

STORIES JESUS TOLD

Hide and Seek

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The Kind of Stories Jesus Told

Parable is made up of two Greek words:

para = ALONGSIDE

ballo = TO THROW

Parables are literally "stories that are thrown alongside" to compare and teach.

A longer definition:

C.H. Dodd "The parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought."

Key: Something is OFF in every parable. Some detail DOES NOT FIT our reality.

It's as if Jesus is saying: "Look closely. Now, look again."

The Context is a Key

"Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'" Luke 15:1-2 (NRSV)

Pharisees and scribes were the insiders.

Tax collectors and sinners were RITUALLY UNCLEAN and NOT WELCOME in the religious community.

Sin = MISS THE MARK

Lost = UNABLE TO FIND ONE'S WAY

over →

What God is Like (part 1)

4 "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? 5 When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' 7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." Luke 15:4-7 (NRSV)

Jesus puts the INSIDERS in the position of an OUTSIDER.

Fact: NO COMPETENT SHEPHERD WOULD BEHAVE THIS WAY.

What God is Like (part 2)

8 "Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? 9 When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' 10 Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Luke 15:8-10 (NRSV)

Fact: NO SANE WOMAN WOULD BEHAVE THIS WAY.

God is like the good SHEPHERD/HOUSEWIFE.

What's the Point?

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD." Isaiah 55:8 (NRSV)

In Jesus' stories who does the losing?

"The church is the only organization that exists for the benefit of NON-MEMBERS." William Temple