

Parables of Jesus - Lesson 1

The English word "parable" originates from the Greek word "**parabole**", which means "a placing alongside," "comparison," or "analogy".

- "para": This Greek prefix means "alongside" or "beside".
- "bole": This Greek word means "to throw" or "to cast".

What is a parable? _____

An Example of a Parable from the Old Testament

- *The key to understanding any parable from the Bible is to know the context in which it is being told.*
- Read 2 Samuel 11 for context behind the telling of the parable.
- Read the parable in 2 Samuel 12:1-4

2 Samuel 12:1-4 The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. **2** The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, **3** but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

4 "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

Reflection Questions

- How was Nathan's parable similar to David's situation?
- What is the purpose of the parable Nathan told David?
- Why might the Lord have Nathan use a parable in this situation, rather than just give David the truth outright?

Why did Jesus teach using parables?

Matthew 13:10-17 The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?"

11 He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. **12** Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. **13** This is why I speak to them in parables:

"Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

"You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

15 For this people's heart has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.'[Isaiah 6:9,10]

16 But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. **17** For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

According to this passage, why did Jesus teach using parables?

Jesus taught using parables. What does this indicate about his identity?

Psalms 78:2 I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old—

Matthew 13:34-35 Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. 35 So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

“I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.”

- Jesus taught using parables. According to Matthew, what does this indicate about Jesus? _____

Jesus spoke in parables to:

1. Reveal spiritual truths to those with open and receptive hearts.
2. Conceal truth from those with hard hearts and closed minds.
3. Make complex spiritual concepts more accessible and memorable to all, despite cultural differences.
4. Encourage engagement and reflection from his audience.
5. Reveal the spiritual condition of the listener; just curious or truly seeking the Lord.

Reflection Questions:

- How do we need to approach God's Word when we read, study, and meditate on it? Do we need to go beyond just reading it?
- Can a Christian have a hard heart and a closed mind to God's Word? How can that happen? How can that be changed?
- How is your personal engagement and reflection concerning God's Word? Do you casually read God's Word and mark off that you are complete for the day? Do you regularly dig into God's Word to seek to understand and apply it? How do you reflect on God's Word?