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The Kingdom

Similies of Jesus

Thirteen Parables

Preface

After the resurrection of Jesus, Luke informs us that the master spent 40 days with his disciples in order to teach them those things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. We have a record of only five of those forty days. There was no “Kingdom Conference” held by Jesus, but we may be able to piece together the content of his teaching by reviewing two primary sources. First, we can piece together fragments (5 of the 40 days). Secondly, we can review the synoptic gospels and study the 13 parables that relate to the Kingdom of God. According to Jesus, these 13 parables reveal mysteries regarding God’s Kingdom and unveil things that have been kept secret from the foundations of the world. In fact, many prophets and righteous men have desired to see and hear those things revealed regarding this topic. Jesus informs us that he used parables in order to both reveal and conceal eternal matters. The parables were uttered in order to conceal mysteries from those who were not ready to receive them and to unveil secrets to those who love him.

In this review, we will attempt to draw meaning from 5 of 40 days and the 13 parable as taught by Jesus. As a result of this study, I hope we gain and understand some of the basic underlying principles concerning the Kingdom of God.

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FRAGMENTS OF THE FORTY DAY KINGDOM CONFERENCE: (Day 1, 8, 9, 10, 40)

Luke informs us that after his resurrection, Jesus was seen of his disciples forty days and taught them about those things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. Even though we do not have a syllabus of the "Kingdom Conference," we may be able to piece together some of its content. Keep in mind that Jesus had just conquered death and was now preparing his disciples for the Great Commission. In this section, I will outline the teaching of Jesus after his resurrection.

WHAT DID JESUS TEACH

(Day 1)

The Women:

Several woman were said to be present at the sepulchre after the resurrection. We have no record of any direct teaching, but the women understood several things after speaking to the angels and Jesus. They understood that Jesus had **conquered death** and was **risen**. The master informed them that he would ascend unto Father and return to meet with his disciples in Galilee.

Simon and Cleopas on their way to Emmaus:

Scripture records that Jesus appeared to Simon and Cleopas as they journeyed from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Jesus is said to have **expounded out of the Scripture all those things concerning himself**. Even though we have no details, we are informed about the focus of the instruction. Jesus taught them that the Old Testament is a revelation of Himself.

Ten Disciples in a Home (1st Time)

While Simon and Cleopas visited the eleven disciples in order to report their encounter with the Master, Scripture records that Jesus appeared to them in a home. Several things happened during this visit. Jesus informed them that in the same way that Father had sent him, **he was now sending them forth**. Jesus breathed on them and said, **Receive the Holy Spirit**. He told them that whose **sins** they would **remit** would be remitted and whose sins they retained would be retained. It is also recorded that Jesus **opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures**. Thomas was not present during this visit.

WHAT DID JESUS TEACH

(DAY 8)

Eleven Disciples in a Home (2nd Time)

Scripture indicates that on this day, Jesus visited the disciples again in a home. If you recall, Thomas was not present during Jesus' first visit. Jesus showed Thomas his wounds and and reprimanded him for his unbelief. Jesus taught his disciples that **he will bless those who believe though they have not seen him.**

WHAT DID JESUS TEACH

(DAY 9)

There is no record of teaching during this day. We are informed that the disciples went fishing. Though they toiled all night, they caught nothing.

WHAT DID JESUS TEACH

(DAY 10)

Jesus appeared to his disciples on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias. They had toiled all night and failed to catch anything. In the morning, Jesus asked them to cast their nets again. They met success and caught over 150 fish. On this day, Jesus taught Peter directly, but his message is applicable to us. Jesus said to Peter, **If you love me, feed my sheep.** When Peter expressed concern about what would become of another disciple - John, Jesus told him that he should not worry about what plan he had for others, but should **focus instead on the task before him.**

WHAT DID JESUS TEACH

(DAY 40)

On day 40, Jesus wrapped up his Kingdom teaching. He taught his disciples several things:

HE TAUGHT THEM ABOUT HIMSELF:

Now that Jesus had conquered death, he informed his disciples that he had been **granted all power in both heaven and earth.** As their King, Jesus had secured all the resources necessary to lead them as they carried out their assigned task.

HE PROVIDED THEM WITH DETAILS CONCERNING THE GREAT COMMISSION:

Jesus issued several commands to his disciples. He said to them ...

GO into all the world, every nation and every creature.

BE my witnesses.

DO: Teach and preach. He provided them with details regarding the content of their teaching. Jesus said to them, as you go...

