

**Title:** Understanding God's Kingdom Through Jesus' Parables

**Passage:** Mark 4:1-20

---

Draft Summary:

I. Overview of Parables

II. Context of Parables

III. Application

Application:

- If a Christian but don't seem to grasp God's Word: re-consider.
- If not a Christian: come to Christ.
- If a Christian and understand God's Word: give glory to God!

Possible Discussion Questions:

- What point(s) in the sermon did the Lord most impress upon you?
- Which parable of Jesus has had an impact on your life and how?
- How much more should we be motivated to read and understand God's Word, which provides the key to the greatest treasure that can be had?
- What next steps will you take in response to the sermon?

---

**Passage:**

Mark 4:1-20

Mark 4:10-12

And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven."

Mark 4:33-34

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

## **EXPOSITION**

### **Introduction**

New sermon series on parables.

### **I. Overview of Parables**

- Over 40 of them in Mathew, Mark, and Luke

*Parables*

- “para” = alongside, parallel
- “ables” = throw
- Meaning = To place or throw alongside something else
  - the truth along with a story
- Note: parables are not allegories
  - not everything within the story has symbolism or spiritual meaning.
    - Ex: donkey in “The Good Samaritan” has no spiritual implications or meaning.
    - Do not invent or create meaning where there is none.

### Matthew 11:25

At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children;

- The main things are the plain things
  - Key truths are evident and clear in parables - easily understood even by children.
- God’s truth does not require special training or understanding.

### Psalms 119:72

The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

- The treasures of God may be found in the Bible.
- If you are motivated enough, God’s Word can be understood.
  - If you were given millions of dollars to do something, you would be motivated to do it.
  - How much more should we be motivated to read and understand God’s Word, which provides the key to the greatest treasure that can be had?

## **II. Context of the Parables**

Jesus ministry changed

- During the first two years, Jesus spoke very plainly from the Old Testament and the Law.
- At a certain point, Jesus teaching changes where He only speaks in parables in public and only interpreted them to His disciples in private.

Why the change in Jesus’ teaching?

### Mark 2:23-28

One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?” And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

### Mark 3:1-6

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

- Fight over the Sabbath (grain field, healing man)
  - Jesus wasn't breaking the Sabbath but breaking man's rules about the Sabbath.
- Sabbath = the focus of religious leaders
  - They had created 24 chapters to instruct people how not to break the Sabbath
    - Ex: not carry pens, not carry anything heavier than a fig, etc.
  - man added so much to the Sabbath, which twisted it into a burden on others but was originally intended to give rest.
- Contrast: Jesus continues to do things on the Sabbath pointing to the heart of it.

#### Matthew 12:22-24

Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons."

#### Matthew 12:31-32

Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

- the religious leaders were beyond hope after plainly seeing and hearing Jesus for two years.

#### Mark 4:33-34

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

- Jesus transitions to speaking only in parables in public.
- Parables was a means of judgment against the religious leaders.
  - Interpretation would only be to those willing to learn.

#### Mark 4:10-12

And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven."

Faith is the necessary pre-requisite to understand God's truth

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

- the true gift of faith comes only by faith.

John 6:44

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

- parables was not to be "seeker-friendly" but rather was a judgment against the religious leaders.
- We do not adjust the message to be seeker but allow God's truth alone to speak and God's Spirit to draw people to Himself.

Parables - what about?

- About the Gospel of God
- About the kingdom of God

Matthew 16:18

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

#### **APPLICATION**

If a Christian but don't seem to grasp God's Word: re-consider.

- true religion is about the Person, Jesus
- re-consider whether truly have faith in Jesus

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

If not a Christian: come to Christ

- you will face judgment if do not repent.
- God wants you to give your life to Him.

2 Corinthians 6:2

For he says,

"In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you."

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

If a Christian and understand God's Word: give glory to God!

- If you read God's Word and understand it, it is a gift from God that you are able to have faith and grow.

Philippians 2:12-13

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.