



ADELAIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE PARABLES QT SERIES

June 2024

MARK 4:33

33 With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. - NIV



THANK YOU!

Firstly, we'd like to thank the members of the Adelaide Church Of Christ who gave up their time to write the following Quiet Times. Thank you for your energy, support and insight into the scriptures!

INTRODUCTION

Mark 4:11

“The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables “

A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. In the month of June, we will be studying in our quiet times all the parables from Jesus. A parable is not an allegory, as if every detail in the story had deep spiritual significance. But the main lesson from each parable shows us the kingdom of God more clearly.

As we study the parables together, we hope your faith will be encouraged and your understanding of God's word deepened. We also hope that we can actively “build together” as we discuss our quiet times and forge greater unity and conviction here in Adelaide.

JUNE 1

PURPOSE OF THE PARABLES



INTRODUCTION

A parable is an everyday story with a spiritual meaning. Some didn't understand Jesus when he spoke this way and so his disciples questioned him why he taught using parables. Jesus' explanation is a good reflection for our hearts today.

READ

Matthew 13:10-17

Optional for cross-reference: Mark 4:10-12, Luke 8:9-10

QUESTIONS

- What did the disciples come and ask Jesus in relation to the parables?
- How do parables reveal the secrets of the kingdom of heaven?
- How can someone see but not see? Hear but not understand?
- The OT reference in V13 is to Deut 29:4, Jer 5:21, Eze 12:2. What did those people see but not understand?
- What does the passage identify as the problem with the people? (V14-15)
- How does someone have a calloused heart? What is the state of your heart?

So Jesus uses Parables to expose who really has a soft heart that sees, hears, turns and is healed by God. People saw the great Exodus from Egypt and still didn't understand the God they worshipped!

- How can we have soft hearts today that do see and hear the Word of God?
- If the prophets longed to see and hear what we do now, how then should we search the Word of God and specifically the parables? (V17)
- For those that do search the scriptures and understand the parables, what will they receive more of? (V12)

The parables reveal truth to those who are hungry, and conceal it from those who are too lazy to look for it, or too blinded by hatred and prejudice to discern it.

CONCLUSION

Parables require thought and time to understand. Take time to reflect on if your heart is calloused or soft. Over the next month, be ready to engage your mind to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of God.

PRACTICALS

Pray for a soft heart so you can see, hear and understand the Word of God.

JUNE 2
SUNDAY SERMON



READ MATTHEW 13:3-8, 18-23

**HEAR THE WORD PREACHED AT CHURCH OR WATCH
THE LIVESTREAM ON THE ADELAIDE CHURCH OF
CHRIST FACEBOOK PAGE.**

JUNE 3



FASTING - OLD & NEW

READ

Matthew 9:14-17

INTRODUCTION

The disciples of John the Baptist approach Jesus and ask him why his disciples don't fast. Fasting, abstaining from food for a set period, was required by the law of Moses once a year on the Day of Atonement. Over time, Israelites practiced fasting more frequently. Jesus' explanation contains symbolism and analogy.

QUESTIONS

God first commanded His people to fast once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lev 23:26-32). Read Lev 16:16. What then is the relationship between mourning and fasting in Mat 9:15?

Scripture describes God as a bridegroom and Israel as His bride (see Isa 62:4-5; Jer 2:2, 3:20; Ez 16:8; Hos 2:19). John The Baptist refers to Jesus as the bridegroom who has come (Jn 3:29-30). Jesus also refers to himself as that bridegroom (v15).

- What does this signify about Jesus?
- So while Jesus is with his disciples, what is appropriate, mourning or celebration?
- So do Jesus' disciples need to fast while he is with them? Why?
- What time is Jesus referring to when he says, 'Then they will fast...'

Jesus continues to explain the question of fasting using two analogies (vv. 16-17)

- What does Jesus say happens when you patch an old garment with unshrunk cloth? What is the result?
- Likewise, what does Jesus say happens when you '...put new wine into old wineskins'? What is the result?
- What do the patch of unshrunk cloth and the new wine represent?
- What do the old garment and the old wineskins represent?

CONCLUSION

The absence of fasting in Jesus' disciples was a witness to the presence of God in their midst. The old wineskins of Judaism cannot contain the new wine of Christianity. The new fasting we practise rests on the finished work of the Bridegroom. John Piper summarises: 'The wine is new; the blood is shed; the lamb is slain; the punishment of our sins is executed; death is defeated; the Bridegroom is risen; the Holy Spirit is sent.' We fast, not because we haven't tasted this 'new wine', but because we have and we long to have more of Christ's presence and power in our midst.

PRACTICALS

Pick a time to fast in order for God to reveal, and for us to humbly stay in step with, His will and plan.

JUNE 4

PARABLE OF THE LAMP



READ

Matthew 5:14-16, Mark 4:21-22, and Luke 8:16

INTRODUCTION

The parable of the lamp offers insights into our role as followers of Christ in this world. It speaks to the importance of shining our light brightly for all to see, reflecting the love and truth of Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS

Be a Witness for Jesus Christ:

Share your faith openly without fear or shame. Let your life profess the love of God and His work in your life with confidence. Reflecting Christ's light, be unashamed witnesses to His grace and salvation.

