

Introduction to the Parables of Jesus

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

When Jesus Christ came to earth, He did not simply arrive on a Thursday, die on a Friday, and rise on a Sunday. Rather, He lived for over thirty years as a full-fledged member of the human race. His earthly ministry is significant for a number of reasons, especially for His prolific teaching about the kingdom of God. In fact, many people who reject the Christian faith still have great respect for Jesus as a wise, virtuous, and gifted teacher. In this series, Dr. R.C. Sproul will explore the teaching ministry of Jesus, focusing particularly on eleven of His parables. During our time together we will discuss why Jesus was such a gifted teacher, and we will seek a greater understanding and affection for the significant and timeless message that He proclaimed.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Matthew 13:34-35; Matthew 22:16; Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-32; John 12:49

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. To present Jesus Christ as history's greatest teacher and communicator.
2. To describe the role of parables in the Bible.
3. To explain Jesus' purposes for teaching in parables.
4. To discuss the elements of salvation and judgment within the ministry and mission of Jesus.

QUOTATIONS

Our Saviour's parables are distinguished above all others for clearness, purity, chasteness, intelligibility, importance of instruction, and simplicity. They are taken mostly from the affairs of common life, and intelligible, therefore, to all men. They contain much of himself: his doctrine, life, design in coming, and claims; and are therefore of importance to all men; and they are told in a style of native simplicity intelligible to the child, yet instructive to men of every rank and age. In his parables, as in all his instructions, he excelled all men in the purity, importance, and sublimity of his doctrine. –Albert Barnes

He stood in the midst of Scribes and Pharisees, publicans and sinners, and preached the glad tidings...His preaching was full of parables, plain to those who had understanding, but often dark and mysterious even to His own followers, for it was a judgment from the Lord upon that evil generation that seeing they should not see and hearing they should not perceive. –Charles Spurgeon

BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why was Jesus a great teacher? What characteristics set his teaching apart from that of the other religious leaders in his day?
2. Which parable of Jesus has been particularly meaningful to you? How has God used this parable in your life? With which parable do you wrestle the most?
3. When Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" in Mark 4:9, what did He mean? How does this verse shed light on the purpose of parables within the teaching ministry of Jesus?
4. In what ways does Jesus bring good news? In what ways does He bring bad news? How does this two-fold reality affect the church's proclamation of the gospel?