



STORY TIME

Discovering the Parables of Jesus

Hebrew noun mashal מִשָּׁל

- Definition: a parable, proverb, riddle, anecdote, allegory
- It defines the unknown by using what is known.
- The mashal begins where the listener is, but then pushes beyond into a new realm of discovery.

Greek noun parabole παραβάλλω

Definition: a comparing, comparison of one thing with another, likeness, similitude, juxtaposition

Why is it important to study the Parables?

- One-third of the recorded sayings of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels are in parables.
- If we do not understand the parables, we miss what may be known about the historical Jesus. One must understand parables to know Jesus.
- The parables are designed to portray a reality. In a world of metaphorical redescription, the reality behind the parable is dramatized in word-pictures. (Brad H. Young)
- The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the Synoptic Gospels because they include many of the same stories, often in a similar sequence and in similar or sometimes identical wording. They stand in contrast to John, whose content is largely distinct. (Wikipedia)

39 Parables of Jesus

PARABLE/LESSON	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
Wheat and tares	13:24-30		
Barren fig tree			13:6-9
Children in market	11:16-19		7:31-35
Budding Fig Tree	24:32-36	13:28-32	21:29-33
Lamp under basket	5:14-16	4:21-23	8:16-18
Dinner guests ✓			14:15-24
Divided Kingdom	12:24-30	3:22-27	11:14-23
Faithful servants			12:35-40
Feast invitations ✓			14:12-14
Friend at midnight			11:5-13
Good Samaritan ✓			10:25-37
Great physician	9:10-13	2:15-17	5:29-32
Groom's attendants	9:14-15	2:18-20	5:33-35
Growing seed		4:26-29	
Hidden treasure	13:44		
Humbled guest ✓			14:7-11
King's war plans			14:31-32
Laborers in vineyard ✓	20:1-16		
Leaven	13:33		13:20-21
Lost coin			15:8-10
Lost sheep ✓			15:4-7

PARABLE/LESSON	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
Marriage feast	22:1-14		
Mustard seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	13:18-19
Net of fish	13:47-50		
New cloth	9:16	2:21	5:36
New wine	9:17	2:22	5:37-39
Pearl of great price	13:45-46		
Persistent widow			18:1-8
Sower ✓	13:3-23		
Rich man			12:13-21
Talents ✓	25:14-30		
Minas			19:11-27
Prodigal son ✓			15:11-32
Steward and rich man			16:1-8
Ten virgins ✓	25:1-12		
Great Supper			14:15-24
Two sons	21:28-31		
Merciless servant in debt with his master ✓	18:23-35		
Wicked Vinedressers	21:33-46	12:1-11	12:35-48

Luke 11-12

Jesus said, "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places." Luke 11:42-43

When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects, plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say. Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all... Luke 11:53-12:1a

[Later] Peter said, “Lord, are You addressing this **parable** to us, or to everyone else as well?” Luke 12:41

Someone in the [large] crowd said to Him [Jesus],
“Teacher [Rabbi], tell my brother to divide the
family inheritance with me.” Luke 12:13

* Possibly a younger brother was claiming that he was being defrauded of his share in an inheritance. – New Bible Commentary

* The request is not only for Jesus to do that which was outside of His calling, but also that which was selfish, in that it would not in any way contribute to the teaching needs of those in the crowd. A question asked of a teacher in that setting should have been one for which the answer would have a broad interest or application. The man asserted himself for his own interest with disregard both for Jesus and for the crowd.

But He said to him, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you [second person plural]?” Luke 12:13-14

- Jesus’ words indicate that the man’s request was in error. Other teachers might be tempted to pronounce on such cases, but Jesus knew that this was not within the realm of His calling or task, and thus He abruptly refused the request. He gives us an indication that the brother was also present.
- Jesus would come, the second time, to act as Judge (see James 5:9), but this was later. The man was not looking at Jesus as Messiah, but only as a teacher, and Jesus would not grant his brazen request. He may have gotten the floor, but he did not get his request. What he got was far more than he asked for, but certainly what he deserved.