- How can we overcome fear or shame to share our faith openly?

Be a Role Model for Others to See:

Our behaviour as Christians reflects God's character. By following His Word and illuminating it in our interactions, we become role models for fellow believers and draw non-believers to salvation. Let us live in a way that sparks interest and points others to Christ.

- What does it mean to illuminate God's Word in our interactions with others?

Be Accountable for Your Sins:

We are accountable for how we use the light God has given us. As our faith grows, sins are exposed. Confess them to God, practice repentance, and live without fear of judgment, knowing God's grace and forgiveness.

- How do you approach accountability for your actions and thoughts?

Be a Light for God's Glory:

Use your spiritual gifts and talents for God's purposes and His Kingdom. Invest, multiply, and utilise them for the benefit of others, bringing glory to God as the giver of these gifts and talents.

- How can we identify and utilise our spiritual gifts and talents?

CONCLUSION

As we reflect on the lessons from the Parable of the Lamp on a Stand, may we be inspired to boldly share our faith, live as reflections of God's character, actively pursue understanding and obedience, remain accountable for our actions, and use our gifts for God's glory. Let us be reminded of our calling to be lights in this world. Our faith is not meant to be hidden but to shine brightly, leading others to Christ.

JUNE 5



PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

INTRODUCTION

In this parable, Jesus has a stark warning for those who are greedy. Greed is often an “overlooked” sin or a “pet” sin to many but Jesus' view of possessions is very radical to how our society functions.

READ

Luke 12:13-21

Ephesians 5:3-5

QUESTIONS

- What are some different forms that greed can take?
- How can we be on our guard against greed?
- What does Jesus mean “life doesn’t consist in an abundance of possessions? How do we try and find life by worldly possessions?
- What is this scripture teaching will be lasting in the end?
- How does greed show in your life?
- Do you invest more in this life or invest more in God? How and why?

- What’s the cost to us if we don’t deal with our greed? (See Eph. 5:3-5) How serious does God take greed?
- How can we practically keep perspective as to what’s important in this life?
- What does the parable say we should pursue in this life?
- Is this scripture teaching its sinful to invest in worldly riches? Why or why not?
- What does it look like to be rich towards God?

CONCLUSION

The warning from Jesus is to watch out and be on our guard against greed. It can easily slip into our lives and corrupt our investment into what really matters, the Kingdom of God.

PRACTICALS

identify one area you are greedy in and make a choice and action to be giving with that thing

JUNE 6

BEAR FRUIT



READ

Luke 13:1-9

Luke 3: 8-9

INTRODUCTION

Repentance is an important part of a disciples walk. In Luke 3:8 it says "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." In Luke 13, Jesus teaches a parable about a fig tree and its fruit after explaining the necessity of repentance. Both John the Baptist and Jesus connect repentance with fruit as we will see.

QUESTIONS

Who is the fig tree?

Who is the one who owns the fig tree representing? What does he expect from the tree?

Who is the one who takes care of the vineyard? What does he do on behalf of the tree?

What does this teach us about God's expectation of our repentance?

What does this teach us about Jesus' role in our repentance?

Elliott's commentary sums up the parable by saying.. "The barren fig-tree is the symbol of a fruitless profession of godliness; the delay represents the forbearance of God in allowing yet a time for repentance."

There can be different types of Fruit: Fruits of repentance and fruits of faith.

Fruits of repentance - 2 Corinthians 7:11 says "see what this godly sorrow has produced in you"

Fruits of faith - Heb 11 talks about things done by faith, Gal 5:22-23 talks about the fruits of the Spirit.

How am I stuck in fruitlessness?

How can I repent in the areas of my life that I am not bearing good fruit?

CONCLUSION

Knowing God's grace, providence and patience, we must be spurred on to repentance in the areas that we are lacking fruit.

PRACTICAL

Write down one area of your life you are finding it difficult to repent. Pray and act!

JUNE 7



PARABLE OF THE WEEDS

READ

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

INTRODUCTION

This parable follows on from the parable of the soils. Matthew has arranged these two parables side by side deliberately. Good soil produces good wheat; bad soil produces bad wheat that may in the end become tares (weeds). The field in the parable is the whole world (v38), and what is being said is that the kingdom can be present in the world while not yet wiping out all opposition. God will deal with the opposition at the harvest at the end of time.

Note: Tares were a weed that looked like wheat in its early stages. Once both had matured, it became easy to distinguish them; but by that stage their roots were so intertwined that the tares could not be weeded out without tearing the wheat up with them.

QUESTIONS

- What does the Parable of the Weeds and the Wheat have to do with the Parable of the Sower?
- V36-43, Who are the characters and what do their various actions tell us about how God operates in the world today?
- What does it tell us about how evil operates in the world today?

When Jesus speaks of the “close (or end) of the age,” he is referring to when he will return to earth (13:39).

