

In Sight of Disaster

Parables: Truth hidden in plain sight. Earthly story with a heavenly meaning. The first thing Jesus does when he begins His ministry is to proclaim “Now is the day of Salvation” *“The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel.”*

Jesus proclaims that His Kingdom is a **reign** not just a **realm**. He was establishing the authority inherent within a King to rule. All the gospels tell us this Kingdom is not just a **future home but a present reality**.

The Pharisees, Sadducees and religious leaders couldn't understand Jesus showing mercy to “Sinners”.

THREE TIMES JESUS TALKED ABOUT THE JOY THAT COMES WHEN SOMETHING WHICH HAS BEEN LOST IS FOUND. A LOST SHEEP, A LOST COIN AND A LOST SON. Do come in, trespassers will be forgiven.

So, these parables teach us first, that God wants the sinner.

Shocking: God not only loves to show mercy to sinners but God actually goes out to seek the sinner, or, that He is actually waiting and watching for the sinner to come home.

God loves to show “mercy to sinners”.

Jesus not only faced difficulty with opposition from the religious leaders, but with the growing doubt of his own disciples over his messianic mission. The disciples needed “Great Assurance.” To encourage his disciples, he told them parables of contrast to illustrate that great ends are implicit with small beginnings.

So, the critics were breaking ground. And many ceased to follow Jesus even His own disciples were doubting the validity of His messianic mission.

Into their doubt and confusion Jesus speaks parables of contrast... The Kingdom of God is like a bit of leaven which gives rise to a loaf; it is like a mustard seed which develops into a large shrub. What is required is the patience of the husbandman to await for the harvest. The seed is doing its work below the surface ... all the wheels are in motion ... the end is about to come – what is required is the faith to see that the end is guaranteed by the beginning.

God finishes what He starts! **PRAY**

Because the end was not far off, Jesus sought to warn the religious leaders and the people of Israel of God's impending judgment. He used parables to trigger their awareness that they

were, *“In Sight of Disaster.”* Like a rich fool unprepared for death, or a citizen unprepared for a burglar, so the religious leaders are unprepared for the advent of the Kingdom of God. God has entrusted to them supervision, and now the time of accounting has come, but they stand like children in the marketplace playing silly games while judgment is at hand. They are like a doorkeeper who has fallen asleep during the watch and therefore is completely oblivious to the important events transpiring around them. When God’s judgment comes, hearing the word will not suffice – one must hear and do – the house must be built on the rock and not on the sand.

What’s the sitz em laben “situation in life that Jesus speaks these parables?


Jesus is warning the religious leaders and the people of Israel of God’s impending judgment. They are persisting in their resistance of the message of Jesus. ***Jesus not only proclaims salvation but also announces judgment.***

1. **Jesus’ message not only proclaims salvation and encouragement to His disciples but also announces judgment; it is a warning and a call to repentance in view of the terrible urgency, Jesus is saying, “You are In sight of disaster”**

Children in the Marketplace – Matthew 11:16-19 “But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, ¹⁷ and saying:

‘We played the flute for you, And you did not dance;
We mourned to you, And you did not lament.’

¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ ¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by her children.”

 **The designation of Jesus as a “glutton and a winebibber” comes from Deut. 21:20 and stigmatizes him on the strength of this connection as a “stubborn and rebellious” son who deserved to be stoned.”**

You say that the Baptist is mad because he fasts while you want to make merry; and you scold me because I eat with tax collectors while you insist on strict separation from sinners. Neither the preaching of repentance nor the proclamation of the gospel suits you.

How blind you are! You can read the signs of the weather, but you cannot recognize the signs of the time. Luke 12:54-56

2. You must be aware that the end is coming and you must respond in light of eternity!

The Burglar – Matthew 24:43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

You're not ready! You better get ready! **You got to get right or get left! "You are in sight of disaster"**

The Rich Fool – Luke 12:16-20 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. ¹⁷ And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' ¹⁸ So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.'" ²⁰ But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'

First, the wise person believes Jesus and takes Him at His word. If you don't believe Him and then His call to expectancy falls on det ears. You are fools! Second, the wise person does good and not evil. To stay awake or to be ready is more than an attitude of attentiveness. **It is also the actions of attentiveness.** We are to wait expectantly while we work expectantly. Towards the end of John Calvin's life, when his friends wanted him to work less for the sake of his declining health, he would often reply to them, "would you have my master find me idle?".

