowledge his or her wrong and therefore refuses to seek forgiveness. Is forgiveness between brethren conditional or unconditional? Must the offender repent of his offense so that the offended may extend forgiveness or may the offended extend forgiveness in spite of the refusal of the offender to repent? The answer to this question is found in the teaching of Jesus in Luke 17:3, *"Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he*

---

*repents, forgive him.*" NKJV. What if a brother refuses to repent? The implication is that forgiveness may only be extended in the case of repentance. While each of us should maintain an ever present willingness to extend forgiveness it is impossible to actually forgive those who refuse to repent. For forgiveness to be complete there must be both the granting and the receiving of it. Remember, the Bible teaches us to forgive as God has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32). God does not forgive the impenitent. (Acts 17:30; Revelation 2:5, 16).

### **CONCLUSION**

---

The parable of the unforgiving servant teaches us the valuable lesson of possessing an attitude of heart toward one another which will lead to both giving and receiving forgiveness. It teaches that without a willingness to forgive those who sin against us (regardless of how many times), we will not receive forgiveness for our sins against God. None of us live perfect lives. There are times in each of our lives when we need to grant forgiveness and when we need to seek forgiveness from others. Let us always maintain the attitude of our heavenly Father who is always "ready to forgive" (Psalm 86:5).

## Chapter 4

# Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard”

### Jerry Pence

Brother Pence is a native of Kentucky but has lived in North Carolina for the past 26 years. He is a graduate of Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky and holds a BS and two Master's degrees in education and training. He is married to his high school sweetheart, Linda. They have been married for 39 years and have three sons and four grandchildren. Brother Pence is currently the minister at the South Stokes Church of Christ in King, NC. He has preached in lectures, meetings, and where ever the opportunity existed, for the 40 years. He has been preaching full time since 2005, since retiring from secular work. Brother Pence is also one of the instructors at the North Carolina School of Biblical Studies at the Warner's Chapel Church of Christ in Clemmons, NC.

## Matthew 20:1-16

### INTRODUCTION

The parable of the “Workers in the Vineyard” has been a parable throughout time that has elicited numerous and diverse explanations. I pray that the lesson offered today on this powerful parable from God's word will add value to your walk in life. To truly understand the parable, we must first place it in context by reviewing scripture in the previous chapter.

### THE PARABLE IN CONTEXT

In **Matthew 19:16-22**, a young man comes to Jesus asking, **“Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”** Jesus answers his question by telling him to, **“...enter into life, keep the commandments.”** The young man says, **“All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?”** Jesus knowing the heart of the young man tells him, **“If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.”** Sadly the young man, like most of the world today, turned and walked away sorrowful, because he had many possessions.

After the rich young ruler leaves, Jesus is aware that his disciples are struggling with what they had just heard. He tells them in **vs. 23**, **“...a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.”** He then tells them, **“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”** The disciples are **“exceedingly amazed”** by this statement and respond, **“Who then can be saved?”** Jesus gives them comfort by responding, **“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are**

---

*possible.”*

Peter thinking through the things he has just heard says to Jesus, “...***we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?***” Peter seems to be asking, if this rich young ruler can inherit eternal life by giving up all he has and following Jesus, what will we get? Peter and the other apostles had given up all of their material blessings two years earlier and had been following Jesus ever since. Peter wanted to know if he and the other apostles would be receiving a greater reward than the rich young ruler and others who would come to Jesus at this time. Jesus responds to Peter in **Matthew 19:27-30**, and tells him that he and the other apostles would have a special role in the spiritual kingdom but everyone willing to give up all to follow Him would inherit eternal life. Then Jesus adds, “...***many shall be last that are first; and first that are last.***”

#### **THE TEXT FOR THE PARABLE**

In **Matthew 20:1-16**, the text for our lesson, Jesus knowing that his disciples need further explanation, gives them and us, the parable of the “Workers in the Vineyard” to explain His previous statement. Jesus begins by saying, “***For the kingdom of heaven is like...***” The word “***For***” ties the preceding verses from **Matthew 19:30**, to the parable he is about to deliver. The phrase “...***the kingdom of heaven is like...***” illustrates the information he is about to give is a parable and not an actual situation. By using this parable, Jesus paints a word picture for the disciples so they might better understand what he wants them to know. The disciples are still expecting Jesus to build a literal kingdom on this earth, and he wants them to understand that His kingdom is spiritual. Jesus had made this point to them before in **Matthew 16:18** where He clearly identified the “kingdom” and the “church” as being the same. Then in **John 18:36**, we also see where Jesus tells them, “***My kingdom is not of this world...***”

As Jesus begins the parable He says, “...***the kingdom of heaven is like a man that is a householder (land owner), which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.***” Landowners went out early to the market place to find day laborers waiting to be hired. Since the Jewish day began at 6 a.m. the landowner would have been there early to hire the laborers to do the work he needed accomplished. The landowner agreed to pay the laborers a “penny/shilling” for the day’s work. Historians seem to think that the shilling would have been worth approximately 15 to 17 cents in today’s currency, but more importantly the workers knew they would receive a fair salary for a day’s work whatever the value of the shilling might really have

---

been.

We then find that the landowner goes back to the market place again at the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour (9:00 a.m.), the 6<sup>th</sup> hour (12 noon), the 9<sup>th</sup> hour (3:00 p.m.), and the 11<sup>th</sup> hour (5:00 p.m.) seeking additional laborers. They are told, ***“Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, I will give thee.”*** It is apparent that each time the landowner went to the marketplace seeking additional workers more men were there wanting to be hired. It is interesting to note that the landowner tells the laborers that he will pay them ***“whatsoever is right”*** for the work they do. No specific amount of pay is mentioned and the workers take him at his word, indicating that the landowner was a man honest and faithful to his word. Some might ask, “Why were the laborers not already working at this late time of day?” The only answer we have is given by those who were hired at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. In **Matthew 20:6-7**, the landowner asked, ***“Why do ye stand here all day idle?”*** To which the laborers respond, ***“No man hath hired us.”*** For some reason they had not been hired earlier in the day. Maybe they were not there when the landowners had come seeking workers. Maybe they were busy with other tasks. Maybe they had stepped away from the marketplace for some special reason, like the five virgins who went to get oil for their lamps (**Matthew 25:1-12**), when landowners had come before. Whatever the reason, the responsibility was on the laborers, to have been ready to go to work when the landowners came seeking laborers.

The parable gets very interesting at this point. In **Matthew 20:8**, night is now drawing nigh and time has come for the workers to be paid. The landowner sends his trusted servant to bring the workers in from the field. The landowner causes a stir by paying those he hired last, first. Not only does he pay the last hired first but he pays those hired at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour the same as the men hired at the 9<sup>th</sup> hour, 6<sup>th</sup> hour, 3<sup>rd</sup> hour and even the 1<sup>st</sup> hour. Each man received the same amount with no consideration given to the amount of work each man had performed.

As you might expect those hired at the 1<sup>st</sup> hour of the day thought they would receive more than those hired late in the day. As a matter of fact, they were sure that since those who were hired late in the day received what they had been promised, they would receive even a greater reward for their work. When they saw that everyone was going to receive the same reward they ***“...murmured against the good-man of the house.”*** (**Matthew 20:11**) They were upset because according to man’s standards, this was just not fair. How dare this landowner pay everyone the same amount when they had worked so much harder than the others in the field? Some of the



---

men had only worked one hour, and they didn't even have to work during the heat of the day to receive their full reward. This was just not fair!

In **Matthew 20: 13-15**, the landowner answers the complaint by saying, "**Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?**" Obviously the landowner is not pleased with the murmuring and makes it very plain that he is the landowner and he has every right to do with what is his as he pleases. He also makes it clear that the evil that is being done is in their murmuring and not in the goodness that he has done.

### **THE FACTS OF THE PARBLE**

Let us now seek to find what we might learn from this wonderful parable. First of all, we need to understand who and what the parable is really about. We must remember that a parable is a simple story that paints a hidden picture that will be unveiled to those seeking the truth (**Matthew 13:10-17**). Here are the basic facts of the parable. (1) The landowner is God. (2) The vineyard is the kingdom (church). (3) The workers are those who work in the kingdom (Christians). (4) Some become workers (Christians) early in life. (5) Some become workers (Christians) later in life. (6) Workers (Christians) who come to work in the kingdom will all receive the same reward no matter when they come to the kingdom to work. (7) Time is short. Night is drawing nigh. (8) It could also be said that the "steward" who was sent to call the laborers to be paid represents Jesus on the Day of Judgment.

### **SOME LESSONS LEARNED**

What lessons can we learn from this parable? What is the "bottom line" for us today? How can we apply this parable to our daily lives?

1. **Longevity in service does not merit a greater reward.** We will receive the reward He has promised no matter when we decide to obey the commands of the Lord. Jesus said he had gone to prepare a place for us and if it were not so he would have told us (**John 14:1-6**). He has promised to us a "**crown of life**" (**Revelation 2:10**) if we are faithful until death. He has promised us the gift of eternal life (**Romans 6:23**) and he has promised that we will ever be with Him (**1 Thessalonians 4:17**) if we will obey him. "**God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.**" ( **John 3:16**)

---

What greater gift could anyone ever want?