- What does Jesus say will happen in this time to those who know him (the righteous) and to those who have refused his offer of a relationship with God (13:39-43)?
- What does it mean to be a “law breaker?”
- Note that Jesus directly connects the removal of those who are law breakers with the removal of the causes of sin (Matt 13:41). In light of this, what is God accomplishing in final judgment of the world?

Compare with 2 Peter 3:9-13.

- What does God ultimately desire? Why has Jesus not yet returned to judge the world?

CONCLUSION

Think about what all this means in practice for you. How should you live in this world? What can you do to ensure you remain good wheat? What will God do for you to remain good wheat?

JUNE 8

A MIRACULOUS SEED



READ

Mark 4:26-29

INTRODUCTION

How great is Jesus that he uses these amazing parables! A story that can be confusing at first, but look closer and see how wonderful the message is inside. This parable reminds me of the story of "Jack and the beanstalk". What makes his story special is not him, but the magic beans that take him to an amazing adventure.

QUESTIONS

- What do you think the seed is? Who is the man scattering the seed?
- How do seeds grow?
- What/ Who is the soil?
- What does it mean for you that the word matures/bears fruit in some one?
- How do you view the word of God? Do you believe it can change hearts?
- Can a seed plant itself? Can a man make a plant grow just by soil?

The man had to believe in the seed, otherwise why would he use it. If he could make things grow he wouldn't need the seed. The seed also needs soil to grow! The same is true for us, how can peoples' lives be changed unless we plant the word in people? How can we plant the word unless we have it with us in the first place.

- How often do you scatter seeds? What would your life look like if you truly believed that scripture can change lives?
- What does it look like now when you scatter seeds? What do you think God wants you to look like?
- Do you believe in the power of scripture? What else have you relied on to bear/cultivate fruit?
- What has stopped you from sharing the Scriptures with people? What does that look like in this parable?

CONCLUSION

God delights in the small things to shame the large. The question is, do we delight in his Word enough to scatter it? Do you believe that you don't have to be amazing or well spoken or completely knowledgeable to plant something that can change a life! Don't hate or look down on the simple act of sharing the word of God! He rejoices when we do the simple work! The seed will grow!

PRACTICAL

Write down one area of your life you are finding it difficult to repent. Pray and act!

JUNE 9
SUNDAY SERMON



READ LUKE 10:29-37

**HEAR THE WORD PREACHED AT CHURCH OR WATCH
THE LIVESTREAM ON THE ADELAIDE CHURCH OF
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JUNE 10



THE MUSTARD SEED

INTRODUCTION

In Luke 13:18, the beginning of the verse says “He said therefore...(ESV)” and the word therefore recommends the reader to consider the healing account (Luke 13:10-17) when reading this parable (Joel B. Green). From that perspective, Jesus is telling a parable about the kingdom of God in the synagogue. His audience (Jesus opponents and the people) are paying attention to Jesus whether they’ve been humbled or standing in awe (Luke 13:17). In this vulnerable moment Jesus unleashes a parable to teach with the intention to get the crowd to contemplate his words. What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? Jesus said.

READ

Matthew 23:31-32, Mark 4:30-32, Luke 13:18-19

QUESTIONS

In this text (Luke 13:10-21), there’s a battle between the synagogue ruler and Jesus for the hearts of the people. And this is happening in a ring (synagogue) that is highly respected by the people of this culture. The synagogue ruler believes the kingdom of God is governed by legalism (v:14). In comparison to Jesus who taught a thought provoking parable about the kingdom of God, with questions and answers designed to be compelling, significant and necessary.

- Who are the people listening to Jesus at this point, and why is he teaching them this parable.
- Today is your kingdom of God governed by rules, coercive power (13:14) or by Gods favour that draws life (13:19).

CONCLUSION

In this parable, Jesus draws the beautiful picture of the kingdom of God for his audience to consider. Outlining the eternal life and the beauty it provides using nature (seed, trees, garden, tree and birds). What are we drawn to today, a kingdom full of life or a kingdom governed by rules and coercion.

JUNE 11



THE KINGDOM IS LIKE LEAVEN

READ

Matthew 13:33

Luke 13:20-21

INTRODUCTION

Continuing from the mustard seed parable, Jesus compared His kingdom to yeast "proving" a dough.

QUESTIONS

- What does this image of yeast proving a dough have in common with the mustard seed growing? How're these two different?
- How would you describe the Roman Empire? What does it say about God's kingdom compared to how we imagine a human kingdom?
- Are you a living cell in His kingdom or a dead cell? How does a living cell contribute to the growth of His kingdom?
- What are the end results of a risen dough/ the kingdom?
- How do you want to help this kingdom grow today?

Extra question for deep thinkers:

- The bible often portrays yeast as something bad (sin). Does the yeast here carry that same connotation or is yeast by nature something neutral?

CONCLUSION

The end result of God's kingdom is beautiful and life sustaining. Not only would it sustain yours but anyone who receives it from you. So go share your faith with joy and know that even though you may not see immediate results, God's kingdom is still growing unstoppably.