- Teach them to **observe all things I have commanded** you.
- Speak to them about their need for **repentance and the remission of sins**.
- When they believe, **baptize them** in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

HE TAUGHT THEM ABOUT THE RESOURCES THAT WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO THEM:

As Jesus spoke to his disciples about the great commission, he also informed them about the resources that would be available to them as they carried out their task. Jesus said, **In my name, you will ...**

- **Cast out devils**
- **Speak with new tongues**
- **Take up serpents**
- **If you drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt you.**
- **You will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.**

Jesus informed them that they would carry out the work he began.

HE GAVE THEM A REMINDER ABOUT HIS PROMISE

Jesus told them to wait for the promise of the Father which he would send. Jesus promised to **baptize them with the Holy Spirit**. As a result, they would be **endued with power from on high**. When the Holy Spirit would come upon them, they would then receive power to **become witnesses for Jesus**. As he concluded his teaching to them, Jesus said, don't forget, **I am with you always, even unto the end of the world**.

Upon completing his instruction, Scripture indicates that his disciples had one question for Jesus. "When will the Kingdom of Israel be restored?" It is interesting to note that after spending 40 days of teaching them about the Kingdom of God, the disciples wanted know about the Kingdom of men. Jesus had previously declared that his Kingdom was not of the world. I am not what to make of this.

Jesus led his disciples to Bethany, lifted up his hands, and blessed them. He was then received up into heaven where he sits on the right hand of God.

His disciples all saw him ascend. The angels confirmed that he would return in the same way he left. The disciples were filled with joy and went to preach everywhere. The Lord worked with them and confirmed his Word with signs following.

Jesus did many other things in the presence of his disciples. They were not all written. All that has been recorded in Scripture is written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing we might have life through him.

Fragments of his teaching during 40 Days:

Day	Content of Teaching	Source
1	Jesus Conquered Death - he is risen	Sepulcre: The Women
1	Old Testament - A Revelation of Christ	Country Side: Simon & Cleopas
1	Father Sent Me, now I send you	Home: Ten Apostles
1	Opened their Understanding of Scripture - They understood	Home: Ten Apostles
8	Bless those who believe having not seen	Home: Eleven Apostles
9	Apostles went fishing - Toiled all night (No direct teaching)	Home: Eleven Apostles
10	Do you love me? Feed my sheep.	Shore of Sea of Tiberias
10	Focus on the task at hand	Shore of Sea of Tiberias
40	All power granted to Jesus in heaven & earth	Mountain in Galilee
40	Go into all world, every nation, and every creature	Mountain in Galilee
40	Be my witness	Mountain in Galilee
40	Teach and Preach all I have commanded	Mountain in Galilee
40	Teach and Preach repentance and remission of sins	Mountain in Galilee
40	Baptize in the name of Father, Son & Holy Spirit	Mountain in Galilee
40	In my name, cast out devils	Mountain in Galilee
40	In my name, speak with new tongues	Mountain in Galilee
40	In my name, take up serpents	Mountain in Galilee
40	If you drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt you.	Mountain in Galilee
40	Lay hands on the sick and they will recover	Mountain in Galilee
40	Carry out the work I began	Mountain in Galilee
40	Wait for the promise of Father - I will endue you with power	Mountain in Galilee
40	I will baptize you with the Holy Spirit	Mountain in Galilee
40	You will receive power	Mountain in Galilee
40	You will be my witness	Mountain in Galilee
40	I am with you until the end of the age	Mountain in Galilee
40	Angels confirmed Jesus would return	Mountain in Galilee

Now we turn to the second source of information regarding the Kingdom of God. The first focused on the fragments of his teaching found in five of forty days. The second source draws its content from 13 parables taught by Jesus prior to his resurrection. It may be safe to assume that Jesus incorporated the content of these parables in the teaching he communicated during the 40 days after his resurrection. Note how Jesus uses similes to describe the Kingdom. A simile is a comparison made between two things using the words “like” or “as.” This makes it easier for the reader to envision the main ideas of the parable.

PARABLE ONE: A SOWER WENT FORTH TO SOW

MATTHEW 13; MARK 4

Jesus was sitting by the sea side when a great multitude gathered. He moved onto a ship while the crowd listened to his doctrine from the shore. He spoke to them about the parable of a sower who set about to plant seeds in a field. The sower was effective and the seed was good, but Jesus reveals that three of the four types of soil on the field were defective. Jesus ensured blessing would come upon those who heard and understood his parables. Note that Jesus explained this parable only to his disciples.

