

Study Guide



The Parable of the Two Sons, Leslie Benson/ © Concordia Publishing House



LifeLight

LifeLight Expands

Available NOW!

The Bible: An Overview
Genesis, Pt. 1
Genesis, Pt. 2
Exodus, Pt. 1
Exodus, Pt. 2
Wilderness Wanderings
Joshua
Judges
Ruth/Esther
1 & 2 Samuel
Life of David
1 & 2 Kings

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Selected Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes/
Song of Solomon
Isaiah, Pt. 1
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Daniel
Minor Prophets
Haggai/Zechariah/
Malachi

Matthew, Pt. 1
Matthew, Pt. 2
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Colossians
Ephesians/
1 & 2 Thessalonians
Timothy/Titus/Philemon
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James/Jude
1 & 2 Peter
1, 2, 3 John
Revelation

LifeLight Foundations

Baptism
Bible Feasts
Creation, New Creation
The Christian's Mission

Heaven & Hell
Law & Gospel
Ministry

Miracles
Parables
Prayer

Prophecy
Triune God
Worship

LifeLight Release Schedule

2014 RELEASES

LifeLight—Nahum/Habakkuk/Zephaniah	January
LifeLight—Hosea/Joel/Amos	April
LifeLight—1 & 2 Chronicles	July
LifeLight Foundations—End Times	October

2015 RELEASES

LifeLight—Jeremiah/Lamentations	January
LifeLight—Ezekiel	April
LifeLight—Obadiah/Jonah/Micah	July

Why Parables?

Matthew 13:34–35

*Distribute before session 1 for use in session 1.
Use enrichment magazine pp. 5–6, 16–18.*

Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study at home and at the week's assembly.

Hymn

Speak, O Lord, Your servant listens,
Let Your Word to me come near;
Newborn life and spirit give me,
Let each promise still my fear.
Death's dread pow'r, its inward strife,
Wars against Your Word of life;
Fill me, Lord, with love's strong fervor
That I cling to You forever!

Oh, what blessing to be near You
And to listen to Your voice;
Let me ever love and hear You,
Let Your Word be now my choice!
Many hardened sinners, Lord,
Flee in terror at Your Word;
But to all who feel sin's burden
You give words of peace and pardon.

Lord, Your words are waters living
When my thirsting spirit pleads.
Lord, Your words are bread life-giving;
On Your words my spirit feeds.
Lord, Your words will be my light
Through death's cold and dreary night;
Yes, they are my sword prevailing
And my cup of joy unfailing!

As I pray, dear Jesus, hear me;
Let Your words in me take root.
May Your Spirit e'er be near me
That I bear abundant fruit.
May I daily sing Your praise,
From my heart glad anthems raise,
Till my highest praise is given
In the endless joy of heaven.
(LSB 589)

Prayer

Merciful heavenly Father, whose Son entered this world as an infant and slept in a manger, open my eyes to the mighty work You do through means such as Your Word and Sacraments, and help me to trust

that You are at work for my salvation even when I cannot see it, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Digging Deep

My Personal Study for Week 1

Day 1 • Read Matthew 13:10–17

THE PURPOSE OF PARABLES

1. This passage is among the more difficult in the Scriptures. Why, according to Jesus, does He speak in parables?

2. Read Isaiah 6. This is the passage that Jesus quotes when He explains why He preaches in parables. What is the setting? Why does Isaiah say, "Woe is me"?

3. Read Isaiah 5:1–7. Why would God tell Isaiah, "Make the heart of this people dull" (6:10)? What have they done to deserve such treatment? Have they had any chances to repent?

4. **Challenge question.** Why would God be so intent on pouring out His wrath against the Israelites in Isaiah's day?

8. Parables are meant not only to obscure but also to reveal the truth of God's salvation. What indications of this do you see in yesterday's reading, Matthew 13:10–17?

5. How does the passage from Isaiah help to explain the troubling words of Jesus in Matthew 13:10–17? Why does Jesus obscure the message of salvation by telling parables?

9. Read Colossians 1:24–29. What is the mystery that has been revealed in these last times?

..... **Day 2 • Read Matthew 13:34–35**

THE PURPOSE OF PARABLES

6. According to these two verses, why does Jesus speak in parables?

7. Read Psalm 78:1–4, which is quoted in these two verses of Matthew. What does the psalmist reveal, to whom, and why?

..... **Day 3 • Read Matthew 13:31–33**

THE PARABLES OF THE MUSTARD SEED AND THE LEAVEN

10. How does leaven work in a batch of dough? Can you see it at work? What does that say about the kingdom of heaven?

11. Read Matthew 18:20. What encouragement does this passage and the parable of the leaven give to Christian congregations (especially small ones)?

Something Old, Something New

Matthew 9:15–17

*Distribute before session 2 for use in session 2.
Use enrichment magazine pp. 00.*

Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study at home and at the week's assembly.

Hymn

Almighty God, Your Word is cast
Like seed into the ground;
Now let the dew of heav'n descend
And righteous fruits abound.

Let not the sly satanic foe
This holy seed remove,
But give it root in ev'ry heart
To bring forth fruits of love.

Let not the world's deceitful cares
The rising plant destroy,
But let it yield a hundredfold
The fruits of peace and joy.

So when the precious seed is sown,
Life-giving grace bestow
That all whose souls the truth receive
Its saving pow'r may know.
(LSB 577)

Prayer

Good and gracious Father, whose Son shows us the true meaning of the Old Testament in the forgiveness He won for us on the cross, use the parables I study in the coming weeks to plant the seed of Your Word in my heart, that I may attain life everlasting, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Digging Deep

My Personal Study for Week 2

Day 1 • Read Matthew 13:3–9, 18–23

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

1. Many farmers till the ground or use no-till planters that bury the seed beneath the surface of the ground. They also choose ground suitable for the crops they are planting. With this in mind, what might be surprising about the farmer's actions in the parable? Do you believe this is how most farmers in Jesus' day sowed their seed?

2. What does the seed in the parable represent? Who, then, does the sower stand for? What point is Jesus making?

3. Read Isaiah 55:1–11. Why does God send out His Word, and what is its purpose?

4. Why would God scatter the seed of His Word like a reckless farmer?

8. Levi is better known as Matthew. What was his occupation? If you have time, look up his occupation in a Bible dictionary and describe how Jews viewed that occupation, and why.

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Day 2 • Read Mark 1:40–2:17

HEALING AND FASTING

5. Mark 1:40–45 is about a man who has an infectious skin disease. If you were seriously ill and met Jesus, what would you ask for? What is surprising about the man's request? Read Leviticus 13:45–46 and 7:19–21. Why would the man specifically ask to be cleansed rather than healed?

9. What complaint did the scribes voice against Jesus after He ate at Levi's house? What does their complaint tell us about their understanding of salvation?

6. Read Leviticus 14:1–9. What was the priests' role in the healing of leprosy? What did Jesus do for the man? How does He compare to the priests?

7. Why do the scribes complain in Mark 2:6–7? How does Jesus respond? What is the point?

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Day 3 • Read Matthew 9:14–15

THE WEDDING GUESTS

10. What question introduces the first parable?

11. If you have time, look up fasting in a Bible dictionary and describe how people in Jesus' day understood it. You might also look at Matthew 6:16–18.