JUNE 12

HIDDEN TREASURE



INTRODUCTION

Finding hidden treasure is often known to be one of the most highly rewarded ventures. There is often a catch to it whether it be figuring out how to open the lock, solving the clue or reading a map to get to this hidden treasure.

Thankfully for us, we don't have to jump over fires, travel through fields of forests or even pay money to find our hidden treasure. Jesus explain this to us in this parable, and Paul also explains an individual's heart on this journey (Colossians 3:1-4).

READ

Matthew 13:44-46 & Colossians 3:1-4

QUESTIONS

- Why is the kingdom of heaven likened to a treasure hidden in a field?
- Why does the man sell all of his belongings to purchase the field with the treasure in it?
- What are some things you can start doing today to seek God's Kingdom as if it were a hidden treasure or a fine pearl?
- Do you view God's Kingdom as a merchant looking for a fine pearl? Why or why not?
- What are some areas in your life that stop you from seeking God's Kingdom?
- When your walk with God becomes mundane or dull, what are some things you compromise in your life?

CONCLUSION & PRACTICALS

Because we are raised to life with Jesus, we are encouraged to set our minds on heavenly things and not on earthly things. God's love is so big and vast for us that He wanted us to appear with Christ when He returns. Paul reminds us that we don't just 'appear' with Christ when we find His kingdom, but we appear with His glory - His loveliness, His perfection, His worth and His magnificence!

As you reflect on how great and powerful our God's Kingdom is, journal and pray about ways that God can help give you the courage and strength to seek His kingdom as if seeking for hidden treasure. Is there something on your heart that is hindering you as you approach God? Pray about this and share with a friend today about this hindrance. God created brothers and sisters for this very reason, we are not meant to be alone!

JUNE 13



PARABLE OF THE NET

READ

Matthew 13:47-50

INTRODUCTION

This passage uses the analogy of a net to illustrate the nature of the Kingdom of God, this would have been very relevant to many people at the time, as fishing was a major production source of food in ancient Israel. It describes a fishing net that would catch all different kinds of fish, which describes the diversity of people God's word reaches and that became Christians. What seems like an ordinary analogy at first quickly speaks on the harsh reality of people's salvation and/or their lack of salvation. Just like a stinky rotten fish has no place with the fresh produce at a market, neither does an evil doer with God's people in his Kingdom.

QUESTIONS

- What two types of fish are spoken of here? What happens to each?
- How does a net represent the Kingdom of God?
- How can you make sure you're a 'good fish'?
- How does this passage impact your view of God's Kingdom?
- How often do you reflect on entering God's Kingdom? If you're confident about this, where do you gain your confidence?
- This passage offers a somber warning...are there changes you need to make in your life?
- How can you help others heed to this warning and take action in order to be right with God?

CONCLUSION & PRACTICALS

Passages like these can make us sit up and pay attention because they remind us that this life is temporary and many people caught living for this world may very well find themselves thrown in the fire one day. For those of us who know Jesus and his Word, we should never take that for granted knowing many others are so blind to the truth. Not only can we be confident, knowing one day angels will come and take us into eternity, but we have been given a charge and a license to go out and proclaim the good news! So, why is it that we often keep that good news in our back pocket and are reluctant to share the truth with those around us?

Today let's all pray that God's wonderful gift and eternal love can compel us to keep the Gospel on our lips! We shouldn't fear the judgment of this lost world, they should fear not knowing God and his Kingdom. Amen.

JUNE 14

THE LOST SHEEP



READ

Matthew 18:10-14

Luke 15:3-7

Take some time to look at both passages and identify the similarities and differences.

INTRODUCTION

Although they seem to be similar enough, both the parables were spoken by Jesus on different occasions. In the record in Matthew, Jesus tells the parable to his disciples in response to the question “Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (Matt. 18:1). In Luke, Jesus tells the parable to a crowd of tax collectors and sinners along with Pharisees and teachers of the law. He says it in response to the comment “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them” (Luke. 15:2). In both instances, he uses the parable to show what God considers most important.

QUESTIONS

- In these parables, who are the sheep? Who is the shepherd?
- List some common characteristics of sheep and a shepherd.
- What are some worldly things that you tend to place your worth in/ consider important?
- What does Matt. 18:13-14 and Luke 15:6-7 teach us about what God values?

CONCLUSION

Both the parables teach us about what God values most. Jesus was not concerned with who the ‘greatest’ in the kingdom was and he did not weigh the worth of a person depending on their sinfulness. Our value is not our successes, achievements or even how ‘spiritual’ we are. Neither is it in our weaknesses, disappointments, and failures. Simply out of his abounding love, God comes looking for us when we are lost or have wandered off from him. And it is his greatest joy when we are united with him again.

PRACTICAL

Ezekiel 34: 11-16 talks about the kind of shepherd God is. Reflect on the ways in which God has cared for you. Make a list.

Maybe you have a family member or friend who has not yet found God. Be encouraged that our God loves them deeply and is searching for them too. Pray for them today!

