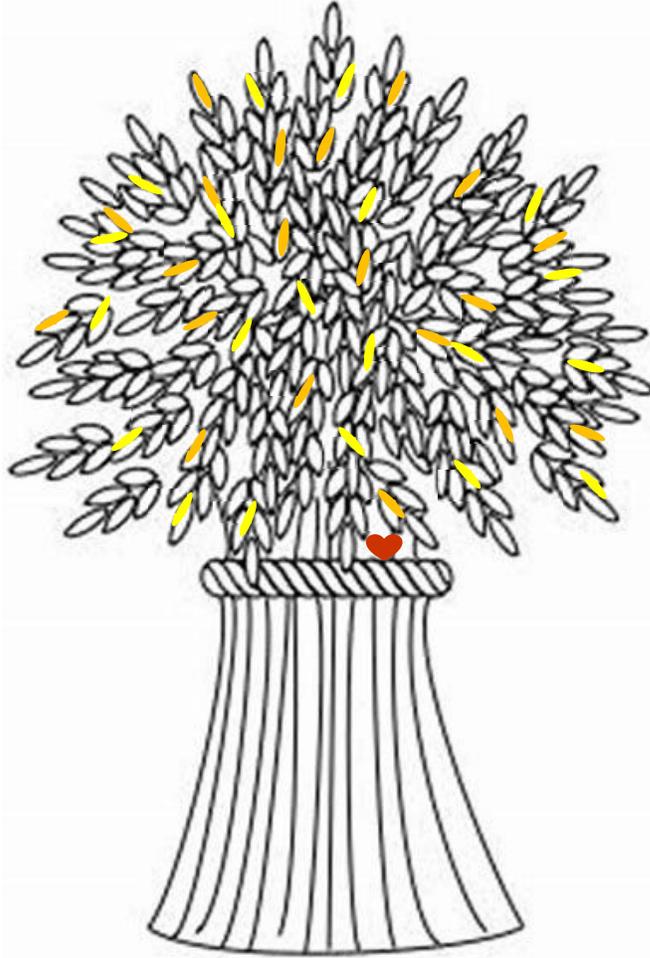


Parables of Jesus



Spring 2021 Sermon & Study Series
Belle View Church

www.BelleView.church



February 2021

We are pleased to provide this study guide for our Spring series on the *Parables of Jesus*. As we approach Passover and Resurrection Sunday, we were led to launch a series that will focus the *first-hand teachings* of Jesus Himself.

We selected 10 parables that I hope will be inspiring and insightful and will challenge you to be everything God wants you to be!

This guide contains questions, comments plus the entire Bible text (NIV). We hope it delivers all that you need to get the most out of this series. In addition, when a parable is listed in more than one location, we've included that text in the appendix.

Finally, you will notice that the appendix also contains a list of Jesus' parables, so if we do not cover one of your favorites, you'll know where to find it.

We hope to present a sermon on selected parables every Sunday morning, February 7 through April 11. We also try to live stream a Bible study every Friday around noon. In addition, we record all our services and make them available through various online sources. You may go to our website for more information.

I have been blessed more than I expected from studying these parables. I thought I knew the stories, but I've learned new things from each. I pray that you will make an effort to devotionally read them as well. I know that you will be blessed as much as I.

We are glad you are with us for this study, and we pray God speaks to you personally and that you have the courage to do what He says.

In Christ, Pastor Dave

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave", written in a cursive style.

You can reach Pastor Dave Howard via email at pastor@bellevuebc.org

#1 The Sower
Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8

Mark 4:2-20

2 He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: 3 “Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he scattered seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

9 Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

10 When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables.

11 He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables 12 so that, “they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!”

13 Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? 14 The farmer sows the word. 15 Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. 16 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. 20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

Why Parables?

Read Mark 3:20 Matthew 12:36 Luke 8:19; these report when Jesus started speaking in parables. As such, it is possible that the parable of *The Sower* could be Jesus’ first parables. Do you think that fact is meaningful? How?

Why do you think Jesus taught with parables? Site Scripture where you can.

Circle and number the 4 soils, and underline and number the corresponding results.

Of all the reasons given for the seed's failure, do you see patterns or conflicts? Explain:

What is the ratio of success to failure? _____

Why? _____

What do you think the saying in v.9 means?