FOUR TYPES OF SOIL

1. **Defective Soil:** Soil by the way side. In this soil, the seed and soil never had the chance to interact. The birds devoured it before it could take root.

Meaning: This soil represents those who hear and understand the word of the Kingdom.

Problem: The wicked one (Satan) catches and takes away the seed that is sown in the heart.

2. **Defective Soil:** Soil in stony places. This soil is defective because it does not provide the seed with much soil. Though the seed sprouted quickly, its root does not have much depth due to buried stones. The seed sprouts, but is scorched by the sun and withers away.

Meaning: This soil represents those who hear, immediately receive and rejoice in the word of the Kingdom.

Problem: They have no root in themselves. They endure for a little while, but when affliction, tribulation or persecution arise because of the word of the Kingdom, they are offended and fall away.

3. **Defective Soil:** Soil by thorny places. This soil is defective because the seed is choked by growing thorns surrounding it. This seed yields no fruit.

Meaning: This soil represents those who hear and receive the word of the Kingdom.

Problem: The word is choked and the hearer becomes unfruitful because of the cares of the world, the deceptfulness of riches and the lust of other things.

4. **Good Soil:** Fertile Soil. This soil is conducive to growth. The seed flourishes and produces fruit in various quantities. (30, 60 and 100 fold)

Meaning: This soil represents those who hear, understand and receive the word of the Kingdom. These bring forth fruit in different quantities. (30, 60 and 100 fold)

Problem: There are no problems with this soil. It is fertile and productive.

Central Message: Sow the Seed - Deliver the message regarding the Kingdom of God

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? This parable emphasizes the **impact of the seed** upon the soil of the heart. Jesus was the first sower of the seed (message of the Kingdom). Now he sends us to do the same. When we set about to sow the message of the Kingdom of God, remember that the heart that receives your message will vary. Our responsibility is to sow good seed, not to control the results. Do not be discouraged with the results your labor yields. We may sow and water, but it is God who gives the increase.

PARABLE TWO: The Wheat and the Tares

MATTHEW 13

In this parable, Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of God is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. Note that Jesus explained this parable only to his disciples.

He set the narrative before his audience:

1. A man planted good seed (wheat) in his field.

Meaning:

The man who planted the good seed is Jesus (Son of Man).

The field in which Jesus planted the seed is the world.

The good seed represents the children of the Kingdom.

The tares represent the children of the wicked one.

2. While the man slept, an enemy planted tares in his field.

Meaning: While Jesus slept, the devil planted his tares (wicked ones).

3. The wheat and tares grew together and brought forth fruit.

Meaning: The children of the Kingdom and children of the wicked one will grow side by side in this world.

4. The planters noted that wheat and tares were mixed in the same field and expressed their confusion to the householder.

Meaning: The children of the Kingdom and the wicked ones will coexist until the end.

5. The householder advised the planters to do the following:

- a. Do not gather up the tares because you will damage the wheat.

Meaning: Leave the wicked ones alone lest you damage the children of the Kingdom.

- b. Let the wheat and tares grow together until the harvest.

Meaning: The children of the Kingdom and children of the wicked one will grow together until the end of the world.

- c. The reapers will gather the tares first and burn them.

Meaning: The angels will gather together the evil ones and burn them in the fire. All things that offend and those who do iniquity will be gathered out of God's Kingdom and will be cast into a furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

- d. The reapers will gather the wheat second and store it in the barn.

Meaning: The children of the Kingdom will be gathered. They will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.

Central Message: The Good and Bad Seed will Coexist until the end of the World

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? This parable focuses on the constituents of the Kingdom. Jesus has sown the believer as seed in the field of the world. As you set out to do divine word, remember that there are two types of seed which have been planted in the Kingdom of God. Jesus has planted good seed whereas the devil has planted the bad. Do not seek to rid yourself of the bad seed. Both good and bad seed must coexist until the end of the world. The angels will be sent to reap the bad seed first and then the good. The angels will gather and burn all that offends. Do not be discouraged when you see the children of Satan's Kingdom working along side you. God will set the record straight in the end.

PARABLE THREE: A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED

MATTHEW 13; MARK 4; LUKE 13

In this parable, Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. Note that Jesus explained this parable only to his disciples. Jesus provides the following details regarding this parable.