JUNE 15

FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT



READ

Luke 11:5-13

INTRODUCTION

This parable follows soon after Jesus teaches the disciples how to pray (Luke 11: 1-4). Firstly, it is important to understand the cultural context of this parable. In Middle Eastern culture hospitality was an expected custom and to not have bread to offer a guest, even a surprise guest could make one feel shameful and desperate. On the other hand, the neighbour probably lived in a one-bedroom, loft-like house, with livestock on the bottom level. For him to get up and walk down to the door would indeed disrupt his whole household.

DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS

So why does Jesus liken prayer to this parable? The Greek word for “boldness” or “persistence” is *anaideia* which is like a shameless audacity or persisting to the point of annoyance. Is this our posture when we come before God in prayer? The friend at midnight found himself in a difficult position, but instead of accepting defeat, he knew his neighbour would be able to help him. Furthermore, he was also secure in his relationship with his neighbour knowing that his neighbour would help him regardless of the time of day and his persistence.

Often we are held back in our prayer because we lack faith in God’s response. Jesus continues to say from v.9 onwards when we ask, we ask from our Father. How much more will our loving Father give us compared to a man who responded to his friend not for the sake of friendship but because of his persistence(v.8)? When we as imperfect beings strive to love and provide for our children how much more will our Creator – Holy, Loving and all-knowing Father want to give and provide for us (v.13)?

Hence, we must learn to pray without ceasing, with boldness and have confidence in our Father.

- How would you describe your prayer life with Jesus? Would you consider it bold and persistent?
- Do you trust to bring your troubles to Jesus and rely on him for help?
- When was the last time you prayed for something that required courage and faith?

PRACTICALS

Is there something in your life you have held back in bringing to God to prayer? If so, pray about that today! Ask God for faith and courage to pray this prayer!

JUNE 16



SUNDAY SERMON

READ MATTHEW 18:23-35

**HEAR THE WORD PREACHED AT CHURCH OR WATCH
THE LIVESTREAM ON THE ADELAIDE CHURCH OF
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JUNE 17

PARABLE OF THE INVITED GUESTS



READ

Luke 14:7-14

INTRODUCTION

The parable we will look at today is told by Jesus when he was invited for a meal at a Pharisee's house. Since the host of the gathering is a prominent Pharisee, other guests were likely to also be figures with relatively high status. It is important to note Jesus was attentively watched by them, perhaps to find faults in him (linked to the theme of today's QT). After performing a healing miracle, he then spoke of a parable that is directly comparable to the situation he and the guests were in.

QUESTIONS

V7 What does the place of honour signify?

V8 Why does Jesus speak against the action of taking an honoured seat? Which part of it is twisted?

V10 What does the lowest place refer to?

What does it mean to take the lowest place?

What does it tell you about this host?

V11 concludes the spiritual reality in the kingdom of God. Someone who chases after acknowledgement will ultimately not be acknowledged.

What does this truth tell you about God's kingdom and His character?

V12-14 How does this application relate to the parable?

What is the differences between the host in the parable (Our Father) and the host at the current event (the Pharisee)?

Is it wrong to want to be acknowledged?

What are the honourable places to you? V12

What are the lowest places for you? V13

Do you desire for an honoured place? If so, meditate on why.

Do you wish to take it or receive the honourable place from our Father?

How could you start to pursue the lowly place?

How can you develop a heart that desires a lowly place?

CONCLUSION

Jesus displayed the unconventional, upside-down truth of who is exalted and humbled in his Kingdom. Only Jesus has the authority to exalt people and the eyes to see the humble ones. As his sons and daughters, we ought to humble ourselves with the same attitude as Jesus in valuing others above ourselves. How beautiful is a banquet filled with humility?

JUNE 18



PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN

READ

Luke 15:8-10

INTRODUCTION

This parable follows on from the parable of The Lost Sheep; and Jesus is continuing his theme of Luke 15:1-2, i.e. God's heart for those who are lost as opposed to the reaction of the religious leaders of the time.

QUESTIONS

- In the culture of the time, why would the loss of a coin be particularly significant for a woman, especially considering the value and potential implications of losing one out of ten coins?
- What does the woman's immediate reaction (lighting a lamp, sweeping the house, seeking diligently) tell us about her determination to find the lost coin? How does this reflect God's relentless pursuit of those who are lost spiritually?
- Does the woman remonstrate about why the coin was lost, or whether or not it deserved to be lost?
- Having found the coin, what does the woman do? What strikes you about her involvement of the community in her rejoicing?
- Read Isaiah 62:5 and Zephaniah 3:17 and consider how God rejoices over his people.
- If we think back to the context of the scripture, are you quick to stand in judgement over people or do you have the heart of God 'who wants all men to come to a knowledge and understanding of Him'?

CONCLUSION

As you go about your day today ask God to help you to have his heart for the lost and take the opportunity to share your faith with someone as you seek to find the lost coins of this city of ours and bring them back to their Father.

