

CGH 9/7 Parables

Over the past two weeks we have been studying parables. Parables are teaching tools that Jesus employed to explain the truths of the Gospel, His kingdom, and illustrate how we should live as Christians. Commentator David Guzik says this about parables: “The idea behind the word *parable* is “to throw alongside of.” It is a story thrown alongside the truth intended to teach. Parables have been called “earthly stories with a heavenly meaning.”

F.B. Meyer tells us that “Jesus defended His use of parables. He said that He carefully avoided stating the truths of the Kingdom too plainly, so as not to increase the condemnation of those who could not or would not accept them. But where the disciples cared to penetrate below the husk of the story or parable, they would reach the kernel of heavenly significance. It is given to meek and teachable hearts to know the secrets of God. Let us draw near to the great teacher, the Holy Spirit, asking Him to make us know the kernel and heart of the Word of God.”

Jesus explains the purpose of the parables in Mat 13:10-17

Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” (11) And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. (12) For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. (13) This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. (14) Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ““You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.” (15) For this people’s heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’ (16) But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. (17) For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Questions:

1. What are some reasons we might struggle with parables as a form of teaching?
2. What is Jesus saying in verse 12?
3. What is the idea expressed in verses 13-14?
4. What is a “dull” heart as mentioned in verse 15?
5. How do we “see” and “hear?”

Parable of the Sower and the Parable of the Weeds

Parable of the Sower

Mat 13:1-9 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. (2) And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. (3) And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. (4) And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. (5) Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, (6) but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. (7) Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. (8) Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (9) He who has ears, let him hear.”

Parable of the Weeds

Mat 13:24-30 He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, (25) but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. (26) So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. (27) And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ (28) He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ (29) But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. (30) Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”

Questions:

1. How are these parables similar?
2. How are these parables different?
3. What is the “role” of Jesus in each of these parables?
4. What is the “role” of the believer in each of these parables?
5. Where do we see ourselves in these parables?

Parable of the Hidden Treasure

Mat 13:44-46 “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.

Parable of the Pearl of Great Value

(45) “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, (46) who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Questions:

1. What is the underlying theme of these parables?
2. How are these parables similar?
3. How are they different?
4. How are these different from the Parables of the Sower and the Weeds?
5. Is there a common theme from the parable of the Sower and the Weeds?

Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Mat 18:23-33 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. (24) When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. (25) And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. (26) So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ (27) And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. (28) But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ (29) So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ (30) He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. (31) When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. (32) Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. (33) And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’

Questions:

1. What do verses 23-25 tell us about our own sin?
2. What do verses 26-27 tell us about Jesus?
3. What does the response of the forgiven servant tell us about responding to forgiveness?
4. What do verses 31-33 tell us about the final judgement?

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

Mat 7:1-2 “Judge not, that you be not judged. (2) For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

Mat 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (22) On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ (23) And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’