1. A man planted a grain of mustard seed in his field or garden.
2. The mustard seed grew, produced great branches and became a great tree.
(Though the mustard seed is the least of all seeds when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs and becomes a tree.)
3. The birds of the air came and lodge in the shadow provided by its branches.

Jesus did not provide any explanation for the above parable. There are various interpretations set forth in regard to its meaning. What follows is the meaning I have assigned based on my reading of multiple opinions.

Central Message: Be Optimistic - The Progressive and External Growth of God's Kingdom

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? The focus of this parable appears to be the external growth of the Kingdom. Jesus was the first to plant the seed of faith the size of a mustard seed. We are to go and do the same. We should be optimistic in regard to the growth of God's Kingdom. It began as a small seed planted in a field and has become a great tree which now provides protection for the entire world.

PARABLE FOUR: Leaven Hid in three Measures of Meal

MATTHEW 13; LUKE 13

In this parable, Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of God is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened.

The parable can be outlined as follows:

1. A woman took leaven.
2. A woman added the leaven to meal.
3. The whole meal was entirely leavened.

Jesus did not provide any explanation for the above parable. There are various interpretations set forth in regard to its meaning. What follows is the meaning I have assigned based upon my reading of multiple opinions.

Central Message: Be Optimistic - The Internal Growth and Permeating Power of the Kingdom

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? This parable seems to focus on the internal growth of the Kingdom. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us now. We should be optimistic in regard to the permeating effects of the good news concerning the Kingdom of God. The woman in this passage could very well be the church who is given the divine commission to speak the permeating Word of God. The gospel of the Kingdom is the power of God and will not return void. There is latent, transforming and permeating power in the good news of the Kingdom. If allowed, it will saturate every fiber of our being, renew our mind, transform us from glory to glory and conform us to the image of God's Son.

PARABLE FIVE: A Treasure Hid in a Field

MATTHEW 13

As Jesus stood before a great multitude, he spoke to them about another parable. He said to them, the Kingdom of God is like treasure hid in a field. He provides the following details.

1. A treasure was hidden in a field.
2. A man found the treasure in the field.
3. The man hid the treasure again.
4. The man, filled with joy, left the treasure in the field, sold all he had and returned to buy the field.

Jesus did not provide any explanation for the above parable. There are various interpretations set forth in regard to its meaning. What follows is the meaning I have assigned based upon my reading of multiple opinions.

Central Message: The Kingdom is to be Valued as God's Treasure Purchased at the Ultimate Price

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? This parable seems to focus on the value assigned to the Kingdom of God. God has hidden His treasure (Kingdom) in a field owned by the god of this world. Jesus came and found God's treasure (God's People/Kingdom). He descended into the lowest parts of the earth and ascended into the heavens and has purchased the Kingdom/Church. In the end, the Kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ. We are called to value and seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Through his birth, life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension, Jesus has "sold all" in order to purchase the field and its treasure.

PARABLE SIX: A Merchant Man seeking Goodly Pearls

MATTHEW 13

As the multitude listened to Jesus, he spoke another parable to them. It can be summarized as follows:

1. A merchant man sets forth to seek a goodly pearl.
2. The merchant finds the pearl of great price
3. The merchant sells all his possessions.
4. The merchant buys the pearl of great price

Jesus did not provide any explanation for the above parable. There are various interpretations set forth in regard to its meaning. What follows is the meaning I have assigned based upon my reading of multiple opinions.

Central Message: The Kingdom is a Pearl of Great Price Purchased at a Great Cost

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? This parable seems to focus on the value assigned to the Kingdom of God. The merchant in this parable may refer to Jesus who came "unto his own." He loved and gave himself for his bride, the church (Great Pearl). In order to possess her, he redeemed/paid the ultimate price of his life and then proceeded to make her his own. We are now known as those who have been purchased with a great price. Jesus became poor that we might be enriched. Through his birth, life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension, Jesus has "sold all" in order to purchase the field and its treasure.

PARABLE SEVEN: A Net that was Cast into the Sea

MATTHEW 13

In this parable, Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of God is like a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind. The parable can be summarized as follows:

1. A net is cast into the sea.
2. The net gathers every kind of fish.
3. Men pull the net to shore and sort the fish.
4. The bad fish are cast away.
5. The good fish are gathered into vessels.

Jesus explained that the nets represent the Kingdom of God. The net will gather good and bad fish. The gathering of fish refers to the end of the world and the men who sort the fish are angels that will, in the end, sever the wicked from among the just. Jesus points out that the bad fish (the wicked) will be cast into the furnace of fire and they will wail and gnash their teeth.