JUNE 19



THE PRODIGAL SON

READ

Luke 15:11-32

INTRODUCTION

This parable, recited by Jesus highlights the contrast between the heart of God and the heart of man. It is important to remember that this parable has taken place in a middle eastern setting, where culturally, honor and shame brought upon a family if a son rebels. Jesus in this parable, and the entirety of this chapter, illustrates the joy the heavens find in the repentance of a lost sinner, and the lengths he will go to save one.

QUESTIONS

Verse 12: In this culture, asking for the share of your father's estate before his passing is extremely disrespectful. The estate is only passed on after the father passes away.

- What does it signify?
- How have we rejected the father(God) in our lives?

The father gives his son what he requested despite the shame. Verse 16: After squandering his wealth, he sees where he is and realizes that it wasn't the wealth that he desired, but rather the goodness that comes by being in the presence of his father.

- What does this tell you about the younger son? What did he need to experience to be reminded of the goodness of his father?

- V22 Why is the response of the Father so powerful? Would the father have been justified to reject his Son?

Verse 28-30: The older brother is furious at the welcoming his brother received. He is equally as lost as his younger brother was.

- Did the brother act righteously in his anger? What is the difference between the younger and the older brother?

- V31-32 What is the heart of the father? What does he care about the most?
- What are things you value more than your heavenly Father? How do you justify these things?
- Do you remember that you were once lost but are now found? What is your response to that?
- Can you see yourself in the way older brother responded? When does this tendency reveal itself.

CONCLUSION

The two brothers signify our innate sinful nature: A desire for something other than God, and an arrogance and condescension that comes with following his law 'perfectly'. It is only the love of Jesus that redeems us from how broken we are as a people. Let us set our minds on things that are higher.

JUNE 20

THE SHREWD MANAGER



READ

Luke 16:1-9

INTRODUCTION

This parable seems to show Jesus commending a “shrewd” Manager who is dishonest with his master’s money. On the surface, it is confusing to think that Jesus is saying we might need to be the same way...

If you want to understand this parable fully, you might want to do these three things:

1. Read through the text (Lk 16:1-9), don’t study it, just to familiarise yourself with it;
2. Go back and read Lk 12:32-34;
3. As you read through the text again, keep this question in mind: What is the lesson that Jesus might draw out of this Manager’s sinful behaviour?

QUESTIONS

- Why did the Manager lose his job?
- Who did the debtors have a relationship with? The Master or the Manager?
- What was the Manager’s strategy to get himself out of trouble?
- What would the Manager gain by doing what he did?

The ‘sons of this world’ (ESV) may be more shrewd in dealing with their own kind (than are ‘people of the light’), but how long does their wealth last? And, how certain is it? Now, if you ‘Sell your possessions and give to the poor...’ how long will your wealth last (according to Lk 12:33)?

And, if you spend your ‘worldly wealth’ to gain friends (the inference here is that they will also become people of the light...), how long will those friendships last? ...they may even go ahead and welcome us into our eternal dwelling!

- So where is our time and our money BETTER spent/invested? Why?
- Look at your calendar and look at your bank account; think also about your financial goals...
- Be honest with yourself... What do you work towards more?
- Financial security/reward in this life (which is temporary, uncertain), or
- Financial security/reward in the next life (which, Jesus teaches, is eternal, certain)?

CONCLUSION

Jesus does not teach us that we need to be like ‘the dishonest manager’ (v8) in how we use our worldly wealth. Instead, he teaches us an EVEN BETTER WAY to use our worldly wealth - one that reaches beyond this life into eternity; One where we accumulate ‘treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.’ (Lk 12:33).

JUNE 21



RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

INTRODUCTION

This parable shows us two men who have different lives and a different afterlife. It's easy to go through life and not consider how we should be living in light of the next life.

READ

Luke 16:19-31

QUESTIONS

- The Rich Man and Lazarus. How are their lives different?
- Why do you think Jesus chose such contrasting characters for this message?

Life After Death:

- What does this parable suggest about the afterlife?
- How does the fate of the rich man and Lazarus in the afterlife relate to their lives on earth?

Wealth and Responsibility:

- What message do you think Jesus is conveying about wealth and how we treat others?
- How can this parable influence the way we view our own resources and the needs of others around us?

The Role of Scripture:

- Abraham tells the rich man that his brothers have "Moses and the Prophets." What does this imply about the role of Scripture in guiding our lives?
- Why do you think the rich man believed that a miraculous sign (someone rising from the dead) would be more convincing than the Scriptures?
- How can I apply the lessons of this parable to my daily life today?
- Are there modern-day "Lazaruses" around me? How can I be more mindful and responsive to their needs?

CONCLUSION

- Reflect on the importance of compassion, awareness of others' needs, and the guidance of scripture in your life.
- Reflect on how you can make a positive impact in your community by being mindful of those less fortunate.
- Ask God for wisdom and compassion to live out the lessons from this parable.

JUNE 22

LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD



READ

Matthew 20:1-16

INTRODUCTION

This parable is in response to a question Peter asks Jesus in Matthew 19:27, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" In response, Jesus explains this truth about the kingdom of heaven.

