

The Parables of Jesus

“The Purpose of the Parables”

Matthew 12:1-14,22-32; 13:10-17; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10

What is a parable?

- A parable is utilizing earthly elements to convey theological concepts.
- Usually parables include ambiguous elements that are difficult to understand.
- This is evidenced by the fact that Jesus has to explain the meaning of the parables to His disciples after He tells them to the crowds.

How many parables are there?

- There are estimates of over 50 parables that Jesus spoke.
- Roughly 40 of those are recorded in the Bible.
- Jesus was the only One who spoke in parables and there is a reason for that to be covered later.

The Sabbath

- The sabbath day was the day that God set aside after He had completed the creation work to rest.
- Did God need to rest? No, but He was setting the example for humanity who does need to rest.
- Exodus 20:8
- The sabbath was a day in which work was to cease.
- This was a day that was to be for worship as well as resting from the monotony of everyday work life.
- It was a day that was intended for people to recharge.

Abuse of the Sabbath

- In Old Testament Judaism there came a time in which the Jews began to run roughshod over the sabbath.
- They were working, they were engaging in sinful activity, etc.
- The religious leaders decided that it was vital in order to keep the sabbath pure.
- In response to the dereliction of the sabbath the leaders added more and more rules involving the sabbath.
- The list became quite extensive.

Matthew 12:1-2

Violating the Sabbath

- In Matthew 12 we see that Jesus and His disciples were walking through a grainfield on the sabbath and plucked heads of grain to eat as they walked.
- This was in violation of the *man-made* sabbath law.
- The Pharisees called Jesus out on this.
- Jesus had a habit of breaking the sabbath in front of them almost as if He was challenging their authority on the matter.

v. 3-5

Jesus Responds

- David, while on the run from Saul, stopped at the tabernacle in Nob for respite. (1 Sam. 21)
- There was no food so he and his companions ate the showbread that was reserved for the priests.
- This placed David on the wrong side of the law yet the Pharisees loved to honor David.

- The law even states that priests in the temple on the sabbath profane the sabbath yet they are guiltless.
- The Pharisees seem to have selective outrage over the sabbath laws.

v. 6-8

The Pharisees Miss the Point

- Jesus tells them that something greater than the temple has come.
- He is that Something greater.
- Jesus hearkens back to the Old Testament and references 1 Samuel 15 and Hosea 6 to illustrate the fact that the Pharisees had missed God's heart altogether.
- They were so bent on keeping the man-made law that they were willing to condemn the guiltless to uphold it.

Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath

- Jesus makes a very bold statement in verse 8.
- He tells them that HE HIMSELF is the Lord of the sabbath.
- Blasphemy!
- Jesus basically tells them not to tell Him what to do on the sabbath because He is the Lord of the sabbath.

v. 9-14

Healing on the Sabbath

- Jesus proceeds to enter the synagogue there and He finds a man with a withered hand.
- The Pharisees ask Jesus if it is lawful to heal on the sabbath.
- What does Jesus do? He heals the man right in front of them.
- He asks them which one of them would not rescue their sheep from a pit on the sabbath.

- Obviously the answer is all of them.
- He tells them that it is lawful to do good on the sabbath and how much more value does a human possess than an animal!

Conspiracy

- The Pharisees witnessed this miracle and their response was to figure out a way to destroy Him.
- They were so concerned with upholding their law that they missed God.
- Talk about missing the forest for the trees!

v. 22-32

Healing the Demon Possessed

- A man who is demon possessed is brought to Jesus.
- Jesus casts out the demons and heals him.
- The Pharisees' response? This Man does this work by the power of Satan!
- This is when everything changed.
- Up until this point Jesus spoke and taught plainly.
- Going forward He would teach them in parables.

Matthew 13:10-17

Purpose of the Parables

- Once Jesus begins teaching in parables His disciples become confused.
- Up until this point Jesus was very direct about what He said and how He said it.
- Now it seems that Jesus is being somewhat ambiguous and He is.

- Jesus tells them that He has given them the ability to understand the secrets of the kingdom of Heaven but to the Pharisees and the people of that generation it would not be given.
- They were so obstinate in their unbelief that Jesus was bringing judgment down on them and that judgment was that they were not to understand the things that He was teaching them.

Isaiah 6:1-13

The Courts of God

- Isaiah is given the unique opportunity to observe the court of the Triune Godhead.
- He hears God ask whom shall be sent to Israel to prophesy.
- Isaiah volunteers and here is what he is told to say.

The Message of God

- God tells Israel through Isaiah that due to their unbelief they would not only remain that way but they would not be able to understand the Word of the Lord until Israel is destroyed.
- God decrees that not all of Israel would be destroyed.
- As He is merciful He would protect and purify a tenth, a remnant.
- The Terebinth tree and oak trees of the Middle East can produce new shoots even when they've been cut down.
- This "terebinth stump" represents the remnant of believers that God would save.
- He would rebuild His people with and through them.

Parables and Judgment

- Jesus began teaching in parables as a way to hide the truth.
- This was judgment that Jesus brought upon these people because of their unwillingness to see Jesus for who He is.
- When they attributed His works to Satan that was the final straw for Him.
- God had given Jesus the right to cast judgment and here we see that Jesus believed it appropriate in this way.
- Jesus had granted the disciples the ability to understand by explaining the parables to them in plain language.

Isaiah 36:26

- The things of God are for the people of God.
- In order to understand the things of God we must have our hearts changed.
- That is the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.
- Unbelievers remain rightly in their unbelief because we all deserve that.
- It is God's abundant mercy being employed when a dead sinner is made alive to believe in Christ and receive eternal life.