

# RIDDLES

Christian Center Church  
Wednesday, October 4  
7:00 PM

Unlocking the mysteries of God's Kingdom  
through the parables of Jesus

The objective of this conversation: How does Jesus want me to live as an ambassador to His Kingdom?

**2Corinthians 5:20**

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

- Generally speaking, an ambassador is a respected official acting as a representative of a nation.
- Writing to the Corinthians, Paul likens us to that of an ambassador of Christ to this "foreign nation" the world

**1Peter 2:11**

Dearly beloved, I beseech [you] as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

- So if we are going to represent the Kingdom of Heaven as Ambassadors – then we need to know how Jesus wants us to represent His Kingdom
- Which is why Jesus taught in parables

**What is a Parable?**

- The word parable is a transliteration of the Greek word “parabole” and comes from two Greek words, “para” (translated “beside”) and “ballein” (translated “to throw”).

### Matthew 13:31, 33

Another parable he put forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: ... 33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

- Some have defined the word parable as “a story by which something real in life is used as a means of presenting a moral thought.”

### Who are the characters in the parables?

- The characters in parables do the things we would expect anyone to do in the normal course of events
- Truth is found in the most common and ordinary issues of life
- God doesn’t want anyone to remain ignorant but rather that everyone come to the knowledge of the truth

### John 8:32

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

### Parables are not allegories

- An allegory is defined as a figurative application taken from real historical facts or events
- Paul uses an allegory of Abraham’s two sons

### Galatians 4:22-24

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he [who was] of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman [was] by promise. 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

- To contrast that – parables speak of supposed events that never really occurred
- They are simply stories Jesus uses about things that people can understand to teach them something that they don’t understand

### Why did Jesus use parables?

### Matthew 13:10-13

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

#### **Reason #1: Jesus taught in parables to conceal the truth from those whose hearts were already prejudiced and hardened**

- Essentially, Jesus was attempting to separate truth-seekers from curiosity-seekers
- You can't communicate truth to someone who is unwilling to listen

### Mark 4:34

But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

- Jesus was separating those who were casual observers from those who were committed followers
- Even though this generation is more needful of truth than any other generation - it is also more resistant to truth than any other generation

### Matthew 13:12

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

- The more receptive you are to truth – the more truth God will reveal to you
- The more resistant you are to truth – the more truth God will withhold from you

### Matthew 13:13

Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

#### **Why did people miss the meaning of the parables of Jesus?**

### Matthew 13:15

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and [their] ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with [their] eyes, and hear with

[their] ears, and should understand with [their] heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

- Jesus can't work where people are not willing to allow Him to work

Matthew 13:57-58

And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. 58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

**Reason #2: Jesus taught parables to reveal heavenly truths to those whose hearts were open and receptive**

- It is not just what you know that makes a difference – it is what you do based on what you know that will change your life
- Reason #3: Jesus taught in parables to appeal to their sense of justice before they realized the parable applied to them.

2Samuel 12:2-7

The rich [man] had exceeding many flocks and herds: 3 But the poor [man] had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. 4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. 5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, [As] the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this [thing] shall surely die: 6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. 7 And Nathan said to David, Thou [art] the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

- The parable appealed to David's sense of making things right so that when Nathan revealed that the parable was about him – he would naturally repent and make it right
- The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers in Matthew 21:33-46 is a classic example.
- But when Jesus finished telling the parable – look how the Pharisees responded:

Matthew 21:45

And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

**How do we interpret the parables?**

**Interpretation Rule #1: Don't read too much into the parable.**

- Parables are not there to confuse His teaching with endless theological speculation.

**Interpretation Rule #2: You cannot form a new doctrine out of a parable**

To make sure this doesn't happen – ask these questions:

- Question #1: To whom was Jesus speaking?
- Question #2: What did Jesus intend to accomplish by the parable?
- Question #3: What is the lesson to be learned?

**Parables contained the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 13:11), as well as “things which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 13:35).**

- However, these mysteries and secret things are now revealed in the wonderful gospel of Christ.

**Romans 16:26-27**

But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: 27 To God only wise, [be] glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.