QUESTIONS

The landowner reminds the workers they agreed to work for a denarius, and can he not deal with his money the way he sees fit by paying the rest of the workers the same? This decision to pay all the workers the same was an act of mercy, not injustice, and is a representation of God. God showers His mercy and grace abundantly on those of his choosing, as Romans 9:15-16 says, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy". Our human measure of fairness and work's-based judgment has no relation to God's grace and mercy. God deals with us according to who He is, not who we are.

- What kind of labour has God called you to do in your life?
- Can you see how he is rewarding you for this work?
- Is this reward enough for you? Even if it is just the promise of eternal life with Him after death?
- Can you feel like Peter in Matthew 19:27? How so?
- Do you find yourself serving God simply for a reward in return?
- How can you learn to see servitude in itself as the reward?

CONCLUSION

(v.15) When we compare the blessings in our life to those around us, we forget of all the blessings we have to begin with. The denarius the workers were given for a day's wage was already very generous and should have been seen as a blessing, however, because of envy and comparison the labourers were distracted and unable to enjoy this blessing. Are we the same with God's generous mercy in our lives? Are we too busy comparing ourselves to those around us and envious of how God blesses them to see the immense generosity already showered in our lives? We have all been fairly given the gift of eternal life, is that enough for you?

PRACTICALS

What are some ways you can compare yourself with others and envy them? Try writing down all the blessings in your life to combat this jealousy.

JUNE 23



SUNDAY SERMON

READ MATTHEW 22:1-14 & LUKE 14:16-24

**HEAR THE WORD PREACHED AT CHURCH OR WATCH
THE LIVESTREAM ON THE ADELAIDE CHURCH OF
CHRIST FACEBOOK PAGE.**

JUNE 24



THE PERSISTENT WIDOW

READ

Luke 18:1-8

INTRODUCTION

Today Jesus provides us with a parable that teaches us about an important aspect of prayer.

As you read and meditate on the passage consider the following:

QUESTIONS

- What is the purpose of this passage ? Is it to tell you to annoy God with your prayers or is it more than that? (hint v1)
- Compare the character of the unjust judge to that of Gods character. How often do you ascribe to God those characteristics of the unjust judge? Look up scriptures about the character of God and be reminded of his true character.
- What causes you to lose heart? Sometimes we lose heart because we think prayer should be easy or prayer remains unanswered. Jesus was incredibly prayerful and was an example of trusting God through all things
- This judge granted the woman's request reluctantly; is our God reluctant to grant our prayers? Knowing his true character how do you think he uses this 'delay' to help us grow in our relationship with him ?
- Jesus leaves his hearers with a question - what kind of faith is Jesus speaking of given what you have learned in this passage ? And will he find that faith in you !

CONCLUSION

Jesus calls us to pray always; Paul reminds us many times eg 1 Thess 5:17 pray without ceasing ... Today as you go through your day, put everything before God.. thank him for what has just happened, pray for what is about to come and end your day knowing that God has heard and is working

JUNE 25



EXALTING & HUMBLING

INTRODUCTION

How do you define what makes someone good? We often look to our good deeds or even as Christians, our religious deeds to answer that question. Jesus tells a parable of two men who go to pray, a spiritual deed, but only one of them did the right thing.

READ

Luke 18:9-14

QUESTIONS

- Who is the target audience of this parable?
- What is the problem with being confident of your own righteousness?
- What does the Pharisee focus on as he prays to God? What does the tax collector focus on as he prays to God?
- Who is the Pharisee comparing himself to? Who is the tax collector comparing himself to?
- Why was the tax collector not confident of his own righteousness?
- What do the two different attitudes towards God show about these men?
- What are ways you exalt yourself? Who can you compare yourself to and get self righteous?
- What does it mean that the tax collector went home justified?(v14)
- How can we humble ourselves and also find justification?

Read Romans 3:21-24

- What is the difference between our own righteousness and the righteousness of God?

Rather than showing up to heaven and showing God all of our righteous deeds, God sees our faith. True faith is seen in the Tax Collector who humbles himself before God, being honest about his sin and realising he cannot save himself. That true faith means we are no longer confident in our own righteousness, but in God's righteousness which he has now given to us.

CONCLUSION

Both these men went to pray, but only one went home justified. We can do all kinds of grand religious deeds, but if our heart is self-seeking or self-glorifying, God will humble us. It's important to search our hearts today and humble ourselves before our Mighty God.

PRACTICALS

Write a sin list and then pray and reflect about your standing with and without Jesus.

JUNE 26

BUILT TO LAST



READ

Matthew 21:28-32

INTRODUCTION

The father called both the sons individually and gave both of them the opportunity to help him. The first son said he wouldn't do it, but changed his mind and did it anyway. The second son said he will do it but didn't follow through.

QUESTIONS

- Who does Jesus compare the sons to?

The first son was compared to prostitutes and tax collectors and the second son was compared to religious people.

- Which son do you resonate most with?