Discuss the meaning of vv. 11 & 12 _____

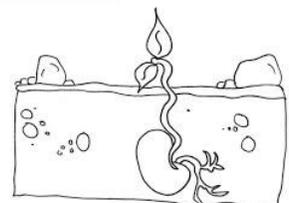
What could be the secret in v.11?

v.12 is a quote from Isaiah 6, who said it and what was the context?

After studying Jesus' *Parable of the Sower* what overarching messages do you believe He intends to communicate?

What questions do you think still needs to be asked?

Other observations of notes from the sermon or Bible study.



#2 The Lost Sheep
Matthew 18; Luke 15

Luke 15:3-7

3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 “Suppose one of you has a 100 sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Matthew 18:10-14

10 “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. (11)

12 “What do you think? If a man owns 100 sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? 13 And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. 14 In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

What would you say is Jesus’ main message in this parable? _____

Does Luke 15:1-2 make any difference? _____

Who does the Shepherd in the parable symbolize? (John 10:11) _____

Who do the sheep represent? _____

There are questions about vv.10&11. Would you include them in this parable? Why or why not?

What does v.7 mean? _____

Sermon or Bible study notes: _____



#3 The Talents Matthew 25; Luke 19

Matthew 25:14-30

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

*“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’
“The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’*

*“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’
“Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’*

“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered. Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

“So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

This records some of Jesus’ final words before His crucifixion. This parable lines up with other instruction that proclaim the certainty of Christ’s return and the justice He will bring with Him.

There are different interpretations of this parable. To begin, let’s consider who the characters in the story symbolize. Start by marking (circle, underline, other shapes or number) the various aspects of the parable that symbolize something else.

First, who do you believe the Master symbolizes? _____

What other symbols have you marked? _____

v.14 opens with “*Again, it will be like...*”
What is Jesus talking about?

Is anything meant by one servant getting more than another?

There are two primary views of who the servants symbolize. What do you think?

Does Jesus make a big deal over the who made greater profit? Why or why not?

In other translations, the ‘bags of gold’ in our story are also called “talents”. Some think the Holy Spirit inserted a pun in the story. Do you see it and what do you think?

What does the profit that the servants made from their master’s investment symbolize?

This parable is about stewardship & judgment. What other messages do you find in the text?

What was the judgment and penalty for the last servant?

What does it mean?

Boice says this parable is about a *judgment of works*. What do you think of his assessment?

The parable concludes with 2 servants being praised and one being punished. What is Jesus saying is the reason for their individual plights?

What other questions or observations should we have made?

Sermon or Bible study notes: _____



#4 The Weeds and Wheat Matthew 13

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-42

24 Jesus told them another parable: *“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.*

27 *“The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’*

28 *“An enemy did this,’ he replied.
“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’*

29 *“No,’ he said, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”*

...

36 *Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”*

37 *He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.*

40 *“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42 They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.*

Jesus Himself gives us the interpretations of the symbols in His parable. *“The Son of Man, sowed the good seed and the weeds were the people of the evil one...”*

What was known to the hearer but not to every reader is the fact that the “weeds” that were sowed among the wheat were actually a poisonous plant common to the area at the time. (Not sure it bears on the meaning of the story but it does impart greater gravity)

What truths would you say this parable conveys about the Kingdom of Heaven? _____

When were the weeds discovered?

Why do you think so many parables are listed together in Matthew?

Why did the landowner choose a particular course to deal with the weeds?

Read v.43. what might this mean in light of Rev. 21:23?

When did He say the weeds would be judged?

What are the implications that arise from the weeds being allowed to grow among the wheat until the final judgment?

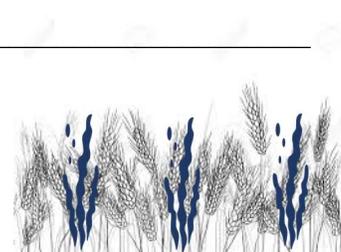
What do angels do in this parable? How does it relate to Revelation 14?

Jesus uses an idiom in v.43 He used elsewhere in Scripture “Whoever has ears, let them hear...” What does this mean and where else have you seen it?

Other observations or inspirations:

Is there any question about who will be victorious at the final harvest?