2. **Complaining against God is not a good idea. It never works.** Paul said, ***“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer.” (1Corinthinas 10:10)***. Paul was speaking about the Israelites and how they had murmured against God during their trip out of Egypt. Paul said that God destroyed those who murmured. Will He do any less in the end with us if we murmur against Him? I think not! In **Philippians 2: 14-16**, Paul said, ***“Do all things without murmuring and disputings. That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.”*** The little word ***“all”*** has always fascinated me. Paul said, ***“Do all things without murmuring and disputing.”*** That is everything. Act like a Christian. Do not act like the world because the world is crooked and perverse. Be a light in the world (**Matthew 5:14**). Hold up the word of God. Rejoice in the race you are running and do not let your labor be in vain. The question is not, “What do I have to do for the Lord?” but, “What can I do for the Lord?”
3. **Never be envious of others who come to Christ later in life, rejoice and be glad.** Ezekiel writes, ***“For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.” (Ezekiel 18:32)*** God has no pleasure in our death. Our death has been brought about by the sin in our lives (**Genesis 3:19**). We all have sinned and come short of the glory God (**Romans 3:23**). Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Peter wrote, ***“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:9)*** With God being longsuffering toward us, do we not owe our fellow man the same love God has shown us? Jesus said in **John 13:34-35**, ***“...love one another as I have loved you, that ye may love one another.”*** Not only are we to love one another but we are to rejoice anytime, early

---

or late, one comes to Christ. Jesus said in **Luke 15:7**, ***“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”***

4. **God has the right to reward us as He sees fit. He is righteous.** To use a childhood expression: This is God’s game, His ball, and His bat. God has every right to determine what reward each of us will receive. We can be assured that the reward he gives will be with righteous judgment. Paul writes in **Romans 9:14-16**, ***“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy...”*** God will never forget the labor of love that we give and we will be justly rewarded. The Hebrew states, ***“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”*** (**Hebrews 6:10**)
5. **God is faithful.** Everyone will receive what He has promised. Paul said in **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:9**, ***“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”*** The Hebrew writer also says, ***“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that has promised...”*** (**Hebrew 6:10**) However, God will be faithful to condemn those who fail to obey His son, just as he will be faithful to reward those who obey His son. In **Matthew 22:14**, Jesus said, ***“For many are called but few are chosen.”*** Only a few will faithfully heed God’s word and follow His Son. Jesus also made it clear that many will enter into a broad gate of destruction, and few will find the narrow gate that leads to life eternal in heaven (**Matthew 7:13-14**). Sadly Jesus words in **Matthew 7:21** truly describes just how faithful God will be to many when he says, ***“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”*** God will be faithful both, to those who do his will, and to those who fail to

---

do his will.

6. **God is so very gracious.** Just as the landowner in the parable kept returning to find more laborers, God keeps providing us opportunities to be workers in His Kingdom. However, we never know how many opportunities are left. We never know if there will be a tomorrow. We never know when our last opportunity will be to come and serve the Lord. Night is drawing nigh and few opportunities may exist. In the parable the landowner asked those he hired at the eleventh hour, ***“Why stand ye here all the day idle?”*** They replied, ***“Because no man hath hired us.”*** I don't know for sure why they had not been hired but what if the land owner had not returned one more time. What if they had been left behind? **God is gracious.** He keeps giving us opportunities to serve him and we keep rejecting him, but one day it will be too late and those opportunities will be in the past. In **Exodus 34:6**, God passed by Moses and proclaimed, ***“The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth...”*** We need to thank God daily for the merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abundant God that He is. In **2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 30:9**, the writers said, ***“the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.”*** Going back to our game analogy, “The ball is in our court!” God is gracious, however, it is up to us whether or not God turns away His face from us. He will always be there for us if, and only if, we will obey His will. Passage after passage tells us how gracious God really is to us. (**Psalm 86:15; Psalm 103:8; Psalm 111:1; Psalm 112:4; Isaiah 30:8-19; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:3; etc.**)

## CONCLUSION

Let us never underestimate the simple, but yet overpowering messages that come from the parables. Let us appreciate God and understand that he has provided us the opportunity to work for him in his kingdom. Let us not be like the nine lepers who failed to return to Jesus and show their appreciation for their cleansing. (**Luke 17:17-18**) Let us always give thanks in everything that God has done and will do for us. (**1 Thessalonians 5:8**) Let us desire to work for Him and welcome every new worker that comes, whether it is early or late in life. Paul said in **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15: 58**, ***“...my beloved***

---

***brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*** Our God is an awesome God (Psalm 139:7-10). Thanks be to God and all of His Glory.

Chapter 5  
**“Parable of the Soil”**  
Paul Kirkpatrick

Paul Kirkpatrick is in his third year of service as the pulpit minister for the Warners Chapel church of Christ in Clemmons, North Carolina. Paul was born and reared in Parkersburg, West Virginia. He is a graduate of the East Tennessee School Of Preaching and Missions in Knoxville, Tennessee, and has course work from Ohio Valley College and West Virginia University at Parkersburg. He was awarded the Regents Bachelor Degree and the Master of Arts from the Theological University of America. Paul has served churches in Kansas, West Virginia, South Carolina, and North Carolina

He has been preaching for twenty-five years and has preached Gospel meetings in West Virginia, Indiana, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Udon Thani, Thailand. He has been a guest speaker on lectureships in Indiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina. He has made mission trips to Jamaica and Thailand. He has had articles published in the Carolina Christian, Palmetto Messenger and the Carolina Messenger. He is also a former Board Chairman and Associate Editor for the Palmetto Messenger [now the Carolina Messenger], and currently serves as board member. Paul is active in youth work, such as the South Midlands Youth Rally, and Christian camps in Ohio, Tennessee, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

Paul has also done radio and television work for several years.

Paul is a part time instructor for the Fishers Of Men evangelism program.

Paul was an instructor in the Central Carolina School of Preaching in Sumter, SC from 2001-2004.

Paul is the Director of the North Carolina School of Biblical Studies.

He and his wife Carla, have been married for twenty-eight years and have three children, Myca: twenty-two, Jennifer: twenty-one, and Joshua: eighteen.

***Matthew 13:3-8***

**BACKGROUND**

As it is often called, “The Parable of Sower” is a story that beautifully illustrates the conditions of men’s hearts in relation to the word of God.

The idea of a sower at his task was a perfectly natural illustration for this culture and time period, one which would be quite familiar to all of those present. Farmers often lived some distance from their fields, so that a literal “going forth” was required in order to sow. The clear picture which is brought to mind is that of a man walking along, carrying a sack of grain, and broadcasting it (somewhat indiscriminately) by hand. The exhortation to “behold” (i.e., “look at”) and use of the definite article (i.e.,

---

"the sower") may even indicate that Jesus referred to an actual person who was within sight of the audience.

In the natural course of the work of a sower it was inevitable that the seed would fall into various types of soils. Matt. 13:4-8 describes the effect of the type of soil on the produce of the seed. For this reason, this parable is sometimes referred to as "the parable of the soils," although Jesus called it the "the parable of the sower"

Some of the seed landed "by the way side." This indicates hard-packed earth, perhaps a well-trodden path or road, running through or around the field. This soil would not allow any of the seed to sink in, much less take root. The result was that this seed quickly became bird food.

Another portion of the seed "fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth." This language might seem, at first glance, to suggest soil mingled with small rocks. This, however, does not explain the fact that the plants which sprang up "had no deepness of earth." McGarvey described this type of ground as "a ledge of rock covered with a very thin coating of soil." In this shallow soil, it was only natural that the seeds sprouted and "sprang up" very quickly. With the rising of the sun, however, these plants were unable to withstand the heat. Without a sufficient root system to provide moisture or nourishment, they soon withered away.

Still other seeds found their way into soil which was full of impurities, namely thorns. Although the seed was able to take root and grow in this type of ground, it was no match for the head start and the extremely hardy nature which the thorns enjoyed. Over time, this seed was deprived of everything essential to its growth and, as a result, was choked out of existence.

Of course, the aim of the sower was to deposit his seed "upon the good ground." "Good ground" in this instance is defined fairly well in terms of the unproductive types of soil already mentioned -- good ground is soft; good ground has depth; good ground is free from impurities. Once the seed found a home in soil which had been properly conditioned (assuming the seed was not

---

flawed), fruit would inevitably be produced. It should be noted also that, in the final analysis, there were only two types of soil in the story -- that which produced and that which did not.

Even in the good ground, though, the harvest was not strictly uniform. Some of the seed reproduced itself one hundred times over, some sixty times, other thirty.

## APPLICATION

Most of us want to do well and be successful in the things that we do. No one is a natural born soul winner. I have heard of mechanics, doctors, and lawyers dying but I have never heard of one being born. It is only through the training of methods, techniques and strategies are men able to be effective soul winners for the Lord.

Much of what makes us successful is our attitude towards the task at hand. We must ask ourselves:

Do we understand it?

Are we looking at it right?

Do we have an understanding of potential obstacles?

Much of the success that comes in personal work has to do with how we view the overall task at hand.

Looking at the Parable of the Sower, we want to point out some things that the Parable implies about Successful Sowing.

### The Sower

The Sower must be proactive - "***the sower went out to sow***" - v.3 "*He went out*" - God expects us to be doing something. Activity is always better than inactivity. Actively doing something is always better than doing nothing at all. Someone has said, "*If you have tried to do something and failed you are vastly better than if you had tried to do nothing and succeeded.*"

The Sower must be purposeful. "*He went out to sow*" It does not say "he went out to convert," or "he went out to baptize" Activity without direction or focus is pointless - Our activity must be focused on sowing. The purpose of sowing is to yield a crop, but our level of activity



---

and responsibility consists in sowing.

