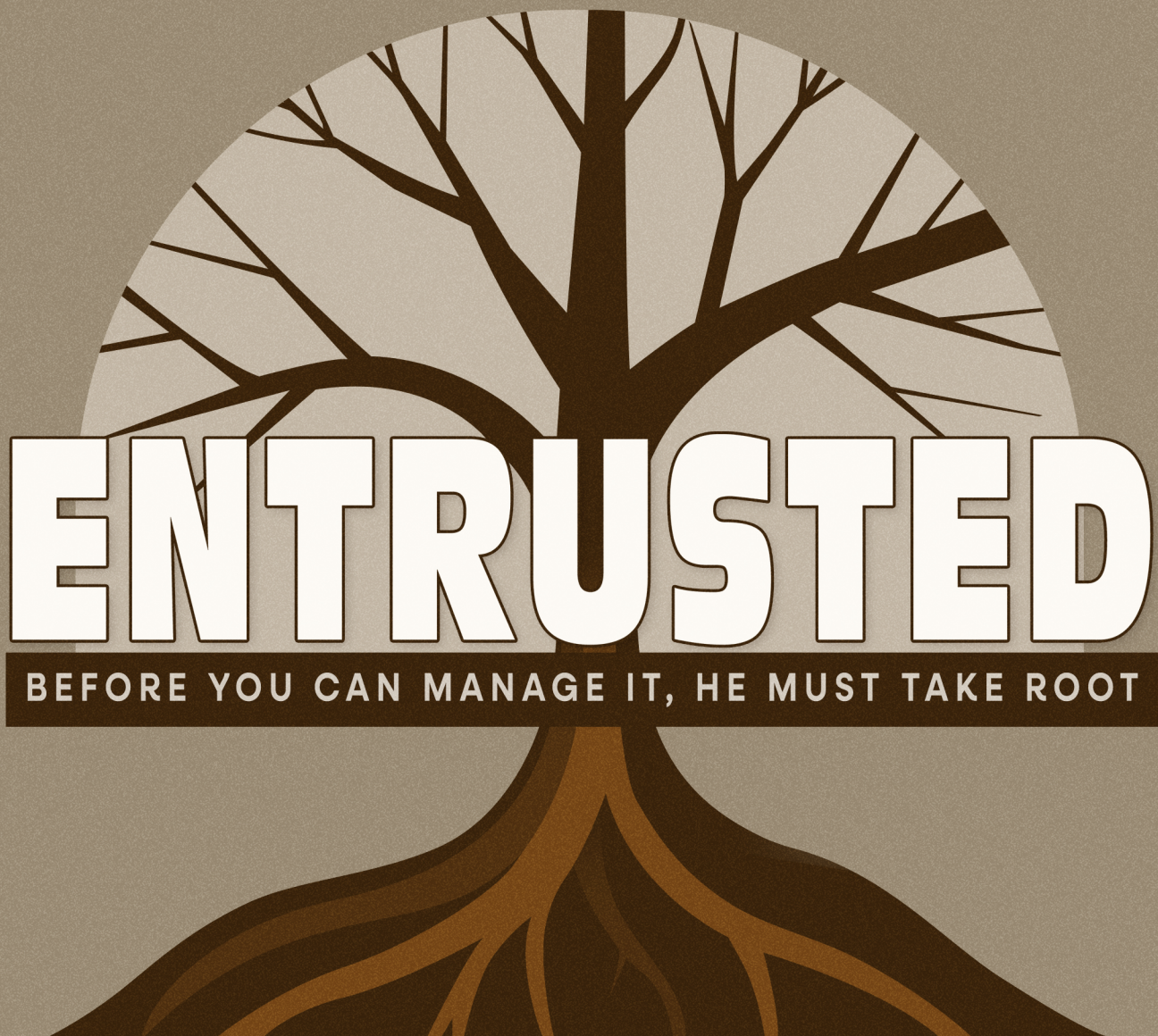




ENTRUSTED

BEFORE YOU CAN MANAGE IT, HE MUST TAKE ROOT

THE NATURE OF PARABLES

In all four gospel accounts, Jesus teaches in parables to differentiate between those who are perceptive to Jesus' identity and purpose and those who are blind to it. Jesus reveals kernels of truth about the Kingdom, but he does so in ways that require the listener to respond to his teaching. Jesus isn't focused on the casual observer of his ministry. The determining factor is what you do with the truth about who Jesus is. Will you be like the calloused religious leaders and be pushed further away, or will you be like the disciples who are seeking Jesus to ask him to reveal himself more?

The parables of Jesus are reflective by design. They force Jesus' hearers, then and now, to meditate deeply on the message Jesus is trying to communicate. Even though parables are meant to be contemplated, that doesn't mean the meaning is elusive. Jesus wants hearers to respond in a certain way, and the Holy Spirit helps illuminate that meaning for us today.

As you contemplate the meaning of a certain parable of Jesus, first pay attention to the audience Jesus is addressing. Who is the primary audience he directs his teaching to, and who is the broader secondary audience hearing his teachings? For instance, in week 3 of this series, why is it important to notice that Jesus is teaching his disciples, but that there were Pharisees who heard and sneered at Jesus' teaching?

Next, pay attention to when and where Jesus is giving this teaching. Does it happen in the beginning, middle, or end of his pre-crucifixion ministry? The location and timing of the teaching are worth contemplating.