Central Message: The Kingdom will gather both good and evil which will be separated at the end of the World.

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? This parable seems to focus on the constituents of the Kingdom. The fish in this parable refer to both the good and evil. Like the parable of the two types of seed, the Kingdom net will draw both the wicked and just. They will coexist along side each other until the end of the age where the angels will separate them. The wicked will be punished and the just rewarded. Do not be disappointed when you see the wicked working along side you, it is God's design. His angels will ensure justice is done in the end.

PARABLE EIGHT: A Certain King which took account of a Servant Forgave his Debt

MATTHEW 18

In this parable, Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of God is like a certain king who asked for an accounting from his servants. The narrative can be outlined as follows:

1. A king takes an accounting of his servants.
2. One servant owed him 10,000 talents
 - a. The servant was not able to pay.
 - b. The king commanded that he, his wife and children be sold to pay off the debt.
 - c. The servant fell down, worshipped him and pleaded for patience to pay.
3. The king was moved to compassion and forgave the servant's debt.
 - a. The forgiven servant went out and found someone who owed him 100 pence.
 - b. The forgiven servant took him by the throat and demanded payment.
 - c. The indebted servant fell at the forgiven's servant feet and begged him for patience to pay his debt.
 - d. The forgiven servant showed no mercy and cast him into prison until he paid all his debt.
4. The king found out what the forgiven servant had done.
5. The king called the forgiven servant and punished him.
 - a. You are a wicked servant.
 - b. I forgave you all your debt because you begged me.
 - c. Why did you not show compassion on your fellow servant like I showed you?
 - d. The king was angry.
 - e. The king delivered the wicked servant to the tormentors until he paid all his debt.

In this parable, Jesus emphasizes the important role that forgiveness plays in the Kingdom of God. Jesus points out that Father will do the same thing the king in this parable did toward those who fail to show compassion and forgiveness.

Jesus did not provide any explanation for the above parable. There are various interpretations set forth in regard to its meaning. What follows is the meaning I have assigned based upon my reading of multiple opinions.

Central Message: The Role of Forgiveness in the Kingdom of God

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? The focus of this parable appears to be forgiveness. We are to imitate our Father to whom we have been indebted. We are to forgive others as He has forgiven us. Those who live under the rule of God must learn to release the failure of others. We are not called to count sins, we are called to erase them. It is not possible to effectively carry out the great commission when we are burdened with the failure and sin of others.

PARABLE NINE: A Householder who went to hire labourers into his Vineyard

MATTHEW 20

In this parable, Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of God is like a man that is a householder who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. The narrative can be outlined as follows:

1. The householder went out early to seek laborers to work his vine.
2. He found group one and agreed to pay them a penny a day to work.
3. He found group two (about 3rd hour) and agreed to pay what is just.
4. He found group three (6th hour) and agreed to pay what is just.
5. He found group four (11th hour) and agreed to pay what is just.
6. Pay day came and the lord of the vineyard called the laborers.
 - a. He paid group four first, until all were paid.
 - b. He paid group 2-4.
 - c. Group one thought they were going to be paid more.
 - d. The lord of the vineyard paid them what they had agreed upon.
 - e. Group one murmured.
- "Why have you made us equal to those who worked less."
7. The lord of the vineyard reprimanded them
 - a. I have not done you wrong - I gave what we agreed
 - b. I have not done anything unlawful

Jesus did not provide any explanation for the above parable. There are various interpretations set forth in regard to its meaning. What follows is the meaning I have assigned based upon my reading of multiple opinions.

Central Message: Compensation in the Kingdom - Focus on the King, not the dom.

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? This parable seems to focus on compensation in the Kingdom of God. The offense in this parable occurred when the men focused on others instead of what the lord of the vineyard had previously agreed to pay. In order to effectively carry out the Great Commission, it is important to we avoid the temptation of comparing ourselves with others. At times, we may feel that others who are doing less in the Kingdom are

receiving more benefit than we are. Remember, the King is fair and will compensate you as he sees fit.