The Sower must be patient. Since the parable itself lasts only 7 verses, one might get the idea that sowing is a quick and easy process. Being an effective sower requires patience.

### The Seed

The seed is the word of God. Luke says in **Lk.8:11** - "**Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.**" Peter says in **1 Pet.1:23** - "**for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.**"

What are some characteristics of God's Word As Seed?

1. The seed is sufficient - "it is the power of God unto salvation"
2. The seed is potent - "it is the power of God unto salvation"
3. The seed is productive - "it is the power of God unto salvation"

### The Soil

The soil is the heart of man – there is a positive correlation between good hearts and good results. Seed is not sown in a vacuum (different soil conditions). There are four soil types listed here.

1. Primitive Soil – never takes root because of lack of understanding, heart is too hard.
2. Shallow Soil – dies
3. Immature Soil –
4. Rich Soil –

In order to take root, the soil must be sown in rich, fertile soil – having all of the necessary ingredients that are needed to support the harvest. There are three necessary ingredients to good soil.

1. Reasonable -sensible, rational, open-minded
2. Receptive - willing to listen and receive
3. Ready - no one will make a change until they are ready too, they cannot be pushed, cajoled, or manipulated.

But not everyone responds to the gospel in the same way. Not everyone responds to the gospel in a

---

positive manner. Knowing these two things on the front would save a lot of grief. Some people may never respond to the Gospel.

### **The Success**

It is not the responsibility of the sower. God gives the increase – **1 Cor.3:6** - ***“I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.”*** The pressure to produce is not ours. It is the result of perseverance (continued toiling in the garden). It comes despite resistance from the devil **v.19** - *“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”*

The devil is in active opposition to success and will stop at nothing to defeat our efforts. Be sure that we have the power to defeat him. We find it in the Gospel (Romans 1:16.)

Chapter 6  
**“Parable of the Two Sons”**  
Tim Canup

Tim Canup was born in Galax, VA and is the youngest of five children of Jimmy and Mary Canup. His father is also a minister of the Gospel. He is a graduate of the West Virginia School of Preaching. He has done local work with churches in Statesville and West Jefferson, NC. He is an instructor at the Tri-Cities School of Preaching. They are new proud parents of a baby boy.

**Matthew 21:28-32**

**INTRODUCTION**

Matthew wrote, “All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: ‘I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world’” (Matthew 13:34-35). One man defined a parable as “earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” Jesus often used parables, which contained common things and circumstances which the people could easily understand, to teach spiritual lessons. The things connected with Jesus’ parables are always true; they are based on true principles.

We must understand that Jesus always had ONE central lesson in mind with each parable. To acquire the intended lesson, we must understand the context of the parable, the content of the parable and then we can make the right connection to the parable for ourselves. Let us examine Jesus’ parable found in Matthew 21:28-32.

**CONTEXT OF THE PARABLE**

Let us first begin by noticing the Scribes and Pharisees’ hatred of our Lord. As Jesus began His public ministry, He spoke the truth concerning God’s Will and the Law of Moses. In doing so, He exposed the hypocrisy of these religious leaders and how they had corrupted that Law. In John 2, shortly after His baptism, Jesus performed His first miracle by turning water to wine at a wedding feast

---

in Cana of Galilee. After that event, He went to Jerusalem to observe the Passover. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, He found they had made the house of God a den of thieves and He drove them out (the first of two times He cleansed the temple), which would have greatly upset these religious leaders who would have been on the receiving end monetarily.

After performing many miracles and after much teaching, Jesus' popularity had grown considerably, which the religious leaders did not like. In Mark 2:1-12, Jesus healed a paralytic man who was lowered through the roof by his friends. Prior to healing him, Jesus forgave his sins (a claim to be God), for which they accused Him of blasphemy. Immediately following, in Mark 2:13-17, Jesus called Matthew (who was a tax collector) to be a disciple and then He went to his house for a meal. There the Pharisees, who considered tax collectors to be the lowest sinners, accused Jesus' disciples of not fasting (Mark 2:18-22), which in essence was a violation of their tradition and not the Law of Moses.

In John 5, Jesus healed a lame man in Jerusalem on the Sabbath Day, which again these religious leaders considered to be a violation of the Law. As He defended His actions, Jesus also claimed to be the Messiah. Notice their reaction: "Therefore the Jews **sought all the more to kill Him**, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:18, emphasis added). The controversy continued to grow between Jesus and the Scribes and Pharisees. For example, they accused His disciples of picking grain on the Sabbath Day (Matthew 12:1-8). They accused Him of violating the Sabbath Day by healing a man with a withered hand (Matthew 12:9-14), and many other such acts.

In John chapters 7 and 8 (remember, many events transpired between chapters 5 and 7), Jesus came back to Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths (or Tabernacles) where He taught the people in the Temple. The religious leaders sent men to arrest Jesus; they came back empty handed. In John 7:53-8:11, after the feast, Jesus was still teaching

---

in the Temple when the religious leaders, who were trying to trap Jesus to have something with which they could accuse Him, brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. Jesus, with His perfect logic, pinned their ears back. In verses 12-20, He claimed to be the light of the world, which in essence was a claim to be the Messiah (every claim Jesus made to be the Messiah made these religious leaders angry). Then in John 8:21-59, Jesus claimed to be from the Father: the I AM, and accused them of having Satan as their father (verse 44). Notice the result of the plain truth which Jesus spoke: "Then **they took up stones to throw at Him**; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by" (verse 59, emphasis added). The opposition only continued to build until we come to the immediate context of the parable before us.

Jesus made His Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11), which was the fulfillment of prophecy. The people received Him as a King (as the Messiah). The religious leaders would NOT have liked this at all. In Matthew 21:12-17, Jesus, for the second time in His ministry, cleansed the Temple. The religious leaders did not like this any more the second time than they did the first. In verse 15 we read, "But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' **they were indignant** {sore displeased – King James Version}."

The next day, they questioned Jesus' authority (Matthew 21:23-27). They asked, "...By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" (verse 23), which referred to His cleansing of the Temple the previous day. Jesus responded to their questions with His own question concerning John's baptism, which put them between a rock and a hard place. They simply were not willing to answer His question, which prompted Jesus to teach them using the parable given in our text. Notice He began by asking, "But what think ye?" (verse 28). Also note that after this parable (and the next one): "Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His

---

parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them” (verse 45).

### CONTENT OF THE PARABLE

Let us begin with the setting of the parable. Jesus introduces us to a “certain man.” The only thing we know about him is he owned a vineyard and had at least two sons, of whom he asked both to work in his vineyard. It would be safe to assume that since no servants are mentioned he was not a wealthy landowner. Undoubtedly there was urgent work to be done; his request was “go work **today** in my vineyard.”

Notice the sons’ response to their father’s request. The first son bluntly answered, “I will not, but afterward he regretted it {repented – KJV} and went.” Rogers & Rogers wrote concerning the word used for repent, “to regret an action and change one’s mind” (Rogers & Rogers, 48). This is the same word used concerning Judas Iscariot, who regretted what he had done and went out and hanged himself. However, this son truly repented; notice, he changed his mind (regretted his action) then he changed his action: “he went.” The second son cunningly answered, “I go, sir, and went not,” “...or as it is simply in the original, ‘I, sir,’ – as if the youth has said, ‘You may thoroughly depend on me’” (Taylor, 122). This second son put up a pretense of obedience.

The meaning of the parable can be gathered by examining the next two verses. “Which of the two did the will of *his* father?” They said to Him, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you’” (verse 31). The first son represents the tax collectors and harlots. The second son represents the chief priests and elders (the religious leaders). Now, notice the first part of verse 32: “For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him...” When John came, he came preaching “...Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matthew 3:2). He also preached concerning the King who would reign over His Kingdom (the Messiah or Christ). In John 1:29, He exclaimed of Jesus, “Behold! The

---

Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Many have used this parable to teach about repentance (which is not necessarily wrong), but the main point of the parable is about authority. John came with the authority of the Father preparing the way for the Messiah. The people (especially the religious leaders of the day) rejected his message. Jesus also came with the authority of the Father and they also rejected Him and His Message! The father in this parable represents a figure of authority. Both sons (at least at one point) rejected the father's authority. These religious leaders had rejected God's authority by rejecting His Christ! This parable goes back to their own question of authority and their unwillingness to answer Jesus' question about John's baptism. Notice William Taylor's comments:

The meaning of this parable is determined for us by the occasion which called it forth. Questioned by the chief priests and elders of the people, as to the nature and source of the authority which he claimed, our Lord replied by promising to give them a definite answer when they should tell him whether the baptism of John was from heaven or of men. This placed them between the horns of a dilemma: for they knew that if they should say it was of men, they would provoke the antagonism of the people, who held John as a prophet; and that, if they should say it was from heaven, Jesus would be ready with the retort, 'Why then did ye not believe him?' They endeavored, therefore, to evade both alternatives by alleging that they could not tell whence it was; and this reply of theirs, which was an evident subterfuge, evoked the parable which forms our theme at this time.