3. Jesus calls them to respond to the claim of the Kingdom in the light of their historic, God-given responsibility.

The Servant Entrusted with Supervision – Matthew 24:45-51 "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' (**Master is out of sight and out of mind...)** **Implying the religious leaders (believers) were idle and God was going to remove them from their supposed place of favor with God.** ⁴⁹ and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **You guys better wake up for you are "in sight of disaster".**

Pounds or Talents – Matthew 25:14-30 “For *the kingdom of heaven is* like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. ¹⁵ And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. (a talent in context is a large amount of money) **As one commentator states, “The talent symbolizes more than money but not less than money.” A talent of course has an elastic quality to it. Lets remember this is a parable not a mathematical equation. So a talent can mean the gifts of knowledge, health, strength, time, intellect, advantages, opportunities, perhaps people (a spouse, children, a friend)... natural abilities. Spiritual gifts and callings. Context is Jesus calls the religious leaders to respond to the claim of the Kingdom in the light of their historic, God-given responsibility.**

¹⁶ Then he who had received the five talents went and **traded** with them, and made another five talents. ¹⁷ And likewise he who *had received* two **gained** two more also. ¹⁸ But he who had received one went and **dug** in the ground, and **hid** his lord’s money.

Notice the contrast between the “aggressive and recessive verbs, instead of forward moving verbs like “Traded” and “gained” used for the first two servants the third servant “dug” and “hid”.

¹⁹ After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ ²¹ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ ²² He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ ²³ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ ²⁴ “Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is yours*.’ ²⁶ “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ²⁷ So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. ²⁸ Therefore take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. ²⁹ ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will

be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

As Hughes says, “in the parable of talents we will learn that readiness looks like “faithful working” If you are **not** working while you wait you won’t hear well done faithful servant... and in the rebellious minds of the religious leaders they will know more than the absence of praise but the eternal fate of HELL and separation from the God they claim to love. **They were not just doing nothing but coming against all that was good.** Simple application to use... don’t bury the \$ or the other gifts God has given you... GET GOING!

The Doorkeeper – Matthew 13:32 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ³⁴ *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. ³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— ³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!”

God has entrusted you with so much! The spiritual leadership of the nation, the knowledge of his will, the key to the Kingdom of God. Now God’s judgment is at hand; now it will be decided whether the theologians have justified or abuse his great trust, whether they have made good use of his gift or turned it to their own advantage and to the imposition of burdens on their fellow men, whether they have opened the door of the Kingdom of God or shut it. Their judgment will be specifically severe.

The Fig Tree – Luke 13:6-9 He also spoke this parable: “A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷ Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’ ⁸ But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize *it*. ⁹ And if it bears fruit, *well*. But if not, after that you can cut it down.’”

Just because you are God’s chosen people false confidence will not suffice... Jesus is shocking them into the understanding that you are rushing into destruction... not only the nation but especially it’s leaders, theologians and priests. THESE are calls to repentance.

The same charge is given to us! We must warn those who think there will be not judgment. Their response is not our responsibility. Our responsibility is to proclaim the good news. The good news is Jesus came to save sinners, the bad news is we all need to be saved because we ALL are sinners.

Ezekiel 33 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ²“Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them: ‘When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman, ³ when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, ⁴ then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his *own* head. ⁵ He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will save his life. ⁶ But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman’s hand.’ ⁷“So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. ⁸ When I say to the wicked, ‘O wicked *man*, you shall surely die!’ and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. ⁹ Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

The Two Houses – Matthew 7:24-27 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” ²⁸ And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ***When God’s judgment comes, hearing the word will not suffice – one must hear and do – the house must be built on the rock and not on the sand.***