PARABLE TEN: A Certain King Plans a Wedding for his Son

MATTHEW 22

In this parable, Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of God is like a certain king who planned a wedding for his son. The narrative is outlined below:

1. A king a planned wedding for his son.
2. The king sent out the 1st group of servants to invite guests to the wedding, but those invited did not come.
3. The king sent a 2nd group of servants to invite additional guests to the wedding.
4. The kings sent a 3rd group of servants to invite guests to the wedding dinner.
 - a. The oxen and fatlings had been killed.
 - b. All things had been prepared.
 - c. They were invited to the wedding.
 - d. Those invited made light of it and went their ways.
 - Some went to their farm
 - Some went to their merchandise
 - Others took the king's servants
 - Treated them spitefully
 - Killed them
5. The king was angered when he heard what they had done to his servants.
 - a. The king sent forth his armies.
 - b. The king destroyed those who murdered his servants.
 - c. The king burned up their city.
6. The kings spoke to his servants again.
 - a. The wedding is ready.
 - b. Those called were not worthy.
7. The king sent his servants into the highways to find and invite people to the wedding.
 - Both bad and good were invited.

- The wedding was furnished with guests.
8. The king was at the wedding and saw a man which did not have a wedding garment.
- a. The king approache the guest and asked why he did not bring a wedding garment.
 - b. The guest was speechless.
 - c. The king had the guest bound hand and foot and taken away.
 - d. The guest was cast into outer darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus did not provide any explanation for the above parable. There are various interpretations set forth in regard to its meaning. What follows is the meaning I have assigned based upon my reading of multiple opinions.

Central Message: The Word of the King is not to be taken Lightly

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? The focus of this parable appears to be neglecting the King's word. In this parable, Jesus points out that the king issued an invitation, but those invited were not worth of the invitation. Instead of honoring the king, those invited treated the word of the king lightly and ignored him. This was done to their demise. When the King of King speaks, every subject in the Kingdom must bow. There are no alternatives to obedience. The King is absolute ruler.

PARABLE ELEVEN: Ten Virgins

MATTHEW 25

In this parable, Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of God is like ten virgins who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. The narrative can be outlined in the following manner:

1. Ten virgins took their lamps and prepared to meet the bridegroom.
2. Five virgins were wise - They took oil in their vessels with their lamps.
3. Five virgins were foolish - They took their lamps, but took no oil with them.
4. The bridegroom tarried and the ten virgins slumbered and slept.
5. A cry went forth that the bridegroom was on his way and the virgins were invited to meet him.
6. The ten virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.
7. The foolish virgins said to the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.
8. The wise virgins answered, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves.
9. While the foolish virgins went to buy oil, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in to the marriage and the door was shut.
10. The foolish virgins arrived late saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.
11. The lord of the house said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Upon teaching this parable, Jesus told the listeners to watch because the day or hour in which the Son of man comes is unknown.

Jesus did not provide any explanation for the above parable. There are various interpretations set forth in regard to its meaning. What follows is the meaning I have assigned based upon my reading of multiple opinions.

Central Message: Do not treat your Kingdom task lightly - Be prepared

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? This parable focuses on being prepared to carry out an assignment. In this parable, Jesus deals with being prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. The virgins in this parables understood their task. They were to prepare. We are called to be like the wise virgins. We are to take our assignment seriously and prepare to carry it out.

PARABLE TWELVE: A Man Travelling into a far Country and Returned to Ask for an Accounting

MATTHEW 25; LUKE 19

In this parable, Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of heaven is like a man travelling into a far country who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. The parable can be outlined as follows:

1. A man travels into a far country.
2. Before leaving, the man delivered his goods to his servants according to their ability.
 - a. 1st Servant got 5 talents
 - b. 2nd Servant got 2 talents
 - c. 3rd Servant got 1 talent
3. The servants worked with the talents provided to them
 - a. 1st Servant traded and made a profit. (5 talents)
 - b. 2nd Servant traded and made a profit. (2 talents)
 - c. 3rd Servant dug a hole and hid his talent.
4. The lord of the servants returned and asked for an accounting.
 - a. 1st Servant was praised for gaining 5 talents - He was made ruler over many things and entered into the joy of his lord.
 - b. 2nd Servant was praised for gaining 2 talents - He was made ruler over many things and entered into the joy of his lord.
 - c. 3rd Servant was reprimanded. He made excuses and said, I knew you were a hard man.
 - I knew you reap where you have not sown
 - I knew you gather where you do not scattered
 - I was afraid and hid your talent in the earth
 - d. This servant was called called wicked and slothful. He failed to take minimal action - deposit the lord's money in a bank for some interest.
 - d. The lord gave his talent to the one with ten talents.