Putting before them a hypothetical case, he questions them as to the conduct of the parties whom he described in it; and then,

---

turning their answer upon themselves, he virtually condemned them out of their own mouths.  
(121)

In the latter part of verse 32, Jesus said, "...but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw *it*, you did not afterward relent and believe him." The tax collectors and harlots are those who at first reject God and His Will, but are willing to repent and follow in obedience. Repentance consists of godly sorrow which leads to a change of mind that leads to a change of life and actions. This parable was spoken concerning these religious leaders who were bent on rejecting God's authority by rejecting His Will and following their own! Marcus Dods commented:

The parable is too-plain spoken to be evaded. They cannot deny that the satisfactory Son is not the one who professes great respect for His father's authority, while he does only what pleases himself, but the one who does his father's bidding, even though he has at first disowned His authority. They are compelled, that is, to own that a mere bowing to God's authority and professing that they attach great weight to it is of no account in God's sight unless it be accompanied by an actual doing of the things He enjoins. (175)

### **OUR CONNECTION TO THE PARABLE**

The following illustration has often been given concerning submission to authority. During the days of the pioneers, a father sent his son ahead to build on some newly acquired land. He gave his son a layout of where he wanted various things built on the land. When the son arrived at the location, he saw where his father wanted the house built and thought, "That is a good place," so he built the house there. He saw where his father wanted the barn



---

built, and again agreed with his father and built the barn. He continued to follow his father's instructions until he came to the wood shed and thought to himself, "That is not the best place for the wood shed. Over here would be better." So he built where he determined was best. Now the question is asked, "Did he obey his father?" Some may say, "Yes! For the most part." The answer is, NO! He only did that with which he agreed with his father. He did not submit to the authority of his father. James taught, "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). We must also remember Paul's instruction, "And whatsoever ye do in **word or deed**, do all in the name {by the authority} of the Lord Jesus..." (Colossians 3:17, emphasis added).

Let us look at submission to authority in our world today. Many say, as the second son did, "I go, sir," but do not go when it comes to many of the commands of our heavenly Father. They say, "I go, sir," but do not go concerning God's commands for salvation. Many people ignore or deny God's command to be baptized in order for one to be saved; although Jesus clearly commanded it in Mark 16:16, and although Peter, who by inspiration, preached it (Acts 2:38). In verse 41 of the same chapter, we learn, "Then those who gladly received his word **were baptized**; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*" (emphasis added). Concerning those who were added, "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." They were being saved by their submission to God's authority in obedience to His command to be baptized. Many say "I go, sir," but do not go, although Peter clearly wrote, "The like figure whereunto *even baptism doth also now save us...*" (1 Peter 3:21).

Many in our world today say, "I go, sir," but do not go concerning God's commands of worship. Many changes have been made by man in the area of worship. Man has, in many instances, redirected worship back to himself and for the entertainment of himself. Any change to worship ignores the Father's authority (cf. Mark 7:7). Many have changed the day of worship from the first day to the seventh (or another day) even though the binding

---

example of the early church is on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Many have changed the elements of worship by adding mechanical instrument of music (a general term), although God clearly commanded us to sing (which is a specific term). In both Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, God commanded us to sing. There are absolutely NO passages in the New Testament which authorizes man to use any mechanical instrument in our worship to God. Neither is there any authority for solos, choirs, singing groups or any other such thing.

Many say, "I go, sir," but do not go concerning God's commands to worship by changing the Lord's Supper. Rather than every first day of the week, as the binding example of the early church (Acts 20:7), many observe it monthly, quarterly, or even yearly.

Many say, "I go, sir," but do not go concerning the name of the church which belongs to Jesus. Many have falsely argued there is nothing in a name. They do so to justify wearing the name of another man, such as, John the Baptist, John Calvin, John Wesley, Martin Luther or another. They wear these names although Jesus is the One who purchased the church (cf. Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28).

Many say, "I go, sir," but do not go concerning the organization of the church. Many religious groups have a headquarters here on earth which rules and regulates activities of the "church." Many religious groups have placed one man over each congregation, usually the preacher who they refer to as pastor. The word pastor as used in the New Testament is always in the plural and is used synonymous with other such terms as shepherd, bishop and elder. There are qualifications to be met for the office of pastor or elder (cf. I Timothy 3; Titus 1).

Many Christians say, "I go, sir" and go not at the commands of the Father to live godly lives (cf. Titus 2:11-12). Many Christians regularly use tobacco products (even though every shred of evidence shows it to be hazardous to our health), gambling (which includes playing the lottery) and the use of illegal drugs. Doing such things constitutes one as a poor steward. A steward is one who has been

---

given charge to take care of something given to him by another. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 4:2, "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." No one can engage in the above listed activities and be considered a faithful steward of what God has given to us. Many Christians attempt to justify their consumption of alcoholic beverages, of which Ephesians 5:18 and Galatians 5:18-21 strictly forbids (in any amount, even from the first sip!). Many Christians say, "I go, sir," but do not go concerning God's standard of modest dress (I Timothy 2:9), which applies to both male and female. Many attempt to justify their dress by the world's standard, which is never acceptable with God. There are many Christians who say, "I go, sir" and go not concerning dancing, which is a work of the flesh (called lasciviousness in Galatians 5:19). Many Christians say, "I go, sir" and go not in their attendance, ignoring the Father's authority as seen in His command for us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (cf. Hebrews 10:25). Many Christians also say, "I go, sir" and go not in failing to heed to the Father's command to take the Gospel "into all the world" (Mark 16:16). Many Christians have relinquished their responsibility to teach others by the false conclusion that it is the preacher's job. For many, it will be a sad day at the judgment when they hear someone cry to them, "You Never Mentioned Him To Me!" The list could go on and on: for example, covetousness, materialism, viewing pornography, using foul language, etc.

### **CONCLUSION**

Jesus said, "All power {authority – NKJV} is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). The question we all need to honestly ask ourselves is, "Do we really honor the authority of our heavenly Father, both in word and deed?" Jesus placed that authority in His Word (cf. John 12:48). Only by obeying the commands found in the New Testament do we submit to the authority of the Father. We do not obey when we only do the things with which we agree (cf. James 2:10). May we always strive to be like the first son and be willing to repent and go

---

wherever we are commanded to go!

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Boles, H. Leo. *A Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*. Nashville, Gospel Advocate, 1969.
- Box, Danny. "The Parable of the Two Sons." *The Parables of Jesus*. The 2000 POWER Lectures. Southaven: POWER Publications, 2000.
- Buttrick, George A. *The Parables of Jesus*. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1928.
- Dods, Marcus. *The Parables of Our Lord*. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1905.
- Lockyer, Herbert. *All the Parable of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1963.
- Morgan, G. Campbell. *Studies In The Four Gospels*. Fincastle, Scripture Truth Book Company, 1927.
- Rogers, Cleon L., Jr. & Rogers, Cleon L., III. *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1998.
- Taylor, William M. *The Parables of Our Saviour*. New York, A. C. Armstrong and Son, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition 1896.
- Trench, Richard Chenevix. *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*. New York, Fleming, no date.
- Shepard, J. W. *The Christ of the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1939.

Chapter 7  
**“Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers”**  
Milton Mathers

Milton Mathers was baptized into Christ 1979 in Indio, CA. Graduated from the Southern Calif. School of Evangelism in Buena Park, CA in 1986. He has a B.A. degree from Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver, CO. Has preached in CA, Oregon, VA, NC, and now is presently preaching at the Mountain View Church of Christ, in Bluff City, TN. He is married to his precious wife, Gwyn Mathers. He helps with the Biblical Viewpoints and TV Sunday School TV programs in Elizabethton, TN, and with the weekly one-hour live call-in radio program that the Stoney Creek Church of Christ sponsors. He teaches for the Tri-Cities School of Preaching & Christian Development at the Stoney Creek Church of Christ in Elizabethton, TN.

**Matthew 21:33-46**

**Introduction**

This Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers/Husbandmen was spoken by Jesus in the temple on the day following His triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-18). Jesus was teaching the people when He was interrupted by the chief priests, scribes, and elders (Matthew 21:23; Mark 11:27-28; Luke 20:1). This is certainly nothing new. They demanded to know by what authority He taught (Matthew 21:23; Mark 11:28; Luke 20:2). The Lord's response not only surprised them, but it also prompted these religious leaders to become defensive themselves (Matthew 21:24-27), which was a part of who they really were. There are many religious leaders today who hold to these same traits.

Jesus had spoken two parables which He applied to these religious leaders. Our Lord concluded The Parable of Two Sons by saying, "...the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matthew 21:31). Immediately, Jesus then presented, in our study, The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen/Vinedressers.<sup>1</sup> (Some emphasis mine, M.M.) This parable is also listed in Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19.

The Parable Stated

Matthew 21:33-46: "Hear another parable: There was a

---

certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: <sup>34</sup> And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. <sup>35</sup> And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup> Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. <sup>37</sup> But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. <sup>38</sup> But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. <sup>39</sup> And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. <sup>40</sup> When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? <sup>41</sup> They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. <sup>42</sup> Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? <sup>43</sup> Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. <sup>44</sup> And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. <sup>45</sup> And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. <sup>46</sup> But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.”

The Arrangements of the Vineyard

The vineyard was fenced in to protect it from animals, thieves, and for lodging. The wine press had two parts: 1) The trough, above, in which the grapes were placed and there trodden by the feet. 2) A lower trough to catch the pressed juice.

The tower was a place where the husbandmen could watch and keep the fruit from being stolen or destroyed by others, or animals; and a place for rest and comfort. This vineyard and others around had good soil for producing

---

this fruit.

The Application of this Parable

The householder was God, the Father. The vineyard belongs to God as is recorded in,

Isaiah 5:1-7: “Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: <sup>2</sup> And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. <sup>3</sup> And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. <sup>4</sup> What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? <sup>5</sup> And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: <sup>6</sup> And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. <sup>7</sup> For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.”

it is also the house of Israel. God had hedged Israel with divine authority and protection, and He has always delivered them from their enemies when she was obedient. The husbandmen was the nation of Israel with all its so-called leaders who were to follow the commandments and ordinances of God.