The law of primogeniture (see Deuteronomy 21:17) says that the firstborn son gets a double portion. If you had two brothers, you divided the estate three ways and the oldest got two parts. We can guess which son is asking this question... the youngest son. If he is asking this, what does that tell us about his father? His dad has just died. This could show that the younger brother is consumed by greed.

Psalms 133:1 says, "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!" The greedy brother treasured riches more than his relationship with his brother.

Then He [Jesus] said to them, “Beware, and be on your [second person plural] guard against every form of greed [Greek noun πλεονεξία *pleonexia*]; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” Luke 12:15

*Jesus condemns greed and warns that even if the man gets a larger share of the inheritance, it will not bring life. People think that if they can only get enough material things these things will produce the abundant life. - Hampton Keathley IV

*Both brothers were probably guilty of greed—the older one for not giving his brother what was his due (the older brother would be the executor of the will), and the younger brother for demanding that he get what was his. - Bob Deffinbaugh

“Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed”
Luke 12:15

What are different forms of greed?

- Money
- Power
- Popularity
- Attention
- Pleasures
- Entertainment
- Escape

What is Jesus teaching us?

Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” Luke 12:15

*Man’s life does not consist of stuff. That is the answer to the materialism of our day.

And He [Jesus] told them [the large crowd] a **parable**, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive [abundant]. And he [the rich landowner] began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’” Luke 12:16-17

People can honor the Lord AND be good business managers

- May He grant you your heart's desire and fulfill all your counsel! Psalm 20:4
- Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established. Proverbs 16:3
- The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. Proverbs 16:9

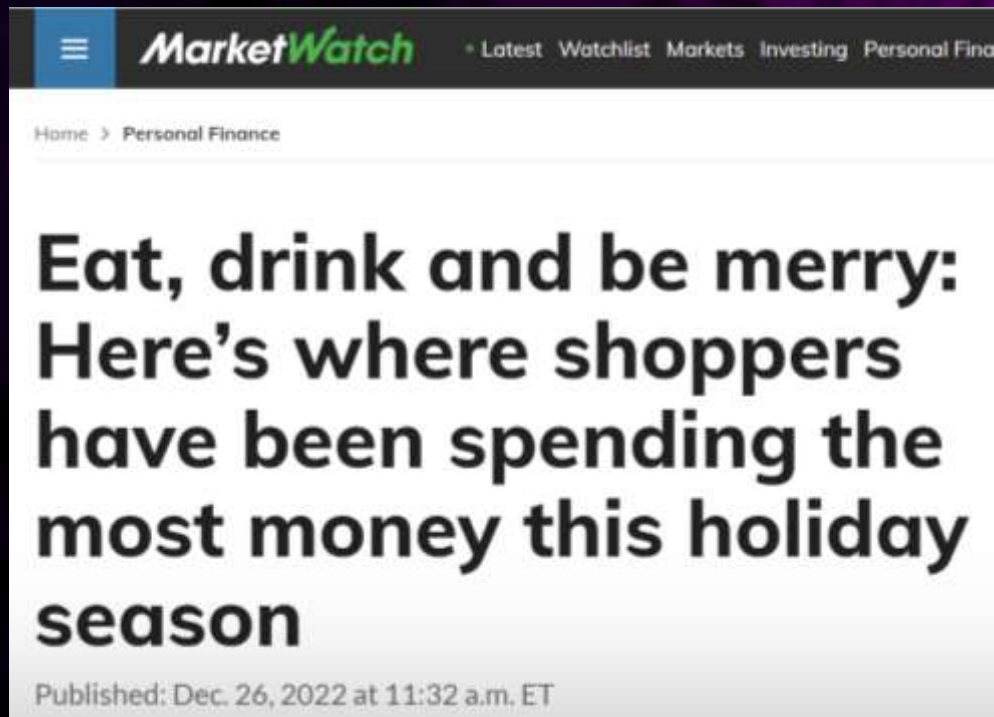
Why is Jesus telling this parable about the rich landowner who had no greed to a greedy younger brother?

Both thought that life consisted in stuff. Selfishness and self-satisfaction are two opposite pulls that are both out of balance to God.

The man in the parable was already rich. He already had enough for himself. But this year, he had a bumper crop. One gets the impression that the rich man didn't really work very hard for this. Why does Jesus want us to get that impression? If you get something that you didn't work for, what is it? It is a gift. Who was this gift from? It was a gift from God.