Sermon or Bible study notes: _____



**#5 The Good Samaritan
Luke 10**

Luke 10:25-37

25 *On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”*

26 *“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”*

27 *He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

28 *“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”*

29 *But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”*

30 *In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. **31** A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. **32** So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. **33** But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. **34** He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. **35** The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’ **36** “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”*

37 *The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”*

One of the most beloved and famous parables in the Bible, only recorded in Luke, it is also where the Great Commandment is recorded. As we study and reflect on what Jesus taught, I’d invite you to scan the surrounding chapters in Luke and get a feel for what is going on and the greater context of this parable.

We know from Luke 8:51 that Jesus has begun His final journey to the Cross, just as predicted in Isaiah 50. His teaching becomes more confrontive, and this parable is part of that escalation.

What beliefs did the lawyer hold regarding salvation (v.25)? _____

Would you say this was a courteous exchange? _____

Jesus said (28) “*you do this and you will live*”
how does this square with the Gospel?

Who did the priest and Levite represent?

...and the Samaritan? _____

So, was Jesus telling the lawyer that he could
be saved by observing the law?

Read Leviticus 19:34, Deuteronomy 10:19
and 26:12-14. Did the priest and Levite act in
accordance with the Law of Moses? _____

What does v.29 mean?

Do you think the lawyer knew this? _____

Did the lawyer feel any guilt? In what way?

What might the lawyer be feeling just now?

What were the other observers thinking?

Some say this is a parable of charity and social justice, others say it is about the failure of the law and works to save, plus the hypocrisy of all who claim works-salvation. I think it contains a bit of both, but if you were to choose a primary focus from these, which would you select?

Do you think the lawyer (and those who believes as he does) think that God ‘owes them?’

Other inspirations or observations from this Scripture.

Sermon and Bible study notes:



**#6 The Vineyard Workers
Matthew 20**

Matthew 20:1-16

1 “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. 2 He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

3 “About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. 4 He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ 5 So they went.

“He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. 6 About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’

7 “‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.

“He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’

8 “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’

9 “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. 10 So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. 11 When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 12 ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’

13 “But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? 14 Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. 15 Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

16 “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

To begin interpreting this parable, let’s start by identifying symbols in the story. Who would you say the landowner represents? Does the vineyard mean something? Who are the workers, and is there a symbolic difference between those hired first, those hired later?

Landowner _____ Vineyard _____

Workers _____

In God's Kingdom, give examples of workers that come at different times?

Since the workers grumbled, does that change your interpretation of who they symbolize? Why or why not? _____

What reason might the workers trust the landowner as indicated in verse 4?

Is there ever a time when it is 'right' to pay someone more than another?

How do you interpret the landowner going out for workers so many times in a day?

In God's kingdom, why do we work?

In the real world, would workers who toil longer reasonably expect more pay? What is the message of this parable?

How much pay do we deserve for it?

What do "deserves got to do with it?"

The hardest question: what do you think is the overall message of this parable?

Boice sees 3 lessons in this parable: 1) God is no man's debtor, 2) God loves people more than things 3) Many who are first shall be last. What do you think about Boice's perspective?

Do you see a salvation message in this parable? Explain.

Sermon and Bible study notes: _____



#7 The Ten Virgins
Matthew 25

Matthew 25:1-13

1 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4 The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6 “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

7 “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

9 “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

10 “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

11 “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

12 “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

13 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Jesus begins this parable by saying “*at that time...*” what time is Jesus talking about?

The classic model for a traditional Jewish wedding included a phase when the bridegroom would leave the bride and go off to build a home for her (*prepare a place* as in John 14). Part of the fun is not knowing when he would finish and return in order to begin the wedding ceremony and feast that would last for days. Until the bridegroom came back, the bride and her attendants would need to stand ready to receive the groom and begin the celebration at a moment’s notice. This is a model Jesus used to teach the doctrine of imminence (or watchfulness) and it is repeated numerous times throughout the New Testament.

Mark up the text as is useful to you, to indicate characters or aspects of the story that symbolize something else. For example:

The Oil that the wise women possessed symbolizes the **Holy Spirit** (as does oil symbolize in almost every other place in the OT and NT).