The owner/householder of the vineyard went into a far country for a period of time. He had left the vineyard for them to produce good fruit, and, giving them this allotted time for that purpose. When the harvest season drew near, the householder sent his servants to rightfully collect the fruit.

The servants here were those Old Testament prophets. Surely the nation of Israel with all its ‘religious’ leaders, would treat those prophets of God in a respectful way?

---

Didn't happen! Instead they were abused, shamefully mistreated, even some were killed. Imagine that; but this was the case (Matt. 21:35-36). We read an account of this in Matthew 23:34-35, "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: <sup>35</sup> That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

Notice the strain that the prophet Elijah was going through concerning this thought of mistreatment in 1 Kings 19:9-10, "And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? <sup>10</sup> And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." They had even stoned God's man, Stephen in Acts 7, when Stephen said these words in Acts 7:51-52, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. <sup>52</sup> Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers."

But not only that, the servants were treated even worse each time they were sent. This occurred from Moses all the way through the New Testament. Read the account of Moses in Hebrews 11:24-26, and others in verses 33ff. After all that had happened unto God's servants, God still had compassion on His people, giving them just another chance to do what He wanted them to do. But it doesn't end there, He sent His only Son, saying, "...surely they will reverence my son" Mark 12:6. Yes, this is God's beloved Son, Jesus (Matt. 3:17; 17:5).

Note the contrast between the "servants" and Christ, He is in a different class than the prophets (Matt 16:13-16), He is



---

Deity (Is. 7:14; Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 20:28; Acts 20:28; Heb. 1:8).

We can see the love of God evidenced by sending of His Son in spite of the abuse that they heaped upon His prophets. Did the husbandmen respect God's Son? Let us read of this account in Matthew 21:38-39, "But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.<sup>39</sup> And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." They were not ignorant concerning who Jesus Christ was, they had known the prophecies concerning Him and who He was, but had blinded their eyes to that fact. John makes reference of this also in John 12 37-41, "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:<sup>38</sup> That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?<sup>39</sup> Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,<sup>40</sup> He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.<sup>41</sup> These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." Acts 2:22 says, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." They knew Him and went ahead and took Him out of the city and slew Him.

Jesus had then asked, "...what will he do unto those husbandmen?" v40. They answered, "...He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons" v41. They had just pronounced judgment upon themselves which was fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

The Lord's Application – VS 42-44

With His marvelous mind saturated thoroughly and perfectly with Old Testament Scripture, Jesus recalled Psalm 118:22-23. Matthew records Him as saying:

---

“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? <sup>43</sup> Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. <sup>44</sup> And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”  
Matthew 21:42-44

The conduct of the wicked husbandmen was of no surprise to either the Father or the Son. In reality, it was prophesied in this Old Testament passage. Christ was the rejected stone. The building imagery is of vivid force; it is graphically stated by this great Parabolic Preacher. The builders are active. The building material is before them. One stone is set aside as being totally useless in their constructive efforts. It is the outcast. Yet, He has Divinely designed to head the corner or to become the chief corner stone. A corner stone holds together two walls and gives strength to both. Here we have a blending of prophecy and fulfillment, of eternity and time, of the present and the future, of Divinity and humanity, of faith and works, of mercy and justice, and of Jew and Gentile. In his marvelous material on Luke 20, Joe Gilmore also added beauty and service to the stately significance of this corner stone and these two walls.

Jesus Christ: The Rock of Ages

Many are the Old Testament and New Testament references to the Christ in rock-life profile. In lyrical force He is truly “the Rock of Ages.”

1. He is the **foundational** stone. Isaiah so stated 28:16: “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone.” In Matthew 16:16, Peter confessed with courage and conviction His Messiahship and His Sonship to God. Peter was **petros** or a small pebble. Peter’s confession of Christ’s Deity was **petra**—a great ledge of rock or a boulder. Upon it—not Peter or the pebble—Christ proposed the building of His church (Matt. 16:16).

2. He is the **tried** stone. There would be nothing wanting or insufficient about Him as a stone.

---

3. He is the **precious** stone (Isa. 28:16). Isaiah tied precious and corner stone together. Peter referred to Him as that precious stone (1 Pet. 2:4,6).

4. He is a **sure** stone. He is the source of all life—physical and spiritual. His own words, in a great “I Am” declaration, portray Him as the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). Minus Him there is **no** going **no** knowing, and **no** living.

6. To the disobedient He is the **stone** of stumbling, and a **rock** of offense (1 Pet. 2:8). They stumble at His Deity and Word; they count His Gospel as being deeply and embarrassingly offensive. They desire **no** part of Him or His Gospel.

7. He is the **destructive** stone. Rejecters of Him will be broken or ground to powder (Matt. 21:44). Both expressions add up to total destruction. Those who erase all wrath from Father and Son would have a very, **very** difficult time in exegeting this verse. Probably most of them do not even know of its literary existence!

8. He is the **rock** of refuge, as we see stressed in Hebrews 6:18. In a world filled with uncertainty and unsurety, He is truly “the Rock of Ages.”

9. He is the **stone** of salvation. There is no other name under heaven in Whom we can be saved other than that of Christ. Later, Peter will say this to the very wicked husbandmen Jesus had in mind when He gave this parable (Acts 4:12).<sup>2</sup>

Jesus had declared in verse 43 that the kingdom would be taken from them and given to a fruitful nation. That new nation was the church of Christ (1 Pet. 2:9), the spiritual Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). And those who would oppose Him would be crushed. When did this take place? In A.D. 70 by the Romans, God’s armies (Matt. 22:7). There were multitudes that were killed and enslaved. Josephus says that 1,100,000 Jews died in that encounter. So, we can see that it is not wise to oppose God’s Son in any way!

Did these Jews, this nation, make any sorrowful changes? Did they even take notice anything that Jesus taught in this parable? Well, at least they had come to the conclusion that Jesus was talking about them, “And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they

---

perceived that he spake of them. <sup>46</sup> But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him to be a prophet.” (Matt. 21:45-46)

Did they let anything pass that all that Jesus had said concerning them go unnoticed? How about having Jesus crucified on that cruel cross?

#### Lesson's Learned

As God's vineyard, we, as New Testament Christians, must be bearing fruit, John 15; 2 Peter 1:1-12. We should utilize every opportunity to do good, Galatians 6:10; James 4:17. We too will meet a fearful judgment just as Israel met if we fail to bear fruit, Revelation 20:11-15. The judgment will have to do with things pertaining to eternity, Matthew 25:30-46. This judgment will be according to our works, Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Corinthians 5:10.

#### Conclusion

God cannot be mocked, nor can His Son be rejected without suffering the consequences like Israel. God is very long-suffering, waiting for those who have not obeyed His Son's Gospel, to do so before it is eternally too late. Also, one must be very careful not to mistreat God's preachers and teachers, who are trying to teach people to obey the gospel, and live the faithful Christian life that heaven will truly be their home, and avoid that place of eternal punishment.

May God help us all to appreciate more The Parables Of His Dear Son!

Chapter 8  
**“Parable of the Wedding Feast”**  
Steven Canup

Steven Canup is an Alumni of Freed-Hardeman College ('77-'79). He worked at secular employment for 24 years as a restaurant manager. In 2006 Steven graduated from the Tri-Cities School of Preaching. He has been the full-time minister for the Fort Chiswell church of Christ, Wytheville, VA since May, 2006. Married to the former Lanita Beecher, they have three children and two grandchildren.

**Matthew 22:1-14**

**INTRODUCTION**

The parable of the wedding feast is the third parable in a series of three parables in which the Lord rebuked the people for their rejection of God and His approved servants. The first, the parable of the two sons (Matt. 21:28-32), and the parable of the wicked vine-dressers (Matt. 21:33-40) demonstrated to His listeners the importance of acceptance and obedience to God's authority. Just prior to this, the chief priests and the elders of the people had come to Jesus wanting to know, "By what authority do you do these things? And who gave thee this authority?" (Matt. 21:23). Jesus responded with a question concerning the baptism of John "whence was it? From heaven, or of men?" (vs. 25). They were discussing authority when Jesus decided He was going to show that they had rejected the sole authority when they were invited to the feast and said no to the invitation. Accordingly, the parable of the wedding feast vividly describes Israel's rejection of Christ and His kingdom, which would be taken and given to others, and the ultimate judgment of God that would be brought upon those who reject God's will. Thus Matthew records,

And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son. And sent forth his servants to call them that were

---

bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen. (Mat. 22:1-14)

Herbert Lockyer noted,

---

There is a vital connection between the previous parable and this one, as can be seen by linking Matthew 21:43 with 22:2. Both parables set forth that combination of mercy and justice which is the glory -of God. In the former parable Jesus "showed His hearers their neglect to calls of duty, and the judgment overtaking their abuse of such privilege. This parable points out their neglect of calls to mercy, and the judgment that overtakes abuse of these higher privileges still." Richard Glover goes on to say that "the great teaching here given is such as only the Savior has ventured to impart. None but He has dared to represent divine mercy as so sublime and none but He has represented human guilt as so wicked." (227)

This parable uses the illustration of a feast to which guests are invited, some refusing the invitation and some accepting. It also points out to us the necessity not only of accepting the invitation, but the importance of having the proper attire for this feast. From this parable we can observe some necessary and important lessons that are applicable even for us today.