“Then he [the rich landowner] said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul [ψυχή *psuche*], “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” ’ ” Luke 12:18-19

*The landowner did not understand that his prosperity was a gift from God. He forgot that he was a steward and thought that he owned it all. He assumes that he will live for a long time, and will enjoy his stuff.



- Jesus now takes us into the mind of the man. We can overhear his conversation with himself. “I have no more storage space,” he said. “What am I to do?” Then, the inspiration came. “I will tear down my barns and build even bigger ones.” He could increase His storage space. He could enlarge his capacity to hoard his possessions.
- This solution now having been conceived, the rich fool now chats with himself in such a way as to reveal his intent, his goal. If his previous words have revealed his problem and the plan which will solve them, the next inner conversation reveals the man’s motives and goals. He talks to himself. Literally, he talks to his soul. Once he has built his bigger barns and put all of his crops and goods into them, he will be able to say to his soul, “Soul, you’ve got it made. You have many good things, enough to last for many years. It’s time to retire, to take life easy, to enjoy the good things for years to come. Its time to eat, to drink, and to be merry.”

“But God said to him [the rich landowner], ‘You fool [*ἄφρων aphron*]! This very night your soul is required of you; and **now who will own what you have prepared?**’ So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” Luke 12:20-21

Greek adjective *ἄφρων aphron*

Definition: senseless, foolish, stupid, without reflection or intelligence, acting rashly (Enhanced Strong's Lexicon)

God says, “your soul is required of you.” The word “required” has the idea of paying back a loan. This emphasizes the idea that the man was just a steward of his stuff and not the owner. Then God says, “now who will own what you have prepared?”

What is the connection between the greedy brother’s question and the parable about the landowner?

The greedy guy’s question was concerning his inheritance (because his father had died) and the parable ends with a question of inheritance (because the rich landowner died). “Who will own what you have prepared?” We know... The kids are going to fight over it.

- Hampton Keathley IV <https://bible.org/seriespage/6-parable-rich-fool>

Thus I hated all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun, for I must leave it to the man who will come after me. Ecclesiastes 2:18

God's words pierce through the shallow thinking of the man, exposing his sin and his destiny, which is vastly different than he supposed. God called the man a fool, a man whose solution and whose wealth seemed to suggest that he was wise. If the man looked forward to a long life, a life of ease, God said that his life would end, this very night, before any of the good things of his prosperity would be enjoyed. What he saved for himself, another would possess.

And He said to His disciples [not the man who asked the original question or the large crowd],

“For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.”

Luke 12:22-23

“Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life’s span? If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters?” Luke 12:24-26

“Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying.” Luke 12:27-29

- Such teaching may seem to encourage laziness and lack of concern about the practicalities of everyday living—‘God will provide; therefore I do not need to do anything!’ Jesus, however, is not talking to lazy people but to worried people, and to those who are tempted to join in the rat-race. They should trust in God and get their priorities right. - New Bible Commentary

The Bible Encourages Hard Work

- Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. Proverbs 10:4
- In all labor there is profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty. Proverbs 14:23
- Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. Colossians 3:17
- Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, Colossians 3:23

“For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things.” Luke 12:30

“But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.” Luke 12:31

[In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught...]

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” Matthew 6:33

“But **seek** [ζητέω *zeteo* – *Greek* verb, present active imperative] **first** His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” Matthew 6:33

- *Zeteo* “seek first” is seeking in order to find, to aim at or strive after. It also means to look for, go after, to search for.
- NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon
- To “seek” that Kingdom is to have a *strong* desire to enter it—a willingness to go to any length to do so. – Kendrick Diaz

Immediately we look at these words of Jesus, we find them the most revolutionary statement human ears ever listened to. “Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God.” We argue in exactly the opposite way, even the most spiritually-minded of us—‘But I *must* live; I *must* make so much money; I *must* be clothed; I *must* be fed.’ The great concern of our lives is not the kingdom of God, but how we are to fit ourselves to live. Jesus reverses the order: Get rightly related to God first, maintain that as the great care of your life, and never put the concern of your care on the other things. - Oswald Chambers

