

# WEEK TWENTY-FOUR

John R. France

## The Parable of the Sower

The parable of the sower is given in verses 3 to 8, and reported and explained in verses 18-23. The same parable is reported and explained in Mark 4:3-20 and in Luke 8:5-15., which are parallel passages with this. Be careful that you follow closely the interpretation which Jesus Himself gave. Notice the following facts: "The seed is the word of god" (Luke 8:11). The Gospel is represented as being preached to four classes of hearers: (1) the careless or indifferent hearer upon whom it makes no impression, like seed by the wayside or turnrow which is picked up by the birds. So Satan takes the Gospel out of the hearts of casual and indifferent hearers (vss. 4, 19). (2) Some who seem to receive the Gospel but have no real change of heart. Jesus says of such an one, "yet hath he not root in himself" (vs 21). When persecution or

trouble arises such a false professor is offended. This certainly pictures people who are interested in religion, perhaps make some claim to be Christians, but never definitely, personally trust Christ for salvation. They have no root in themselves, are unsaved (vss 5, 21). (3) The seed that fell among thorns (vs. 7) represents those who hear the word and receive it (vs. 22). such people are evidently saved, but their lives do not bring forth good fruit for the Master. "the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." People can be really saved who "bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:14). First Corinthians 3:1-15 shows how a Christian can be saved, so as by fire, with his work burned up like wood, hay, and stubble. Many Christians

who have been once useful later allow the cares of this world or the deceitfulness of riches to "cooke the word" so that they "become unfruitful." (4) Some hear the word, receive it, like seed cast into good, clean ground and bear abundant fruit, thirtyfold, sixtyfold, or an hundredfold.

The first two cases seem to be of unsaved people and the last two cases of Christians. We should notice that some are just as certainly unsaved being friendly toward religion and perhaps in the church as others totally indifferent to the miracles of Christ, while on the other hand we must be sure that some who are truly saved will break his heart by failing to bring any fruit to perfection. Some will surprise him gladly, however, with fruit "a hundredfold!"

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST:  
THE PARABLES

# WHAT IS A PARABLE?

A parable is a story that runs parallel to a biblical teaching. Parables are commonly called “Earthly stories with heavenly meanings.”

Holman’s Bible Dictionary describes parables as “stories, especially those of Jesus, told to provide a vision of life, especially life in God’s kingdom. Parable means a putting alongside for purposes of comparison and new understanding. Parables utilize pictures such as metaphors or similes and frequently extend them into a brief story to make a point or disclosure.

presenting each form of character with that which, as a penalty or blessing, is adapted to it. They withdraw the light from those who love darkness. They protect the truth which they enshrine from the mockery of the scoffer. They leave something even with the careless which may be interpreted and understood afterward. They reveal on the other hand, the seekers after truth. These ask the meaning of the parable, and will not rest until the teacher has explained it. In this way the parable did work, found out the fit hearers and led them on. In most of the parables it is possible to trace something like an order.”

no parable properly so called, although the illustration of the good shepherd (John 10:1-16) has all the essential features of a parable.

John 10:6: What does John, himself, call this passage? \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Passages easily recognized as parables should be considered parables.

These are usually, though not always prefaced with a phrase like, “Whereunto shall I liken...” or “like unto...”. These type of phrases clearly indicate a parable.

**Mark 4:33-34:** How did Jesus speak to them? \_\_\_\_\_

To whom did Jesus expound His parables? \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 13:10-16:** Who was to intended to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_

What two characteristic describe those who would not understand? \_\_\_\_\_

Other parables give no clear statement within the text but still are easily recognized as “earthly stories with heavenly meanings.”

It is equally important to define what is not a parable. The following cannot be considered parables.

Parables have three primary characteristics. They will illustrate a divine truth through a

story. Parables will hide a truth from those whose hearts are hard and have already rejected the truth.

Finally, parables engage the mind of the listener.

Parables illustrated truth by transforming the listeners ears into eyes as Jesus painted word pictures for the listener to visualize.

Parables hid the truth from those unwilling to learn and understand while revealing truth to those who are willing. Smith says,

“The direct teaching was met with scorn unbelief hardness, and he seemed for a time to abandon it for that which took the form of parables. The worth of parables as instruments of teaching lies in their being at once a test of character and in their

What was the condition of their heart and reason for their lack of understanding? \_\_\_\_\_

Not all commentators agree on their listing of parables. While we allow for some liberty for others to decide on what is and what isn’t a parable we ought to recognize at least two basic guidelines for recognizing parables.

**1. Passages declared in the Scriptures to be a parable is a parables.** Although this ought to be an obvious truth for Bible believers, many scholars do not recognize parables in their lists that are blatantly described as parables in the gospels. Take note of Easton’s comments on the parable of the Good Shepherd in John 10.

“The parables uttered by our Lord are all recorded in the synoptical (i.e., the first three) Gospels. The fourth Gospel contains

Real occurrences such as past events or types from the Old Testament such as Noah and Jonah are not parables. Neither are future events such as the prophecies concerning the second coming, judgment, or the kingdom. Neither are contemporary events including accounts with specific names are not parables.

The account of the rich man and Lazarus is incorrectly found in many listings of parables. Jesus used a proper name indicating that this was an actual event rather than a parable. Incorrectly relegating this event to a parable robs the preacher of a relevant passage that teaches of a literal hell.