### **Analysis of the Parable**

This was the final recorded parable of the many by which Jesus taught during His ministry here on earth. He began this parable by likening the kingdom of heaven to a marriage which a king made for his son. Clearly, the king referred to in this parable is God the Father, and the son is Jesus Christ. Jesus refers to the "kingdom of heaven" which is the church for which He would eventually die. Sometime prior to this Jesus had stated to Peter, "...that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church...And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom

---

of heaven..." (Mat. 16:18-19). From this we must necessarily understand that the kingdom and the church are one and the same. All throughout the New Testament, kingdom and church are used interchangeably to designate the same thing. Paul spoke of the church in the same way, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. 1:13). We must note that Paul is speaking of the kingdom in the past tense, indicating that it, as the church, had already come into being. The marriage referred to is between Jesus and the church. Paul later in his writing to the Christians at Ephesus made this comparison of Christ and the church, contrasting this relationship to that of husband and wife,

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it. (Ephesians 5:23-25)

In the first chapter of the same epistle Paul states, "And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). Paul continually reminded the first century Christians of the fact that Christ is the head of the body, "And He is the head of the body, the church..." (Col. 1:18).

When the king sends forth his servants to invite them that were bidden to the wedding, we can observe an invitation that is spurned. Jesus states, "And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding" (vs. 3). The king in essence is saying "come to the feast" which is the spiritual banquet prepared by God for His people. Initially this was an invitation of God to the Jews, as they were His chosen people. However, this invitation is



---

rejected and spurned by those to whom this invitation is given. As such, during Christ's ministry, we can see time and again the rejection of Him by the Jews. A good example is found in John chapter nine with the story of the man, blind from birth, whose sight was restored by Jesus. As brother Woods noted,

The Jews of that day were of the ruling class composing one of the inferior courts of the Jewish people and empowered with authority to examine any they believed to be in violation of, or opposed to their traditions. Some of them were Pharisees, the strictest sect of the Jews, who felt special concern about the activities of Jesus. (192)

John notes in the text the Jews disdain for Jesus and his teachings. "These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue" (John 9:22). We can also read of the rejection of Christ by the Jews as Jesus was at the "feast of dedication...and walked in the temple in Solomon's porch" (John 10:22ff). John tells us the Jews encircled Him on this occasion and asked specifically if He was "the Christ." Jesus' response displays to us the flagrant refusal of the Jews to accept Christ, "I told you, and ye believed not" (vs. 25). Verse three of Matthew's record of Jesus' parable of the wedding feast told it all, "they would not come." Even though the message was made clear time and again that the "kingdom of Heaven" was at hand, the Jews continued to reject Jesus. Even in light of the evidence provided in the scriptures as pointed out by Christ, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Yet, they continued to falsely accuse and condemn Jesus, eventually putting Him to death on the cross.

"Again, He sent forth other servants, saying, tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my

---

dinner..." (Mat. 22:4). After Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, He gave the charge in which He sent both the apostles, and those who should obey the Gospel, to preach the King's invitation among "all nations" to "every creature." In Matthew 28:19-20, we have the great commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Also Mark 16:15-16, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Christ's succinct directive, "Go preach the 'King's invitation' to every creature, among all nations and to the entire world." This Gospel certainly was taken and preached to the "Jew first" as we can readily observe in the first nine chapters of the book of Acts.

"They made light of it, and went their ways..." (Matt. 22:5). Even during this time, those "bidden" or "called" rejected the King's servants even more so. An example of this is seen in their rejection of Paul and Barnabas during their ministry as they were striving to "put the Jew first." When in Antioch of Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue and preached Christ unto the Jews present. The next Sabbath day, almost the whole city came to hear the Word of God, and when the Jews saw the multitude "they were filled with envy and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming" (Acts 13:45). Note carefully, Paul and Barnabas' response,

It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto

---

the ends of the earth.” (Acts 13:46-47)

When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced, glorified the word of the Lord, and many of them believed, “And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region” (Acts 13:48). Yet, after this the Jews turned more violent than ever before, stirring up the people, provoking persecution against Paul and Barnabas, eventually driving them out of their city.

“The remnant took His servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them” (Matt. 22:6). This is what Israel did to God’s prophets time and time again in the Old Testament, even rejecting the preaching and teaching of the apostles. We can note Jesus’ warning of such,

Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute; that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zechariah, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.”  
(Luke 11:49-51)

The first bidding to the feast was given to the Jews by the prophets of the Old Testament dispensation. They foretold of the Messianic feast of exceeding great and precious promise, peace, and full salvation that would be available in the coming Messiah. But the Jews would not come to the feast. Later, God sent other servants in His chosen apostles and His own son. They proclaimed a more urgent and explicit invitation, were more aggressive in their manner and preached a complete Gospel. But the result of their preaching was no better than that of their predecessors. Those who were invited became antagonistic to the point of violence, seized upon the

---

servants of the King, maltreated them, and killed them. As such the apostles were bitterly persecuted, later, even unto death.

Beginning in verse seven, we see the King's reaction to this antagonism. "When the king heard thereof, He was wroth; and He sent forth His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." The people who refused the invitation and abused and persecuted the messengers paid a great price. The anger of God was finally brought against the obstinate Jews, for their rejection of His Son, and His kingdom, the church. The Lord, in telling this parable, no doubt had in mind the events that would occur to the city of Jerusalem and the temple. Some forty years later, A.D. 70, Titus and his Roman army would march against Jerusalem, destroying the city, the temple and killing untold multitudes of Jews. In this parable we can observe that Jesus prophesied of the occasion by which God "destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." When God carried out the total destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem, He was in essence saying, "I am through with you."

Next, we hear the King stating to His servants, "The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage" (Matt. 22:8-9). To those Jews present, as to some of the people, it must have been apparent that Jesus meant that the Gentiles were to be brought into the kingdom feast. Those in the "highway" were most certainly referring to the Gentiles, to whom the Gospel would be taken. Recall Paul's statement, "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47). The second chapter of Ephesians, Paul speaks about the Gospel taken to the Gentiles,

Wherefore remember, that ye being  
in time past Gentiles in the flesh,  
who are called Uncircumcision in the  
flesh made by hands; That at that  
time ye were without Christ, being

---

aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world; But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:11-13)

Thus the Gospel is taken to the Gentiles who were to enjoy salvation in Christ as well as the Jews. God sent Peter to the Gentiles after preparing him for the endeavor by a vision. He learned that the Gentile was the same in the sight of God as the Jew and states, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). Paul's statement of purpose for writing the book of Romans, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16) indicating that the Gospel was to be taken to "all nations." A chapter later Paul again states, "...to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; For there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:10-11). "The wedding was furnished with guests" indicates the church in its realization and completion, the culmination of God's great plan for mankind and the completion of Christ's mission, "To seek and save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15).

When the King comes in to see the guests, He sees a man "which had not on a wedding garment." It is not good enough to accept the invitation; we must comply with the requirements to attend the marriage feast. There are conditions which must be met by the wedding guests, whether Jew or Gentile. They must be clothed in the wedding garment of a righteous character and holy life, thus, there was and is a dress code. Rejection of the stipulated wedding garment indicated disregard and disloyalty toward the giver of the feast. What is this required wedding garment for us to put on? It is the putting

---

on of Christ in baptism as Paul indicates, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" (Rom. 6:3). This is our "wedding garment," the "putting on" of Christ, that is required and which we accomplish in the act of baptism. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Paul states,

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (Rom. 6:4-6)

The king inquired "how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless... then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 22:12-13). If we do not have character in harmony with that of the King, we will inevitably be cast out into outer darkness. Notice, those who refuse the invitation or show up wearing the wrong apparel, will be lost. Brother Rice states it this way,

If baptism into Christ, initiating our "walk in newness of life" (righteousness), is the "wedding garment" that one must wear to the Son's marriage, and if one shows up without having been "baptized into Christ," he will, instead of being welcomed to the marriage feast, be cast out into outer darkness where

---

there is only weeping and gnashing of teeth. Those arguing that some will be welcomed by the King (God the Father) to the marriage feast of His Son (Jesus Christ) without the "wedding garment" (baptism into Christ and imputed righteousness) need to read and study this parable once more. (273)

Jesus warned about the many that will not have the correct attire,

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matt. 7:21-23)

"For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14). "The many that are "called" include everyone from Pentecost to the end of the world; the few who are "chosen" are those who obey the call in baptism and remain faithful to it until the great "marriage feast" at the end of the world" (Rice, 273). As John noted at the end of the book of Revelation,

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of

---

saints. And he saith unto me, Write,  
Blessed are they which are called  
unto the marriage supper of the  
Lamb. (Rev. 19:7-9)

We are called by the Gospel, "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thes. 2:14). And when we accept that invitation, or calling, we become "...a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

### **Application of the Parable**

Could we, like Jews of old, be guilty of rejecting the Lord's invitation through indifference (Lamentation 1:12), or perhaps through rebellion, like the Israelites, who ignored the exhortation and invitation of God,

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.  
(Jer. 6:16-17)

Are you properly attired? Having properly "put on" Christ in your life. Attendance alone is insufficient, "For the grace of God that bringing salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Tit. 2:11-12). We must be continually and properly attired to attend the wedding of this parable. Yet, there are "clothes" we must put off and some we must put on. For example, the apostle Paul tells us, "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his



---

deeds" (Col. 3:8-9; 12-15). Through the grace of God, salvation is offered to all (Tit. 2:11). We can treat lightly, and with indifference, those things that are important, put off those things we must do to in order to attend this "great wedding feast."