Read: Mathew 7:21, 1 Samuel 16:7

Both the sons grew up in the same household and were raised by the same father. Just like how all of us have access to God's love and his word but we still become religious about things. It's so much easier for us to say yes to God in front of everyone and then not follow through. We go to church regularly and attend every event. We know the right things to say at the right time and that's how the second son was. But what is our heart like? Do we have a truly repentant heart that wants to work for God's kingdom?

Jesus told them that they didn't believe when John the Baptist had preached to them. We have an even better example to follow, how much more eager should we be to repent? We are so blessed to have Jesus' example and the bible to guide us through our Christian lives but we can overlook them and take them for granted.

Read: Jeremiah 17:10

CONCLUSION

God looks at our hearts. He doesn't care if we have the right answers to say at the right time. He knows that we're sinners and mess up a lot. He wants a relationship with us anyway. He is calling us and giving us opportunities to work in his vineyard, it's up to us to truly serve him or not.

JUNE 27



PARABLE OF THE TENANTS

READ

Matthew 21:33-46

Isaiah 5:1

INTRODUCTION

This parable was addressed (originally) to the people of Israel— it serves as sobering warning against prolonged pride and indifference towards God voice. To this day the people of Israel remain partially-hardened and accursed by God because of their stubbornness, but hope remains for them. (Romans 11:25)

QUESTIONS

- What do you notice about the character of the master?
- What do you notice about the character of the tenants?
- Reading v.42, what role does Jesus play in this parable?

The tenants here are entitled, narcissistic and self-righteous and did not care about the vineyard or the master. They abused their privileges.

- What are some privileges in your life that you can take for granted? List 5 things.
- In what way is God "sending His servants" i.e speaking to you in your life?

CONCLUSION

Ultimately this parable shows aims to end all boasting, self-righteousness and entitlement. Since it was through Israel's rejection that the Gospel reached us, the Gentiles.

PRACTICALS

Give thanks to God for all things you take for granted

Resolve to do one thing (this week or today) you have avoiding God's voice in.

JUNE 28



BE PREPARED & READY

INTRODUCTION

History isn't just a story signifying nothing. History is His-story. Jesus made this world. He came to dwell in it. He will return at the end of history to wind it all up. That is the Christian hope. In Matthew 24:3, Jesus's disciples ask what will be a sign that Jesus is coming back. The context of the following verses then proceeds to talk about the end times. Jesus makes it clear we need to be prepared and ready.

READ

Matthew 24:36-51

QUESTIONS

- Who does it say knows the end times?
- Who are the characters in the parable? (faithful and wise servant, Master, servants in his household)
- What are the things God has put you in charge of until Jesus returns?
- How do we "keep watch" of the end times?
- How does the wicked servant treat God, the master?
- Why do you think Jesus treats the wicked servant the way he does in v. 51?

The wicked servant thinks he can use and take advantage of God. He's proud and thinks he can get away with his abusive and indulgent lifestyle(v48-49). 1 Peter 5:5 "God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble".

- How much do you think about Jesus returning? How does that shape your day to day life/thinking?
- Are you a faithful manager with what God has put you in charge of or are you proud and taking advantage of God like the servant in v. 48-50?
- Would you be ready to meet your maker today? How can you be prepared?

CONCLUSION

Jesus expected his servants to act in the same way when he was absent as when he is present. He still expects the same of us today. Will he find you faithful?

PRACTICALS

Reflect on the priorities in your life. Rearrange them in light of Jesus's unknown return. What is the most important things to focus on? What's least important?

JUNE 29



THE TEN VIRGINS

INTRODUCTION

This parable illustrates what the return of our Lord and savior will look like and what separates true and false Christians. It captures how unexpected his return might be and the dread of not being prepared to receive him.

READ

Matthew 25:1-13

QUESTIONS

The verse starts with 'At that time' referring to the previous chapters talk of the end times. There are 2 simple categories for the ones who wait for the groom: Wise and foolish.

- Are you aware that these are the end times? Would you categorize yourself as wise or foolish?
- What does it mean to be prepared for the coming of the groom?

The bridegroom took longer than both the wise and foolish could have expected. Both groups fall asleep. But when the groom does eventually come the wise virgins are ready for him because of this oil. The oil could signify the holy spirit, separating the ones who join Jesus in the Kingdom and who don't; or it could simply signify being ready.

- Do you lie in wait for the Lord, confident in joining the wedding?
- Do you see yourself scrambling to get extra 'oil' after learning of the Lord's return? What would that look like?
- Does the thought of hearing 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you' scare you?

CONCLUSION

The application of this parable is simple: Be ready. Many people live their lives like Jesus could not appear at any moment. But further than that it represents true and false Christians, as both are expecting to enter the banquet. The act of being a wise and foolish virgin is what will determine your entry into the kingdom of heaven. Live out your life expecting the Lord to return in the next hour, and take every step to be ready to receive the groom and reap the benefit of joining him at the wedding banquet.

JUNE 30



SUNDAY SERMON

READ MATTHEW 25:14-30 & LUKE 19:11-27

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