

# PETE BUMGARNER MINISTRIES

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PARABLES OF JESUS

STUDY GUIDE



# PARABLES OF JESUS

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. What is a parable?

1. *The Layman's Bible Encyclopedia* defines a parable as a short, fictitious, and comparative narrative of something which might occur in real life, from which a moral is pointed or a lesson taught.
  - a. The parable as a means of teaching was used by the Hebrew teachers from the earliest times and arrived at its highest development in the parables of Jesus. (*The Layman's Bible Encyclopedia*)
  - b. The most ignorant people could absorb and digest a parable, where direct language might prove to be beyond their comprehension. (*The Layman's Bible Encyclopedia*)
2. Jesus made His parables things of actual life, and they form the most characteristic and beautiful passages of His teachings. The gospels contain over fifty parabolic utterances of Jesus, though He doubtless spoke many more in the course of His ministry. (*The Layman's Bible Encyclopedia*)
  - a. Truth cannot lie. Jesus is Truth; therefore, He never lied.
  - b. His teaching in parables was not fictitious teaching; it was illustrative teaching.
3. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, a parable is a simple story illustrating a moral or religious lesson.

### B. Why parables?

1. Parables are unique; they have the ability to enlighten one while confusing another.

2. The pearls that are not to be cast before swine are too valuable to be destroyed or damaged. Likewise, valuable messages from the Lord are given only to the those who have a heart toward the Lord.
3. And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.' But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." (Matthew 13:10-17 NKJV)
4. All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 13:34-35 NKJV)
5. But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.' " (Mark 4:10-12 NKJV)

6. And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.' " (Luke 8:10 NKJV)
7. Parables were not exclusive to Jesus' ministry; they were also used in the Old Testament. (Judges 9:7-15; II Samuel 12:1-4; II Samuel 14:1-11; I Kings 20:35-40; II Kings 14:9; Isaiah 5:1-7; Ezekiel 17:3-10; Ezekiel 19:2-9; Ezekiel 19:10-14; Ezekiel 24:3-5)

## II. PARABLE OF THE SALT

- A. "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men." (Matthew 5:13 NKJV)
- B. "Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another." (Mark 9:50 NKJV)
- C. "Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Luke 14:34-35 NKJV)
  1. Salt seasons and preserves.
  2. Seasoning improves or enhances the flavor.
  3. Preservatives prevent decay or ruin.
- D. The principle conveyed in this parable relates to the effect believers have upon the world.
  1. If the believer diminishes in his beliefs, morals, and integrity, he will diminish in his spiritual influence upon the world.
  2. The believer's influence is directly related to his fellowship with the Lord. If he breaks fellowship, no one can help him, and he becomes worthless to the kingdom of God.

### III. PARABLE OF THE LAMP

- A. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16 NKJV)
- B. And He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him." (Mark 4:21-25 NKJV)
- C. "No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him." (Luke 8:16-18 NKJV)
- D. "No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light." (Luke 11:33-36 NKJV)
1. A lamp illuminates. It is usually located in a place that gives effective lighting.
  2. One does not luminate a lamp and then hide it. He places it where the light is beneficial.

3. The principle conveyed in this parable relates to the believer's influence on the world.
4. Knowledge of the Word and the infilling of the Holy Spirit were not given for the believer to hide; these were given to illuminate and help others.
5. The eye is the illuminator of the body. Vision affects thought and action.
6. Through good vision, we can avoid many traps and obstacles.
7. Light exposes things that are not recognizable in the dark.
8. As the light of the world, we must illuminate the traps and obstacles designed to cause people to fall.
9. Believers must guard their hearts, refusing to participate in things that produce dark or evil thoughts and actions.
10. A pure heart will produce good fruit, resulting in good works that glorify the Father and give illumination to others. (While it is true that a pure heart will produce good works, not all good works are indicative of a pure heart.)

#### IV. PARABLE OF JUDGING A BROTHER

- A. "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye. " (Matthew 7:1-6 NKJV)

B. "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye." (Luke 6:41-42 NKJV)

1. This parable teaches us not to judge one another.
2. The speck is a small particle; the plank is a large object.
3. The principle conveyed in this parable relates to the faults in both ourselves and others. We must correct the faults in our own lives before we attempt to correct faults in the lives of others.

