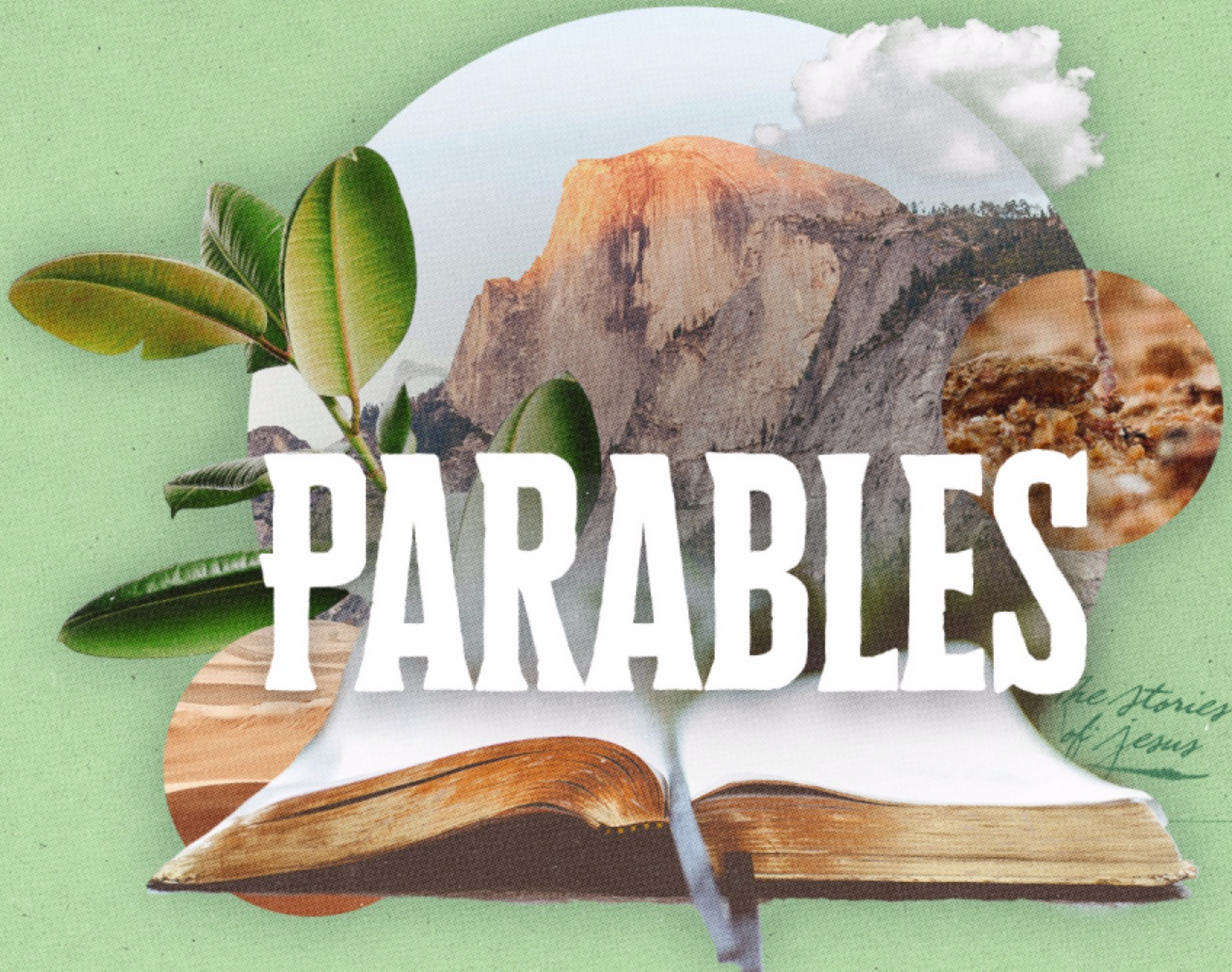


PARABLES



""Addiction' might be the best word to explain the lostness that so deeply permeates society. Our addictions make us cling to what the world proclaims as the keys to self-fulfillment: accumulation of wealth and power; attainment of status and admiration; lavish consumption of food and drink, and sexual gratification without distinguishing between lust and love. These addictions create expectations that cannot but fail to satisfy our deepest needs....

...As long as we live within the world's delusions, our addictions condemn us to futile quests in 'the distant country,' leaving us to face an endless series of disillusionments while our sense of self remains unfulfilled. In these days of increasing addictions, we have wandered far away from our Father's home. The addicted life can aptly be designated a life lived in 'a distant country.' It is from there that our cry for deliverance rises up."

—Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

"The more I reflect on the elder son in me, the more I realize how deeply rooted this form of lostness really is and how hard it is to return home from there. Returning home from a lustful escapade seems so much easier than returning home from a cold anger that has rooted itself in the deepest corners of my being. My resentment is not something that can be easily distinguished and dealt with rationally. It is far more pernicious: something that has attached itself to the underside of my virtue. Isn't it good to be obedient, dutiful, law-abiding, hardworking, and self-sacrificing?...

...And still it seems that my resentments and complaints are mysteriously tied to such praiseworthy attitudes. This connection often makes me despair. At the very moment I want to speak or act out of my most generous self, I get caught in anger or resentment. And it seems that just as I want to be most selfless, I find myself obsessed about being loved. Just when I do my utmost to accomplish a task well, I find myself questioning why others do not give themselves as I do....

...Just when I think I am capable of overcoming my temptations, I feel envy toward those who gave in to theirs. It seems that wherever my virtuous self is, there also is the resentful complainer."

—Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

1 John 3:1

**See what great love the Father
has lavished on us, that we
should be called children of
God! And that is what we are!**

PARABLES