- e. The lord cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Even though Jesus does not provide us with an explanation of this parable, he does pull back the curtain of time so the reader is able to see the events that will transpire upon his return. Jesus taught that when he returns in his glory with his angels, he will sit upon his throne and judge all the nations. The nations will be gathered before him and he will separate them into two groups.

1. Group 1: The Sheep

- a. These will be placed to his right.
- b. The King will say, Come, you blessed of my Father.
- c. Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
- d. The occasion for the gathering of the Sheep: Jesus will praise them for the investment of their time. They performed good works.
 - I was an hungred and ye gave me meat:
 - I was thirsty and ye gave me drink:
 - I was a stranger and ye took me in:
 - I was naked and ye clothed me:
 - I was sick and ye visited me:
 - I was in prison and ye came unto me.
- e. The righteous ask for an explanation. When did we do all these things?
- f. The King's answer:
 - Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.
 - The righteous entered into life eternal.

2. Group 2: Goats

- a. These will be placed to his left.
- b. The goats are reprimanded and punished.

Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

- I was an hungred and ye gave me no meat:
 - I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink:
 - I was a stranger and ye took me not in:
 - I was naked and ye clothed me not:
 - I was sick and you visited me not:
 - I was in prison and ye visited me not:
- c. The wicked demanded a response. When did we do all this?
- d. The King responds:
Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.
- e. The wicked went away into everlasting punishment.

This information about the separation of the sheep and goats may not be an explanation of the parable above, but it does provide some insight. In the parable, there was an expectation imposed upon the servants who were provided with resources by their master. The master expected his servants to take what he had provided and invest it in order to gain a profit. The servants were assigned a task for which they would then be accountable.

In the separation of sheep and goats, Jesus teaches that there is an expectation imposed upon the nations of the world. When Jesus returns, the nations will give an accounting based upon the assignment they receive. The nations are responsible for providing God's people with food, drink, clothing, hospitality, healing and emotional support (visitation in prison). If the nations failed to carry out their assigned task, they would be judged accordingly. If the nations succeeded, they would be rewarded with eternal life.

Additional insight is provided regarding this parable by a similar parable provided in Luke chapter 19. This parable can be outlined as follows:

1. A nobleman travels into a far country to receive a Kingdom and return.
2. The nobleman called in 10 servants and give them 10 pounds.
3. The nobleman gave them a general mandate to "Occupy until he returned."
4. The nobleman is identified as someone was hated by his community.
5. The nobleman is identified as someone who the citizens of his community would refuse if he reigned over them.

6. The nobleman returned, having received the Kingdom. He was granted kingship.
7. The nobleman/king called in his servants to ask for an accounting of the use of money he had provided them.
8. The king sought to know how much every man had gained by trading.
9. Servant 1 reported:
 - a. Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.
 - b. The nobleman/king praised and rewarded him.
 - c. Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.
10. Servant 2 reports:
 - a. Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.
 - b. The nobleman/king praises and rewards him.
 - c. Be thou also over five cities.
11. Servant 3 reports:
 - a. Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.
 - b. I feared thee, because thou art an austere man. Thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.
 - c. The nobleman/king reprimanded and judged the servant for his excuses.
 - d. Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.
 - e. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow.
 - f. Why did you not give my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?
 - g. The nobleman/king gave servant 3's pound to the one that had ten.
 - h. He reward the most successful. He said, Unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.
 - i. The nobleman/king destroyed those who would not be ruled by him

Again, in this parable, there is an expectation imposed upon the servants of the nobleman/king. When the nobleman/king returned he asked for an accounting of the resources provided to his servants. Jesus is our nobleman/king. He gave us an assignment. (Go and preach to every nation, heal the sick, cleanse the leper, cast out devils, raise the dead, etc.) When Jesus returns from his journey, he will ask for an accounting in regard to our assignment.

Central Message: Do not shun your Responsibility/Assignment in the Kingdom. You will give an accounting

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? The focus of this parable appears to be accountability. In this parable, Jesus emphasizes the importance of doing God's will. As Kingdom people, we have an assignment to carry out. We are not only to receive, but also to provide food, drink, clothing, hospitality, healing and emotional support to others. As Kingdom people, we are called to be a channel of God's blessing. In the parable, the servants had to trade or occupy until their master returned. We are called to preach, teach, heal the sick, cleanse the leper, cast out devils, and raise the dead. We are to use the divine resources provided us in order carry out our mission. Upon his return, our hope is to hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

PARABLE THIRTEEN: A Man who cast seed into the ground

MARK 4

In this parable, Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of God is like a man who cast seed into the ground. It can be outlined as follows:

1. A man cast seed into the ground.
2. The man slept.
3. The man rose night and day.
4. The seed sprang up and grew.
5. The man did not know how .
6. The man saw that the earth brought forth fruit of herself.
7. The man saw the process:
 - First, it brings forth the blade
 - Second, the ear
 - Third, the full corn in the ear
7. The man saw fruit produced by the seed.
8. The man used his sickle to harvest the crop.