- “Seek ye first” is an invitation to a new reality, the reality of the Kingdom. It’s an exchange. Instead of living for and by what they can do themselves, Jesus invites them into a life of sonship where provision comes because of who they are, not because of what they do! Imagine hearing this for the first time! The God of the universe is offering to provide everything you need—not just spiritual, but your tangible, physical needs—if you’ll simply seek His Kingdom first. That is, provision flows out of His Kingdom because you are His child and He loves you, not because of how you perform, sweat, work or strive on your own.
- So practically, what does it mean to “seek first the Kingdom”? It means that you look to God and His Kingdom first for everything you need, including your purpose in life, your daily provision, your creative inspiration, your business ideas, your family relationships, everything. As you keep God and your relationship with Him in the center of your life, “all these things will be added unto you.”

- Matt Tommey

Seek first His kingdom

Jesus does not say seek *for* the kingdom which is what Jesus would have said if He was addressing this command to unbelievers. Seek for it to get into it was not what He was saying. He was speaking to those who are kingdom citizens to make the interests of God's kingdom their priority. Kingdom citizens should ponder "Is what I am going to say or do going to advance God's kingdom and glory?"

“Do not be afraid, little flock [defenseless group], for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.”

Luke 12:32-33

Yeshua identifies fear as the source of greed (v. 22). The one certain way to relieve anxiety over material matters is by seeking God's kingdom (v. 31) and its eternal riches. This is accomplished through doing *tzedakah* (literally, "doing righteousness," but understood as "giving to charity"), that is, by not being selfish but sharing the wealth (v. 33). Yeshua is not against having wealth but against making wealth the be-all and end-all of life (vv. 21, 31, 34).

Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Luke 12:34

*Jesus’ point was that if His followers had a treasure on earth they would think about it. But if they instead had a treasure in heaven, which is safe from theft and decay by moths, and were “rich toward God” (Luke 12:21), they would be concerned with matters pertaining to the kingdom and therefore would not be in a state of anxiety.

This parable tells us how to define life. Most people define life in terms of material possessions, physical fitness or the future. This parable speaks loudly to our generation. Have you been defining life in your career, your house, your stock portfolio, in terms of what you can do physically, or the assumption that you will live much longer? What is going to happen when you lose one or more of those things? What happens when you get laid off? What happens when the stock market crashes? What happens when you get some disease which takes away your physical ability. What happens when you find out you only have six months to live? If you define life in these things, you will be devastated.

Having possessions is not wrong, it is putting your security in them that is wrong. The rich man is not condemned for being rich. He is condemned for being self-centered, for not using his surplus to help others, for leaving God out of his life.

But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Timothy 6:6-10

First Melissa's passion is to **make disciples of Jesus**

Every January, we choose a scripture passage to guide us through the year, hoping that God will use that passage to teach us and guide us and use us to help others meet Jesus as Savior.

Theme Verse for 2023

You shall not make [עָשָׂה 'asah] other gods besides Me; gods of silver or gods of gold, you shall not make [עָשָׂה 'asah] for yourselves.

Exodus 20:23

What does “make” mean?

1. To “believe”
2. To “produce”

How can you “make for yourself a god”?

- When I choose to emphasize and prioritize things that have no spiritual value, I “make them” into a god
- When I choose to emphasize and prioritize things that only entertain me, I “make them” into a god
- When I choose to emphasize and prioritize things that only boast about myself, I “make them” into a god
- When I choose to emphasize and prioritize things that only insult and denigrate others, I “make them” into a god

Addictions, cravings, lusts, etc., arise from a refusal to be satisfied, by hungering for more than the blessing of the present moment. "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13). The living waters are present for us, but we will only find them if we open our hearts to the wonder of God in this moment. We can "break the spell" of continual dissatisfaction, of the power of greed, ambition, and so on, when we discover that our constant hunger is really a cry for God and His blessing. This is the blessed "hunger and thirst" given by the Spirit (Matthew 5:6). Our sense of inner emptiness is an invitation to come to the waters and drink life.

It is written: "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack" (Psalm 34:8-9). We can only "taste and see" when we are earnest however, when we seek God with passion.

- Hebrew for Christians

What is my heart's desire?

More stuff?

OR

More Jesus?