

The Parables of Jesus

Last week we examined the ways the Gospels were designed and their particular purposes. This week we will focus especially on interpreting the parables of Jesus.

Video/Lecture Notes

- “Parable” comes from the Greek word *παράβολή*, meaning “analogy” or “proverb.” These are short, pithy statements that teach a deeper truth.
- Parables make use of metaphor similar to poetry, employing a cluster of meaning centered on a main truth, often including surprise twists for the hearers.
- Parables are about Jesus and His mission – the flipped expectations and values of the kingdom of heaven as well as warnings to those who reject Christ’s message.
- There is also a distinction between “Kingdom” parables – what the Kingdom of God *is* – and “piety” parables – how members of God’s Kingdom *act*.

Discussion

For each of the following parables, examine the metaphors based on our previous discussion of Biblical metaphors. How does this parable twist expectations? How does this parable fit into Jesus’ mission and message? (See Bible reading on pg. 2)

Matthew 13:44

Luke 14:16-24

Luke 18:9-14

Matthew 13:44

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Luke 14:16-24

But he said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’”

Luke 18:9-14

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”