### **Conclusion**

"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). This was the warning given by Christ to the Jews of the first century. They failed to take heed to this important warning and as such missed out on the "great wedding feast" provided to all mankind by God. This parable should teach us that though God loves us, He will not force Himself on us. His call has gone out to all men, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11). We are allowed free moral agency, that is, to accept or reject God's love. In spite of this universal call, only few are chosen, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14). You have been called, but are you among the chosen?

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

All scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

Barnett, Albert, *Understanding The Parables Of Our Lord*; Alec R. Allenson, Inc.; Chicago, IL., 1954.

Lockyer, Herbert, *All The Parables Of The Bible*; Zondervan Publishing House; Grand Rapids, MI., 1963.

Rice Jr., Ira, "Jesus' Final Confrontation With The Jews And His Judgment Upon Them"; *Studies in Matthew, Fourteenth Annual Denton Lectures*; Valid Publications, Inc., Denton, TX, 1995.

---

Lawson, LeRoy, *Matthew*; Standard Publishing;  
Cincinnati, OH., 1986.

Shepard, J.W., *The Christ Of The Gospels, An  
Exegetical Study*; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Grand  
Rapids, MI., 1961.

Unpublished sermon outline; Wesley Simons, "*The  
Wedding Feast.*"

Chapter 9  
**“Parable of the Talents”**  
Doug Frazier

Doug Frazier was born in Aiken, SC in August 1980. He graduated from Ridge Spring Monetta High School in 1999. He attended the Central Carolina School of Preaching and graduated in October of 2004.

He interned at Warners Chapel church of Christ for 9 months. He began preaching full time at the West Jefferson church of Christ in November of 2005 and resigned in August 2008. He and his wife Jessica are currently laboring in Alachua, Fl. There are the proud parents of twins James and Joy who are 4 months old.

**Matthew 25:14- 30**

**Introduction**

**“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look I have gained five more talents besides them. His lord said to him well done good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. He also who had received two talents came and said, Lord you delivered to me two talents; look I have gained two more talents besides them. His lord said to him well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you a ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. Then he who had received the one talent came and said, Lord I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where**

---

you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours. But his lord answered and said to him, You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but for him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The lesson that was assigned unto me is the Parable of the Talents. The theme of this year's lectureship is the Parables of Jesus. The Lord spoke many parables and they are all important. The disciples asked Jesus why he spoke to them and parables and Jesus gave them the explanation. Matthew 13:10-17,

“And the disciples came and said to Him. Why do you speak to them in parables? He answered and said to them, because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many

---

prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” There was a time when Jesus only spoke to people in parables. Matthew 13:34, **“All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them.”** “The word parable comes from the Greek word *paraballo* which means to throw or lay aside and even to compare according to Vines.” A parable can also be defined as using physical things to explain the spiritual. In this parable the Lord explains how important our talents are. We all have talents and God expects us to be good stewards of them. So many take their talents for granted and because of this they fail to polish them and make them better. Some think just because they only have one there is no need to develop their talent. Like the parable before which teaches us to watch for the Lord the parable of the talents teach us we must also watch how we use our talents. A person who sits by the way side and does nothing with their talents is like a car that is in neutral it won't work unless it is in drive. We are responsible for our talents and when we fail to use them we only have ourselves to blame. People give so many excuses to get out of using their talent. Moses was a man who made many excuses as to why he was unable to go to Egypt but every excuse he used God destroyed. Many are like Moses and give a lame excuse as to why they don't use their talents. When we do not use our talents we disobey God and become unprofitable. James 4:17, **“Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”** In order for us to have good talents we must work on them. Look at those who are successful in life, they have taken their talent and polished it to where it has become good. Growing up I was the type of person who did not like to get up in front of people to speak but I would do it. When I began to preach I was not very good but the more I did it the better I became. The reason I got better is because I refused to quit and I polished that talent that I never knew I had. You do not know what kind of talents you have until you try. The reason people are scared to use their talents is because

---

they are afraid that people may laugh or they might not be as good as the next man. Gods' people do not have a spirit of fear. 2Timothy 1:7, **"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."** When it comes to our talents we can not be scared to use them but they should cause us to be more confident. Philippians 4:13, **"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."** Paul said that he could do all things and so can we if we just trust in God. Those who think they do not have a talent better think otherwise because they can do all things through Christ. We should not care what others think but what God thinks. As long as we are using our talents to glorify God that is what matters most. We all have talents some might be better than the others but that still should not deter us from using our talents. When we use our talents we are not to use them to show off in front of man but to use them so they benefit God. There are too many in the Lord's church that are using their talents to be seen of men and to receive their praises.

James 4:6, **"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."** God's people are to be humble while using their talents, not boasting for the simple reason if it were not for God they would not have that wonderful talent. Are we using our talents to benefit the Lord or promoting ourselves to rank above others.

In the parable a lord was going away to a far country and the lord delivered to the servants his goods. The lord gave his servants talents according to their abilities. These men were not hired servants but belonged to the lord. The first one received five talents the second two and the third one. The lord gave these talents according to their abilities, which show that each man was capable of using them. If they were not capable of using them, the lord would not have given them their talents. We must remember the word "talents" here mean to us abilities. Just like the lord, God has given us some abilities that are talents and we must use them. If we were not capable of having talents God would not have given humanity some. A talent is a gift and all good gifts come

---

from above. James 1:17, **“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with who there is no variation or shadow of turning.”** The man with five talents went and gained five more and the man with two gained two more. The man with one talent did not do like the others. He went and hid his talent. Two of the lord’s servants were doers while one was not, because he feared. The Lord wants doers and being a doer is using our talents. The one talent man is like many of us we take our talent and hide it because we fear to use it. There have been men who had a wonderful talent in preaching but because they were treated wrong or something evil was said about them they quit using their talent. Preaching is a wonderful talent but that talent is slowly going away. The Lord’s church is loosing more preachers’ everyday. We should be like the others and use our talents. The one talent was a slothful individual he took his talent and wasted it. When the servant of the lord returned he had found two of his servants who were faithful and used their talents. The five talent and the two talent men because they were faithful over a few things, they became ruler over many. They got to enter the joy of their lord. The one talent man did not receive those things because he was wicked and lazy for not using his talent and the talent he had was taken away from him. We have a good lesson here and that lesson is if we do not use it we will loose it. The one talent man was not able to enter the joy of his lord. He was cast out into outer darkness where there will be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. When we fail to use our talents we sin. When the Lord comes back, those that did not use their talents because they were lazy and not doers will be cast into the outer darkness where there will be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Those who want to enter heaven must use their talents. Jesus impresses upon us the importance of using our talent. We must decide who we want to be- those who did like the five and two talent men or lazy and wicked like the one talent man. Use your talents and use them to benefit the Lord. Eternal life depends upon how we use our talents.

Chapter 10  
"The Wise and Foolish Vigin's"  
Michael Jordan

Michael Jordan was born in Texas. He finished high school in Memphis, TN in 1973. He attended Memphis School Of Preaching from 1973-1975, Freed-Hardeman College from 1975-1976. Other educational background includes Magnolia Bible College in Mississippi. Itawamba Community College, Northeast Mississippi Junior College, Northwest Mississippi Junior College, and Southern Christian University where he received his B.A. in 1997.

He began full-time preaching in 1992 and has preached in Mississippi and North Carolina. He is currently laboring with a congregation in Marion, VA. He married Jewel (formerly Attebury) in 1977. They adopted 2 children in 1994, Deborah and William. Deborah is married and lives in Mississippi. He has one granddaughter. Has conducted Gospel Meetings and Lectureships in MS, VA, NC & SC.

**Matt 25:1-13**

**Introduction**

I would like to thank Doug Frazier and the men of the congregation here at West Jefferson for the invitation to speak again at the Back To The Bible Lectureship. In one way it does not seem like it has been a year since last years lectures and then again it seems like a lifetime since we have been with you. I trust and pray that you will continue this lectureship each year and that it as well as the congregation will continue to prosper.

The Parables of Christ; many important subjects to study, and so rich in spiritual information. And i appreciate my subject that has been assigned to me, "The Parable Of The Ten Virgins" or better known as "The Five Foolish And Five Wise Virgins." I think that the decision to end the lectureship with this parable shows that there are those concerned about our relationship with God and where we stand in God's kingdom.

Now to our study reading **Matthew 25:1-13** from the New King James Version.

*"Then the kingdom of heaven*



---

shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. **2** - Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. **3** - Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, **4** - but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. **5** - But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. **6** - And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him! **7** - Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. **8** - And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. **9** - But the wise answered, saying, No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves. **10** - And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. **11** - Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us! **12** - But he answered and said, Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you. **13** - Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."

Years ago there was a famous orator on the radio who produced a radio drama of an imaginary attack on the world. His name was Orson Wells. Some of you may remember this. You remember what happened? The world went into a panic; they were being attacked by aliens. One student at Campbell College in NC turned on his radio and midway through the broadcast he did not realize he was hearing a fictitious report. And as Orson Wells was vividly describing the fire falling from the earth he recalled some sermons from his boyhood years he

---

concluded the end of the world had come. He grabbed the telephone and called home. This is what he said. "Mama! Mama! Have you got your radio on? The fire is falling, the end of the world is coming and I'm not ready to meet God! The next morning he was the laughing stock of the college. But a godly Bible teacher in chapel services took the podium and said, "I understand one of the guys got a lot of ribbing because he got scared listening to the radio program last night. But young men and women, what if it had truly been the end of the world last night, would you be ready? Jesus taught this parable about 10 virgins, 5 wise and 5 foolish. I want us to look at that and ask ourselves this question very seriously. If the end of the world were to come right now would you or I be ready?"