#### V. PARABLE OF THE GOOD FATHER

A. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:7-12 NKJV)

B. "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:11-13 NKJV)

1. A hungry son will persistently ask his father for food.
2. An earthly father will not give his hungry son something that would harm him.

3. Unrighteous people know how to care for their children properly. How much more does the heavenly Father know how to care for His children?
4. Just as the natural father gives to the hungry son who asks, the heavenly Father also gives to those who are hungry enough to ask for spiritual things.

## VI. PARABLE OF THE TWO FOUNDATIONS

- A. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." (Matthew 7:24-27 NKJV)
- B. "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great." (Luke 6:46-49 NKJV)
  1. The two foundations, rock and sand, signify stability and instability. Wise men depict stability; foolish men depict instability.
  2. One must dig beneath the surface and go deep enough to find solid substance that is capable of supporting the foundation and house.
  3. A house without a solid foundation cannot endure the storms.
  4. Storms of life are inevitable; they come to everyone.
  5. A wise person will go deep into the Word and Spirit of God, thereby laying a solid foundation that will withstand the storms of life.

6. A foolish person will not put forth the effort to establish a deep and intimate relationship with the Lord; consequently, he will be hurt or destroyed by the storms of life.

## VII. PARABLE CONCERNING FASTING

- A. Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast." (Matthew 9:14-15 NKJV)
- B. The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days." (Mark 2:18-20 NKJV)
- C. Then they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?" And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days." (Luke 5:33-35 NKJV)
  1. The Greek definition of "fast" is to abstain from food.
  2. A wedding celebration is not a grievous time; therefore, it is not a time to fast.
  3. Absence of the bridegroom is a cause of grief; therefore, fasting is acceptable.
  4. When one is in the presence of the Lord, fasting is not needed; however, when one is not in the presence of the Lord, fasting is a way to express the desire to be in His presence.

## VIII. PARABLE OF THE CLOTH AND WINESKIN

- A. "No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." (Matthew 9:16-17 NKJV)
- B. "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins." (Mark 2:21-22 NKJV)
- C. Then He spoke a parable to them: "No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.' " (Luke 5:36-39 NKJV)
1. New cloth and old cloth do not match, and their consistencies are not the same; consequently, both are damaged when they are put together.
  2. New wine poured into old wineskins will result in the wineskins breaking as the new wine ferments.
  3. New wine relates to the new life and spirit in Jesus; old wineskins relate to the unregenerate person.
  4. The new birth supplies the new container that is capable of holding the new wine.
  5. The parable of the cloth and wine reveals the dramatic difference between the "old man" and the "new man."
  6. Religious tradition must be abolished in lives so that we can be fruitful for the kingdom of God.

7. Change does not come easy for the religious person. He is content with his old style of worship and works.

## IX. PARABLE CONCERNING JESUS' GENERATION

- A. "But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, and saying: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not lament.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children." (Matthew 11:16-19 NKJV)
- B. And the Lord said, "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not weep.' For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by all her children." (Luke 7:31-35 NKJV)
  1. Those playing the flute and encouraging the dance were looking for the festive approach.
  2. Those who mourned were looking for a solemn approach.
  3. John the Baptist came in a mournful way, abstaining from food and the finer things of life, and they declared that he was demon-possessed.
  4. Jesus came in a more festive way, indulging in eating and drinking, and they declared that He was a glutton, an excessive drinker, and a friend of sinners.
  5. Religion never accepts God's method of ministry.

6. God's ways are not man's ways, nor are His thoughts man's thoughts; God's ways are higher than man's ways, and His thoughts are higher than man's thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

## X. PARABLE OF THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT

- A. "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation." (Matthew 12:43-45 NKJV)
- B. When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." (Luke 11:24-26 NKJV)
  1. When a devil is cast out of a person, the evil spirit looks for a habitation.
  2. When the evil spirit does not find a habitation, he returns to the person from whom he was cast out.
  3. If the person has not filled his life with the Word and Spirit of God, the evil spirit will recognize the vacancy and bring seven additional spirits more evil than he.
  4. Religion will not keep the devil out of a person's life. In reality, the devil will gain even more control, and the individual will be worse in the end than at the beginning.