After you have identified the audiences, location, and the timing of the parable, now it is time to put yourself in the shoes of the audience members. What images and characters are used in the parable that the audience would be familiar with? What part of the parable would they have found shocking or different from their expectations?

As you move to contemplating the meaning of the parable, look at any interpretations or conclusions given by Jesus directly. Jesus had an intended

purpose in that teaching, and we want to note anything he says that helps us understand its meaning.

Lastly, how does this parable still challenge us today to respond to Jesus' teachings? How does this parable still move us to action in following Jesus with our heart, priorities, wisdom, and resources? Consider specific ways to respond—spend time in prayer reflecting on how the parable applies to your life, discuss its meaning in your life group, or look for an opportunity to serve someone in need this week as a practical outward expression of Jesus' teaching. By taking intentional steps like these, we move from hearing Jesus' words to living them out each day.

As we contemplate Jesus' parables during the Entrusted series, join us in allowing the Holy Spirit to illuminate their meaning and convict us to become more fully devoted followers of Jesus.

Sincerely,

Christ's Church

PARABLE OF THE SOWER

MATTHEW 13:1-23; MARK 4:1-20; LUKE 8:4-15

CONTEMPLATE THE MEANING

SERMON NOTES

Audience

- Are there any specific people mentioned in this passage?
- What is the posture of the crowd?

Location and Timing

- How does this parable connect to the opposition Jesus faced from the Pharisees in chapter 12? What have they already started to plot?
- Matthew 13: 1 says, "that same day Jesus went out of the house". What happened earlier on that day?
- Considering chapter 12, who else is presumably in the audience besides Jesus' disciples?

See Through Their Eyes

- What images or characters are used in this parable that the audience would be familiar with?
- What part of the parable would the audience have found shocking or different from their expectations?

Finding Meaning

- How does Jesus explain the purpose behind his teaching in parables in Matthew 13:11-17?
- How does Jesus explain the meaning of this parable in Matthew 13:18-23?
- What is the response that Jesus desires from his true disciples?

CONTEMPLATE YOUR NEXT STEP

- *How do you see yourself in this parable? How is Jesus challenging you to be open to His teachings? What is the posture of your heart and life towards Jesus?*

PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

LUKE 12:13-21

CONTEMPLATE THE MEANING

SERMON NOTES

Audience

- Are there any specific people mentioned in this passage?
- What is the posture of the crowd gathered in Luke 12:1?

Location and Timing

- How does this parable connect to Jesus' teachings directed toward the Pharisees in Luke 11-12?
- How does this parable continue similar themes that Jesus taught on in Luke 12:1-12?

See Through Their Eyes

- What images or characters are used in this parable that the audience would be familiar with?
- How might the audience also share in the motivation of the question seeker?
- What part of the parable would the audience have found shocking or different from their expectations?

Finding Meaning

- How does Jesus lead into this parable in Luke 12:15? What is he teaching against?
- How does Jesus conclude this parable in Luke 12:21? How does Jesus continue his teaching in Luke 12:22-34?
- What is the response that Jesus desires from his true disciples?

CONTEMPLATE YOUR NEXT STEP

- *How do you see yourself in this parable? How is Jesus challenging you to be open to His teachings? What is the posture of your heart and life towards Jesus?*

PARABLE OF THE SHREWD MANAGER

LUKE 16:1-15

CONTEMPLATE THE MEANING

SERMON NOTES

Audience

- Are there any specific people mentioned in this passage?
- How is this parable connected to those gathered in Luke 15:1-2?

Location and Timing

- How does this parable connect to Jesus' teachings directed toward the Pharisees in Luke 14-15?
- How does this parable continue judgment against the Pharisees and religious leaders who were keeping people from God instead of accepting and believing in Jesus as the promised Messiah?

See Through Their Eyes

- What images or characters are used in this parable that the audience would be familiar with?
- What part of the parable would the audience have found shocking or different from their expectations?

Finding Meaning

- How does Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees in Luke 16:14-15 shed light on the purpose of this parable?
- What is the response that Jesus desires from his true disciples?
- How does the reality of eternity shape how we should live our everyday lives?

CONTEMPLATE YOUR NEXT STEP

- *How do you see yourself in this parable? How is Jesus challenging you to be open to His teachings? What is the posture of your heart and life towards Jesus?*

PARABLE OF THE BAGS OF GOLD

MATTHEW 25:14-29; LUKE 19:12-27

CONTEMPLATE THE MEANING

SERMON NOTES

Audience

- Are there any specific people mentioned in this passage?
- How is this parable connected to Jesus teaching his disciples in Matthew 24:1-3?

Location and Timing

- How does this parable connect to Jesus' teachings in Matthew 24:36?
- How does this parable continue the theme of being watchful and ready for Jesus' second coming?

See Through Their Eyes

- What images or characters are used in this parable that the audience would be familiar with?
- What part of the parable would the audience have found shocking or different from their expectations?

Finding Meaning

- How does Jesus' judgment against the Pharisees and religious leaders in Matthew 21-23 shed light on the purpose of this parable?
- What is the response that Jesus desires from his true disciples?
- How does knowing that Jesus is within days of his death add meaning to Jesus' desire for people to find life and love in him?

CONTEMPLATE YOUR NEXT STEP

- *How do you see yourself in this parable? How is Jesus challenging you to be open to His teachings? What is the posture of your heart and life towards Jesus?*