Neither can fables and fantasies be classified as parables regardless of how significant allegories such as these may be. Every parable Jesus told was a realistic event.

Day  
1

## APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you have learned from God’s Word today and how can you apply it to your life?

# KINGDOM PARABLES

While the majority of parables are commonly recognized, not all listings of parables are the same. In many cases, it is not a matter of doctrine but simply of classification. Is it a story or a simile? Is it simply an example or does it qualify as a parable by telling a story? Some list as few as 30 while others as many as 40 parables. During the next few days, we will examine thirty-eight accounts that can properly be listed as parables.

*Matthew 12:25-31, Mark 3:23-30:*

*Matthew 13:45-46:*

*Matthew 13: 24-30:*

*Matthew 13:47-50:*

You will find a variety of truths taught in these parables such as wisdom, the deity of Christ, blasphemy, victory over Satan, sin, tradition, thought life, God's care and compassion, hell, soul sinning, the second coming, stewardship, service, faithfulness, the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, leadership, judgment, love, finances, patience, persistence and more. However, the most popular teaching seems to be on the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God. That will be our subject for today. Keep in mind that the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are the same. One simply indicates the person while the other describes the place.

*Matthew 13:31-32, Mark 4:31-33, Luke 13:18-19:*

*Matthew 18:23-35:*

*Matthew 13:33, Luke 13:20-21:*

After reading each of these parables, indicate what they teach about the Kingdom. Some may teach additional truths as well. Include these thoughts after writing you you learn about the Kingdom.

*Matthew 20:1-16:*

It is worth noting that the majority of these parables appear in Matthew's gospel. Matthew wrote specifically to the Jews who would have a special appreciation for the Kingdom promises made to David and presents Him as King of the Jews.

*Matthew 13:44:*

*Matthew 7:21-27, Luke 6:47-49:*

Tomorrow we will continue to examine parables concerning the Kingdom.

DAY  
2

## APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?

# MORE KINGDOM PARABLES

Yesterday, we began learning some *Matthew 22:1-14:* important truths concerning the Kingdom as Jesus taught through parables. Following are more Kingdom parables for you to consider and summarize.

*Luke 14:15-24:*

*Matthew 21:28-32:*

*Matthew 25:1-13:*

*Luke 19:11-27*

*Matthew 21:33-46, Mark 12:1-12,  
Luke 20:9-19:*

*Matthew 25:14-30:*

*How did Jesus motivate and inspire us concerning the Kingdom with His parables?*

*Mark 4:26-29:*

DAY  
3

## APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?

# LUKE'S COLLECTION OF PARABLES

Sixteen parables are unique to Luke's gospel. Two of them concerning the Kingdom have already caught your attention. However, Luke primarily presents Jesus as the Son of Man. Luke is writing primarily to the Greeks. Some have described his gospel as a Handbook for Holy Living. Summarize the truths Jesus taught in the following parables.

*Luke 12:16-21:*

*Luke 15:11-32:*

*Luke 6:37-42:*

*Luke 12:35-48:*

*Luke 16:1-13:*

*Luke 7:40-50:*

*Luke 13:6-9:*

*Luke 17:7-10:*

*Luke 10:25-37:*

*Luke 14:7-14:*

*Luke 18:1-8:*

*Luke 11:5-8:*

*Luke 15:8-10:*

*Luke 18:9-14:*

DAY  
4

## APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?

# MARK, JOHN AND OTHER PARABLES

Mark and John each have only one parable unique to themselves. This is John's only parable and Mark's is a kingdom parable that has been previously examined. Mark's remaining parables are shared with Matthew and Luke. There is also a non-Kingdom parables shared by Matthew and Luke.

Examine each of the following parables and summarize what Jesus is teaching.

Matthew 9:14-17, Mark 2:18-22, Luke 5:33:

As we conclude this weeks study, it is wise to recall that Scriptures is its own best interpreter. Men with more ingenuity and creativity than spirituality love to assign special meanings to Scripture, especially parables and allegorical sections, that God never intended. Always remember that **NO MAJOR TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD IS DEPENDENT UPON IMAGINATIVE INTERPRETATION OF DARK PASSAGES!**

Matthew 15:10-20,  
Mark 7:14-23:

**2 Peter 1:20:** What is no Scripture dependent upon? \_\_\_\_\_

Every major truth that is illustrated through a parable is clearly and plainly taught outside of that parable as well. Very often the interpretation is near at hand. The Parable of the Sower in Mark's fourth chapter is an excellent example. After the disciples inquiry Jesus fully explains the parable to His followers. The meaning is clearly at hand.

Matthew 18:12-14, Luke 15:3-7:

Likewise, learn to imitate Jesus method's of teaching. As you teach a Sunday School class, preach a sermon or witness to friends and strangers, use common, everyday occurrences to help illustrate genuine biblical truth. Jesus gave us this pattern throughout His earthly ministry.

Matthew 24:32-36, Mark 13:28-33, Luke 21:29-36:

**Use the space in the next column to write your own parable that might help someone else understand their need to be saved.**

DAY  
5

## APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?



# TABLE TALK



# PASTOR'S MESSAGE