## XI. PARABLE OF THE SOWER

- A. Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Matthew 13:3-9 NKJV)
- B. "Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." (Matthew 13:18-23 NKJV)
- C. Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Mark 4:2-9 NKJV)

- D. And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." (Mark 4:13-20 NKJV)
- E. And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Luke 8:4-8 NKJV)
- F. Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" (Luke 8:9 NKJV)
- G. "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. And the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a **noble and good heart**, keep it and bear fruit **with patience**." (Luke 8:11-15 NKJV)

1. This parable reveals the natural law of sowing and reaping in connection with soil condition.
2. The condition of the soil determines the production of the seed sown into it.
3. The four types of soil relate to four conditions of the heart.
  - a. The seed by the wayside represents the heart that does not allow the Word of God to penetrate and take root.
  - b. The seed sown into stony ground represents the heart that gladly hears the Word of God, but because it has not been properly prepared, cannot withstand persecution, and prevents the Word from producing fruit.
  - c. The seed sown among thorns represents the heart that receives the word, but as the Word of God grows, the daily affairs of life take precedence over the Word of God, thereby preventing it from producing fruit.
  - d. The seed sown into good ground represents the heart that hears, receives, and cares for the Word of God; however, the production of the receptive heart varies.
4. We must prepare our hearts to receive from the Lord, and we must guard our hearts from everything that would hinder the Word from coming into complete fruition.

## XII. PARABLE OF THE TARES

- A. Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.' " (Matthew 13:24-30 NKJV)
- B. Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Matthew 13:36-43 NKJV)
1. According to *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, tares are poisonous grass resembling wheat, but with smaller seeds. The tares were usually left in the fields until harvest time, then separated from the wheat during winnowing.
  2. The wheat in this parable represents those who serve God; the tares represent those who do not serve God.

3. Evil makes constant attempt to infiltrate God's kingdom, appearing as something good and acceptable.
4. Much evil has infiltrated the Church under the guise of good.
5. Just as the wheat and tares grow beside each other, good and evil grow in the same environment.
6. God's servants can be identified by their fruit. Although evil may produce some good works, it cannot produce good fruit.
7. God alone has the right and the ability to separate the real from the counterfeit.
8. We must mature and produce fruit in the midst of undesirable things.

C. Only Matthew records this parable.

### XIII. PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

- A. Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32 NKJV)
- B. Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." (Mark 4:30-32 NKJV)
- C. Then He said, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches." (Luke 13:18-19 NKJV)
  1. The mustard seed is a very tiny seed, yet it grows to be a large herb.

2. When God's Word enters into our hearts, like the mustard seed, it is very small in comparison to other things in our heart.
3. The Word of God follows the principle of the mustard seed. Through slow, consistent growth, it outgrows the other things in our hearts.
4. God's kingdom begins small and grows to be the dominant force in a believer's life.
5. The persistence of Satan is revealed through the fowls that lodge in the branches. If Satan cannot steal the seed, he will try to get the fruit.

#### XIV. PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

- A. Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened." (Matthew 13:33 NKJV)
- B. And again He said, "To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened." (Luke 13:20-21 NKJV)
  1. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, leaven is an element, influence, or agent that works subtly to lighten, enliven, or modify a whole.
  2. Leaven works through the element in which it has been placed until the complete mass is leavened.
  3. This parable reveals how God's kingdom works in an individual's life. It begins small, then influences every area of an individual's life.

#### XV. PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE

- A. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." (Matthew 13:44 NKJV)

1. When one finds a treasure in property that does not belong to him, he will give all that he has to acquire the property for the purpose of getting the treasure.
2. One should see the kingdom of heaven as a treasure that is more valuable than anything he possesses and give everything to acquire this great treasure.
3. God saw the Church as a valuable treasure in the world. He paid the ultimate price for the world so that He might gain possession of the Church.

B. Only Matthew records this parable.

#### XVI. PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

A. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it." (Matthew 13:45-46 NKJV)

1. The pearl of great price follows the same principle as the hidden treasure. One who recognizes its worth will give all that he has to acquire this precious jewel.
2. The kingdom of heaven is worth whatever possessions a man may own. A wise man will give up the earthly treasures to obtain the heavenly treasures.
3. In the sight of God, the Church is a pearl of great price that He acquired when Jesus gave His life for Her.