List other items in the story and what they symbolize:

The Bridegroom is Jesus! (but you knew that)

Read Revelation 19:6-9, is that what this wedding banquet symbolizes?

Do we take from this parable that we should not help others in need? Why or why not?

If the *unwise* women were unsaved, did they know it? (see Matt 7:23 as you answer)

What does the doctrine of watchfulness (or imminence) mean to you?

Do any of these facts fit into your answer?

In real life what is the difference between the two groups of virgins?

“I don’t know you...” v12

The door was shut (Genesis 7:16)

MacArthur sees this parable about Salvation: Do you agree? Explain:

They had no oil.

Explain:

Jesus said this parable is an illustration of the Kingdom of Heaven. Considering His Words, what might we conclude about the Kingdom of Heaven?

(hints: watchfulness, oil, preparation, known to the Bridegroom...)

Other inspiration and observations from your study:

Sermon and Bible study notes: _____



#8 The Tennant Farmers
Matthew 21; Mark 12; Luke 20

Matthew 21:33-45

33 *“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. 34 When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.*

35 *“The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. 36 Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. 37 Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.*

38 *“But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ 39 So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.*

40 *“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”*

41 *“He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”*

42 *Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:*

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes”?

43 *“Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. 44 Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”*

45 *When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them.*

In every gospel account, this parable follows the Triumphal Entry. From internal evidence (v.42) Jesus self identifies as Son of the Landowner and calls the Pharisees the first tenants.

Since Jesus is the Son of the Landowner, the Landowner must be Yahweh!

Consider further how you interpret these elements:

- 1) The vineyard (that the Landowner walled and improved)
- 2) Crops that the Landowner was due for rent
- 3) Servants that the tenants abused
- 4) The second set of tenants who will replace the first and deliver fruit to the Landowner.

Write your interpretations in the body of the text or anywhere convenient on the worksheets.

As a parable of judgment, why are the tenants being judged?

What does the symbolism of cornerstone mean and how does that fit into this parable?

Daniel prophesied that Messiah would come at a specific time (9:25). Others said He would be rejected (Dan 9:26; Is 53:3; 50:6-7). How is this related to the Triumphal Entry?

Name some Old Testament figures who fit the symbolic description of the servants?

Of the projected judgment in v 41. Has that happened or is it still in the future?

Do you think it was part of God’s plan for Jesus to escalate the tension by these open criticisms of the Pharisee and priest?

What does the vineyard symbolize? In whose hands is the vineyard now?

Jesus quotes Psalms 118:22 in the parable. Read that Psalm and note verses 25&26. How might they be connected to this timeframe?

Read Isaiah 5:1-7. Can this prophecy be related to Jesus’ parable?

To whom is this parable a wonderful symbol of salvation and life?

Other inspiration and observations you’ve discovered.

Sermon and Bible study notes: _____



#9 The Great Wedding Banquet Matthew 22; Luke 14

Matthew 22:1-14

1 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2 “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

4 “Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’

5 “But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. 6 The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. 7 The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

8 “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. 9 So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ 10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

13 “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie his hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

14 “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Matthew puts this right after the Triumphal Entry (Luke just before) at a time when tension from the religious elite is approaching its zenith, Jesus delivers this parable. How do you respond to the suggestion that this parable is exceptionally confrontive to the Jewish religious institutions?

Matthew 21 – 25 contain important teaching. Do you have a favorite from this list?

Read vv.2-6 then read John 1:11-12. What do you think of the comparison?

In Luke's account (14) he reports the invitee's excuses. Who do the first invitees symbolize

Who do the other characters in the parable represent?

The parable does not say why the invitees mistreated the messengers. Is that relevant?

Someone from the group who finally came was not wearing proper clothing. Why was that an issue and what happened to him?

What is ending statement in this parable?

What does it mean?

If you were a Pharisee listening, what might you be thinking?

Both Luke and Matthew record this parable, yet each ends it differently. Reflect on who each author was and to whom they wrote. Consider why it is appropriate for each Gospel account to differ in this way and record your answer.

Additional questions or insights:

Sermon of Bible study notes: _____



#10 The Two Sons
Matthew 21

Matthew 21:28-32

28 *“What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’*

29 *“‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.*

30 *“Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.*

31 *“Which of the two did what his father wanted?”*

“The first,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

Only in Matthew; this parable is also recorded during the Triumphal Entry. As you read it however, do you see judgment, salvation or Christian living as its primary message?