Jesus did not provide any explanation for the above parable. There are various interpretations set forth in regard to its meaning. What follows is the meaning I have assigned based upon my reading of multiple opinions.

Central Message: The Unconscious Growth Process of the Kingdom - We see then End, Not the Process

What is the central message of the parable in relationship to the Kingdom of God? The parable seems to focus on the inworkings of the growth proces. The man in the parable was very conscious of the process of growth. He planted a seed. Over time, it produced fruit. The man did not understand. In the end, the man saw the fruit borne and moved to harvest his crop. We are called to harvest the crop, not agonize over the process of growth. Stop analyzing how the fruit is borne, focus on the task at hand. We may plant and water, but only God gives the increase.

CONCLUDING REMARKS REGARDING THE 13 PARABLES

When comparing the 13 parables with each other, it is interesting to note the message they communicate about the Kingdom of God.

The **1st and 13th parable** reveal something about the **impact and workings of the Kingdom** message. The 1st parable informs us that the Kingdom message will impact individuals according to their heart condition. The 13th parable informs us that instead of trying to understand the inward workings of the Kingdom, we should focus on the task at hand - the harvest.

The **2nd and 7th parable** deal with the **constituents of the Kingdom**. Both the just and unjust will coexist in the Kingdom until the end. The 2nd and 7th parable informs us that the good and bad seed/fish will coexist in this world until the end comes and the angels separate the just and the unjust in order to mete out rewards and punishment.

The **3rd and 4th parables** speak to us about the **external and internal growth of the Kingdom** we are to expect. The 3rd parable informs us that we should be optimistic regarding the external growth of the Kingdom. We began as a seed and will become a great tree providing protection for all. The 4th parable informs us that we should be optimistic about the internal growth of the Kingdom. The leaven of God's Kingdom message has been hidden in us and will permeate every fiber of our being.

The **5th and 6th parables** speak to us about the **value and cost of the Kingdom**. It cost the purchaser everything. Both the 5th and 6th parable inform us that the purchaser valued the Kingdom so much that he paid the ultimate price for its purchase. Jesus did not only become poor (left His glory) but also gave himself a ransom (paid with his life) in order to purchase us.

The **8th through 12th parables** speak to us about the **Standard Operating Procedures** of the Kingdom. They inform us regarding

- **Forgiveness**
- **Compensation**
- **Our response to God's Word**
- **Our obedience to His Will**
- **Accountability in the end of time.**

As we review the 13 parables, we are able to view what Jesus taught his disciples about the Kingdom prior to his death.

Before giving his disciples the great commission and empowering them with the Holy Spirit to carry out the divine task, is it possible that Jesus covered the following topics:

Session 1: The Impact and Inward Workings of the Kingdom

Session 2: The Constituents of the Kingdom

Session 3: The Growth of the Kingdom

Session 4: The Value and Cost of the Kingdom

Session 5: The Standard Operating Procedure of the Kingdom

Obviously, the points listed above may not have been listed on a syllabus, but the ideas provided must have been part of the body of instruction covered by Jesus. The 13 parables under study contain the major ideas taught by Jesus during his earthly ministry. These are the ideas Jesus taught his disciples before commanding them to GO and make disciples of nations. Without knowledge of these ideas, it may be difficult to understand or know what to expect when we carry out God's command to disciple every creature and every nation.

OTHER BOOKS AND QUICK READS

BOOKS

The Narratives of Christ (Gospel)
Is God Speaking? (Minor Prophets)
God's Life-Changing Curriculum (An Agent of Change)
Worship (In the New Testament)

QUICK-READS

The Authority of the Believer
Transforming Power
Redeemed from the Curse (Entitled to the Blessing)
Emotional Intelligence (Models: A Brief Review)
Why He Came
The Kingdom (13 Parables)
Divine Transition
Divine Expectation
Unclaimed Wealth
Times of Refreshing
Unlocking God's Diary
The House of James
The Will of God (In James)
The Pure Gospel (Galatians)
Paul's Vision of God (Ephesians)
The Journey

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