B. Only Matthew records this parable.

#### XVII. THE PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET

A. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 13:47-50 NKJV)

1. A fisherman nets all types of fish. When he pulls in the net, he brings in both the good and bad, but he discards the bad.
2. Jesus died for all the world. God's invitation for salvation is to everyone.
3. Many respond to God's invitation, but only those who do the will of the Father will be granted access into His kingdom.

B. Only Matthew records this parable.

#### XVIII. PARABLE OF THE HOUSEHOLDER

A. Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old." (Matthew 13:51-52 NKJV)

1. A writer conveys his message by using both old and new material.
2. Those who teach concerning the kingdom of God must use both the Old and New Covenants.
3. The principles of the Old Covenant still apply; therefore, we must not disregard the Old Covenant. The New Covenant is not easily understood; consequently, we need help in understanding it. By using the Old Covenant with the New Covenant, the principles of the Old Covenant help explain the New Covenant in an understandable way. The types and shadows point to the substance.

B. Only Matthew records this parable.

## XIX. THE PARABLE OF DEFILEMENT

- A. When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand: Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch." Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain this parable to us." So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding? Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man." (Matthew 15:10-20 NKJV)
- B. When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?" And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." (Mark 7:14-23 NKJV)
1. Things taken into the body affect only the physical man. Things not needed by the body are excreted by the body.
  2. Physical things cannot defile the spirit-man.

3. The things in a man's heart bring defilement. The physical body carries out the desires of the heart.
4. Evil is not physical; it is spiritual.
5. Manifestations of evil reveal the heart of an individual.
6. Keeping outward rules and regulations will not make the heart clean.

## XX. PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

- A. "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father Who is in heaven. For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father Who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." (Matthew 18:10-14 NKJV)
- B. Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." So He spoke this parable to them, saying: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance." (Luke 15:1-7 NKJV)
  1. Jesus spoke this parable because of the criticism He received for associating with sinners.
  2. Religion places its emphasis on those whom are a part of the system.

3. Those who pattern after the heart of Jesus will place their emphasis on the "lost."
4. Both saint and sinner are God's creation; therefore, heaven rejoices when a sinner is brought into the family of God.
5. A lost sheep can be found only when one leaves the fold and begins to search.
6. The ninety-nine are left in a place of safety while the shepherd looks for the sheep that is in danger.
7. The Church should be a secure place for those who are not lost, but the shepherds must seek and save those who are lost.
8. Our urgent field of ministry should be the world, not the Church.

## XXI. THE PARABLE OF DEBT FORGIVENESS

A. "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses." (Matthew 18:23-35 NKJV)

1. The king represents God. The servant with the great debt represents each of us indebted to God. The servant with the small debt represents those who are indebted to us.
2. We were unable to pay our debt, so God canceled our sin-debt through Jesus Christ.
3. We must forgive others as God has forgiven us; otherwise, we will not be forgiven.

B. Only Matthew records this parable.

## XXII. PARABLE OF THE HIRED LABORERS

A. "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.' So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.' And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.' But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?' So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen." (Matthew 20:1-16 NKJV)

1. The landowner looked for and hired laborers at a predetermined wage. Each servant agreed to the wage offered by the landowner.
2. Later, the landowner chose those who had not previously responded.
3. The amount of time worked by the servants was irrelevant to the wages because each one had agreed to work for a certain wage.

4. Because of their agreement, the landowner did not do an injustice to any of the hired servants.
5. So it is with the kingdom of heaven. Longevity of service does not affect salvation. God's goodness must not be resented or viewed as unfair.
6. We must never be resentful of God's goodness. We all need mercy and grace.

B. Only Matthew records this parable.

### XXIII. PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

A. "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him." (Matthew 21:28-32 NKJV)

1. A father asked his sons to work in his vineyard. One said he would go but did not; the other said he would not go but did.
2. The one who fulfilled his father's request did the will of the father.
3. It is our actions, not our speech, that fulfill the will of the heavenly Father.
4. Sinners delay doing the will of the Father but repent and obey.
5. Religious people talk the will of the Father but never get around to doing His will.
6. The kingdom of God will be occupied by those who do the will of God.