(As you’ve probably already done...) identify the important symbols in the text.

Briefly describe what is happening:

Why did the first son change his mind?

Did the second son have a change of heart, or did he lie from the onset?

How do Jesus’ comments inform our interpretation?

What is the main message of this parable?

Sermon and Bible study notes: _____



Appendix – List of Jesus Parables

Sower - Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:5-15
 The Lamp - Matthew 5:14-16; Mark 4:21-25; Luke 8:16-18
 New Cloth, Old Garment New Wineskins - Matthew 9:16-17; Mark 2:21-22; Luke 5:36-39
 The Tenant Farmers - Matthew 21:33-45; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-18
 The Mustard Seed - Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-34; Luke 13:18-19
 The Budding Fig Tree - Matthew 24:32-35; Mark 13:28-33; Luke 21:29-31
 The Leaven - Matthew 13:33-34; Luke 13:20-21
 The Divided Kingdom - Matthew 12:24-30; Mark 3:23-27
 Wise and Foolish Builders – Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:47-49
 The Heart of Man - Matthew 15:10-20; Mark 7:14-23
 The Lost Sheep - Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:3-7
 Marriage Feast or Great Banquet - Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 14:16-24
 Ten Talents or Gold Coins - Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27
 The Good Samaritan - Luke 10:29-37
 The Rich Fool - Luke 12:13-21
 The Lost Coin - Luke 15:8-10
 The Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-32
 The Speck and The Log - Matthew 7:1-5
 The Barren Fig Tree - Luke 13:6-9
 The Ten Virgins - Matthew 25:1-13 7
 The Growing Seed - Mark 4:26-29
 Counting the Cost – Luke 14:28-33
 The Weeds Among the Wheat - Matthew 13:24-30, 36-42 - 2
 The Persistent Widow - Luke 18:1-8
 The Rich Man and Lazarus - Luke 16:19-31
 The Pharisee and The Tax Collector - Luke 18:9-14
 The Net - Matthew 13:47-50 - 3
 Laborers in the Vineyard - Matthew 20:1-16
 Hidden Treasure - Matthew 13:44
 Pearl of Great Price - Matthew 13:45-46
 The Homeowner – Matthew 13:52
 The Faithful vs. The Wicked Servant - Matthew 24:45-51
 The Faithful vs. The Wicked Servant (Returning Owner) - Mark 13:34-37
 The Watchful Servants – Luke 12:35-40
 The Wise and Foolish Servants – Luke 12:42-48
 The Two Sons - Matthew 21:28-32
 The Unforgiving Servant - Matthew 18:23-35
 The Shrewd Manager – Luke 16:1-9
 The Master and the Servant – Luke 17:7-10
 The Friend at Midnight - Luke 11:5-13
 The Invited Guests - Luke 14:7-14
 The Parable of the Moneylender – Luke 7:41-43
 The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats – Matthew 25:31-46 - 4

Appendix – Parables with Additional Locations

#1 Sower - Matthew 13:1-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear.” The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance.

Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. This is why I speak to them in parables:

“Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’

But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

#1 Sower Luke 8:5-15

“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.”

When he said this, he called out, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

His disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, “‘though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.’

“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and

be saved. Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

#3 The Talents – Luke 19:12-27

He said: “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’

“But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’

“He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

“The first one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned ten more.’

“‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’

“The second came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned five more.’

“His master answered, ‘You take charge of five cities.’

“Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’

“His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’

“Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’

“‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’

“He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away. But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.’”

#8 The Tenant Farmers - Mark 12:1-12

Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

“He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

“But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

“What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. Haven’t you read this passage of Scripture:

“‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

#8 The Tenant Farmers – Luke 20:9-18

He went on to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.

“Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.’

“But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. ‘This is the heir,’ they said. ‘Let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

“What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.”

When the people heard this, they said, “God forbid!”

Jesus looked directly at them and asked, “Then what is the meaning of that which is written: “‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”

The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.

#9 Great Wedding Banquet Luke 14:16-24

Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

“But they all began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

“The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

“‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’

“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. 24 I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”