Here's the fact. One of the greatest failures that you or I or anyone in the world could face is the tragedy of not being ready to meet God in judgment! That is the most tragic thing that I can think of. There are a lot of traumas that we face or are a part of in life, but none so drastic than to meet God unprepared; have Him say to you or me "I never knew you!" There are many things that happen to us that we are not ready for accidents, at home, on the road, mistakes we make we never expected to happen. Damage may happen to our homes or us from floods, tornadoes, fires, etc. I want us to think of what Jesus said in **Matt 25:1-13**. I want us to see how God communicated some important information that you and I overlook as we travel down the road of life. I want you to understand what He is saying about the kingdom of heaven. He's talking about the church that He shed His blood for upon Calvary. How do I know this? If you go back to chapter 24 and the last few verses in that chapter He is talking about the second coming and it goes right in to talking about those who are in the kingdom and those who are not. In this parable in the wise and foolish virgins, I want us to really focus on how important it is to be ready. There is a grand song we sing as an invitation song "Are you ready for the judgment day?" There have been many people who have predicted when Jesus is coming. They are nothing but

---

liars because Jesus said He didn't know. But I'm sure He knows know because He is ascended back into heaven with His father. But while He was on the earth He said He didn't know the angels in Heaven don't know only My Father in Heaven knows. What gives man who is limited in his wisdom who is not perfect to think that, "I know when the Lord is going to come." How foolish a thought or statement.

Let's think about what Jesus said in this parable. When you look at this parable it is clearly an illustration for us to look at ourselves and see which class we stand in. Notice what He said. The kingdom of heaven, the church, is like 10 virgins- not just 5, but 10 virgins. You see you have 10 different individuals. You have 5 ready and 5 not ready. In order for us to really comprehend and understand what He is talking about the kingdom we must understand these 10 virgins.

Let's go back and look at it. First of all let us understand there is a banquet. In the times Jesus spoke this parable remember the introduction to the parables, that Jesus would take things they were involved with every day and make an application to the kingdom, make an application to righteousness where they would understand. Look at what He's doing. He's taking a banquet probably one that is given in a father's house for a daughter who is to be wed. They all understood this, so He's using this illustration. As you read on picture folks with their lamps. The father has gone to get the bride he'll be back in a moment. While he's gone, they wait much like some folks in the church. They come in and sit down and think the preacher is going to be there awhile so the eyes shut and the head nods in half of agreement. They never hear another word. They slumbered. These 10 sat down and slumbered. These folks were much like us today. We sit for awhile, and we go to sleep. Later the husband would escort his wife to their new home, possibly his father's house because they usually lived together for awhile. Notice what happens. When the bridegroom comes back

---

they wake up because someone harks out the bride groom is coming so what do you do you get up you brush your clothes off you fix your hair you trim your lamps and make sure your are presentable for the new couple. There is a problem. Five are not ready. Five are ready. Those who are not ready ask for oil from the others. Sometimes these marriage feasts last all night long. You had to have enough oil, for these lamps to burn all night long. If the wise gave the foolish some of their oil guess what would happen. In our time probably about 4:00 a.m. it would be dark because all the oil would have been used. Notice the similarities to our day. Ten virgins all had lamps but five had extra and five didn't. The bridegroom was delayed. While they waited they decided to catch a nap: we don't know how long. He came back. Some are ready some are not. The application is for us to watch.

If I were to ask each one of you when Christ is going to return or when the end of time is we would all agree we don't know. How many of us are truly watching for the coming of Christ. Go to a passage with me in 2 Tim.4:8. See if you and I are in this verse. How many of us at this moment want the Lord to come? How many are saying "yes but?" We may think He is going to come when I am ready. That isn't going to be the case. He might come before services are over. Are we ready? Christ in Eph. 5 wants to present the church to God spotless, blameless and pure. Christ can't do that because we sin. But the shedding of Christ's blood saves a reprobate like you and me and we should appreciate that. Remember when we take the Lord's Supper we are remembering the great sacrifice that you and I could not pay. God loved us so much He sent the perfect sacrifice, the perfect gift that you and I might live with Him for ever on the condition that we love His appearing enough that I'm willing to sacrifice my body my soul to serve Him. How many of us are ready to meet the Lord?

There is a second application. What do I do to watch? What do I do to get ready? Solomon said in *Prov.*

---

**23:26**, "My son give me your heart and let your eyes watch my way." Now He isn't saying look up in heaven and say when are you coming Lord? He's saying "Son, watch my ways!" Jesus said, "Except ye believe that I am He, you'll die in your sins." How many of us are dead in our sins right now? In **Eph. 2** I can see He has made you and me alive by Christ. Paul said in **I Cor. 16:13**, to WATCH, there's that word again, Stand fast in the faith. That means hold on to it. Have you ever seen a commercial where a big wind's coming and a person is holding on to a pole and the wind is blowing so hard the person is actually parallel with the ground? We're supposed to hold on to Christ. He is the anchor for the soul. He continues; Be men, stand up for what you believe. There was a song out years ago, "When you're talking about our country man, you're walking on the back side of me." Let me tell you something. We need to speak up when someone is talking against God's word we don't need to listen to them and we need to earnestly contend for the faith. Be strong in it! If God be for us who in his right mind is going to try to come up against us? In **I Thess. 5:6**, "Therefore let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us watch," and when we're watching we're calm because we're doing what God's word says and we know we are ready for His coming. It's not what the preacher says; it's what God's word says. In **II Tim. 4:5**, Paul encouraged Timothy. He said to watch in all things. Yes he was talking to the preacher but the preacher was telling the church what to do. Watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, tell the folks you don't know when the Lord is going to come, they don't know, so be ready. Can you not hear Timothy preaching that? In **Rev. 3:3**, John wrote remember then how you have received and heard and behold fast and repent. You who are not members of the Lord's church, how many times have you heard a gospel sermon and you will not repent? Oh, careless soul why do you linger wandering from the fold of God? "Hear you not the invitation, oh prepare to meet thy God." You and I live in a world that thinks it know everything. I was there at one time; I was 16 years old and thought I knew everything. I

---

realize now at the age of 53 how ignorant I am. I am serving a God who knows everything. When I put myself up against Him, I don't amount to anything but by the grace of God I am what I am because of His son. So, therefore watch. I appreciate what God has done for me. You ought to appreciate what God has done for you and make that commitment to serve God. In the long ago Jacob said in the book of Genesis chapter 27 "I am old but I do not know the day of my death." If you knew the day of your death, what would you do? You would get ready to meet your God. My friends as we close this lesson lets face fact. You see we easily live in a fantasy world and the devil wants us to. The Lord wants us to live in reality. Would you get back to reality with me? I don't care how young or old you are. You are a heartbeat away from death. You are a breath of air away from eternity. If you were to draw your last breath, if your heart were to beat its last beat and you passed from this life where would you spend eternity? I do not want to play on your emotions. But folks it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Let's get back to reality. If I'm not a member of the Lord's church, what do I need to do to become a member of the Lord's church? If I'm a member of the Lord's church but I haven't been living the way He wants me to live, the way He has instructed me to live, what do I need to do to get right with Him? Those are vital questions. The Bible says, and this is all found in the book of Romans, that I must hear the word. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. I must repent. Romans 3. We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God so I must repent of that. I must confess Jesus Christ. With the mouth confession is made unto salvation. And then I must be obedient to Him by baptism, Rom. 6. See you don't need the whole New Testament to tell you that. Just one book will tell you what to do. But listen to the judge. Jesus Christ is going to judge the world. "The words I have spoken unto you, they will judge you in the last day." Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be

---

saved." Are you saved this hour? Have you been washed in the blood of the lamb? If you have, but you haven't been living according to God's law, then why not confess your sins? James said in James 5 that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. But He also says that those who convert a scul from the error of their ways hide a multitude of sins. God put it this way. "I will blot out and remember your sins no more." I am thankful to God for that.

**Where are you? Are you one of the 5 virgins who were ready or are you one of the 5 foolish? Your decision needs to be made right now...**







## Other Books Available:

1998	The Splendor of the Church.....	out of print
1999	Who Is This Jesus We Talk About.....	out of print
2000	The Teaching of Paul The Apostle ....	out of print
2001	Great Men of the Bible.....	out of print
2002	Is The Church of Your Choice The Right Choice? (Only a Few Left).....	\$4.00
2003	Premillennialism: Of God Or Of Man?.....	\$4.00
2004	What Is Truth?.....	\$4.00
2005	What Taught About.....	\$4.00
2006	Women of the Bible.....	\$4.00
2007	The Beatitudes.....	\$5.00

## DVDs, CD, VHS, Etc.

DVD & VHS available for 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007  
DVD - \$25 or VHS-\$20 (each year)

CD available for all years

Audio(mp3) and Text (PDF) - \$5 (single year)

Audio(mp3) and Text (PDF) - \$20 (1998-2007)

To order, write or call:

West Jefferson Church of Christ

P.O. Box 117

West Jefferson, NC 28694

(336) 846-5615

wjcoc@skybest.com