B. Only Matthew records this parable.

#### XXIV. PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD

A. "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet. (Matthew 21:33-46 NKJV)

- B. Then He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a place for the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated. And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some. Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But those vinedressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they took him and killed him and cast him out of the vineyard. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this Scripture: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" (Mark 12:1-11 NKJV)

C. Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast him out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him.' But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others." And when they heard it they said, "Certainly not!" Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone'? Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people--for they knew that He had spoken this parable against them. (Luke 20:9-19 NKJV)

1. The planter and owner of the vineyard leased his vineyard, but every time he sent someone for fruit, those who had leased the vineyard refused to give them fruit; they either abused them or killed them.
2. Thinking that his son would be respected, the owner sent him to the vineyard, but he was killed by those who had leased the vineyard.
3. Because of the evil actions of those who abused and killed the ones sent to them, the owner of the vineyard was sure to come and execute judgment against them.
4. The owner and planter of the vineyard represents Father God; the servants represent the men of God or messengers of God; the son represents Jesus Christ; the leasers of the vineyard represent the religious system.

5. Israel was the vineyard of the parable; the prophets were the servants of God who were mistreated or killed; Jesus is the Son Whom the religious system killed.
6. The religious system refused to release Israel to God; therefore, their temple was totally destroyed.
7. God is looking for and requesting disciples. The religious system makes disciples for itself, not God.
8. God will reject all religious systems that refuse to make disciples for Him.

## XXV. PARABLE OF THE WEDDING BANQUET

- A. And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding." ' But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:1-14 NKJV)

1. A king who arranged a wedding for his son sent out invitations to the wedding, but those who were invited did not accept the invitation.
2. The king sent other servants who told about the wedding banquet, but again the invitation was rejected, and those who had been invited did not take the wedding seriously.
3. Some of the servants sent to invite the guests were spitefully treated or killed.
4. When the king heard what had taken place, he sent his army to kill the murderers and burn their city.
5. Once again, he sent his servants out with an invitation to any and everyone who would come, both good and bad.
6. A capacity crowd was at the wedding banquet, but one of the guests was improperly dressed. When the king questioned him about his attire, he was speechless.
7. The king ordered that the guest who was improperly dressed be bound and cast out.
8. Father God has arranged a wedding for His Son Jesus. Israel was first invited to the wedding, but they rejected the invitation. Not only did they reject the invitation, but they also mistreated and killed the prophets, including Jesus.
9. When Israel rejected God's invitation, they incurred God's judgment, and the invitation was extended to the Gentiles.
10. The improperly attired guest at the wedding banquet emphasizes the importance of being clothed in righteousness, which can only come through Jesus. Anyone who does not accept Jesus as his personal Savior will be cast out of God's presence.
11. God invites many to the wedding of His Son, but only those who have properly prepared themselves will be chosen.

B. Only Matthew records this parable.

## XXVI. PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

A. "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." (Matthew 24:32-35 NKJV)

B. "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near--at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." (Mark 13:28-31 NKJV)

C. Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." (Luke 21:29-33 NKJV)

1. The preceding verses in each narrative are the key to understanding this parable.
2. In the parable of the fig tree, the emphasis is on signs. The buds and leaves on the tree are signs of the season.
3. Just as the buds and leaves of trees are signs that reveal the season, the statements made by Jesus preceding this parable are signs of the end-time.
4. The generation that sees these signs will not end until all is fulfilled.

5. Contrary to popular belief, the Bible does not teach that Israel is the fig tree. We must realize that Jesus also mentioned "other trees" when He spoke this parable. The parable reveals signs, not nations.

## XXVII. PARABLE OF WATCHING

- A. "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (Matthew 24:42-44 NKJV)
  1. If the person responsible for the house knew when the thief would come, he would be waiting to catch the thief and prepared to protect his goods.
  2. We do not know when Jesus will return, but we do know that He is coming again; therefore, we must be prepared and looking for His return. (Hebrews 9:28)
- B. Only Matthew records this parable.

## XXVIII. PARABLE OF THE FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT

- A. "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 24:45-51 NKJV)

B. Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things de-serving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. (Luke 12:42-48 NKJV)

1. The servant who is faithful and wise will be blessed by his master when he returns.
2. A servant who abuses his fellow servants and indulges himself in physical desires will not be ready for his master's return. This unfaithful servant will incur the wrath of his master.
3. Jesus has taken a journey. He has entrusted us with His household. We must be faithful and wise servants; otherwise, we will incur the judgment of God.
4. It is imperative that we properly care for and feed those for whom we are responsible.

B. Only Matthew records this parable.

## XXIX. PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

A. "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." (Matthew 25:1-13 NKJV)

1. There are ten virgins in this parable; five were wise, and five were foolish.
2. Each of the virgins had light, but only five had extra fuel.
3. Five of the virgins had not prepared for a long delay; consequently, they did not have enough fuel to sustain them.
4. They wanted to take fuel from the other five but were refused.
5. While the five foolish virgins went to get more fuel, the bridegroom came.
6. When the five foolish ones returned, they were denied entry into the wedding.
7. A virgin is one who has not entered into an intimate relationship with anyone.

8. A wise virgin properly prepares for herself; not only does she prepare for the present, but she also prepares for the future.
9. A foolish virgin does not properly prepare for herself; she looks only at the present and does not take the future into consideration.
10. These ten virgins represent two types of believers: those who place more attention on themselves than they do on Jesus and those who place more attention on Jesus than they do themselves.
11. Those who live in the present and do not prepare for the future will not have the stamina to get them through the circumstances of this life. Those who live in the present and prepare for the future will have more than enough to get them through the circumstances of this life.
12. Believers in Jesus Christ are the light of the world.
  - a. It is imperative that every believer prepare to the best of his ability. We must still be shining when Jesus returns.
  - b. Although none of us have arrived at perfection, it is vital that we have enough reserve in us from which to draw when needed.

B. Only Matthew records this parable.

### XXX. PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

A. "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' " (Matthew 25:14-30 NKJV)

1. The amount given to the servants was directly related to their ability.

2. Each servant was responsible and accountable for what had been given unto him.
3. Each servant had the liberty to use his master's goods in the way he thought most beneficial.
4. Two of the servants used their abilities and doubled their master's goods. One hid his master's goods, thereby bringing no profit to his master.
5. When he returned, the master of the servants made each give an account for the amount that had been entrusted to him.
6. Two of the servants were commended and rewarded; the other servant was rebuked and judged for his lack of diligence.
7. We, too, have been entrusted with our Master's goods. Each of us has received according to his ability.
8. When Jesus returns, He will not be interested in getting only what He has given us; He desires a profit.
9. We will give an account for what we have done with the "goods" (gifts, abilities, finances, etc.) that have been entrusted to us.
10. We will either be commended and rewarded or rebuked and judged. The outcome is directly related to our choices and actions.

B. Only Matthew records this parable.

## XXXI. THE PARABLE OF THE SHEEP AND GOATS

A. "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:31-46 NKJV)

1. The sheep on the right hand represent those who do the will of the Father; the goats on the left hand represent those who do not do the will of the Father.
2. When we minister to legitimate needs, we are ministering to Jesus.
3. When we reject legitimate needs, we reject Jesus.

4. Those who minister to Jesus will be commended and rewarded; those who do not minister to Jesus will be rebuked and judged.
5. Eternal punishment or eternal life--the choice is ours. Our actions, not our speech, determine our destiny.

B. Only Matthew records this parable.

## XXXII. PARABLE OF A DIVIDED KINGDOM OR HOUSE

- A. "But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.' " (Matthew 12:25-29 NKJV)
- B. "Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, 'He is out of His mind.' And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, 'He has Beelzebub, and, by the ruler of the demons He casts out demons.' So He called them to Himself and said to them in parables: 'How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end.' " (Mark 3:20-26 NKJV)
- C. "But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.' " (Luke 11:17-20 NKJV)
  1. If Satan works against himself, he will weaken his kingdom.

2. When the occupants of a house or kingdom do not agree, it brings division to the house or kingdom.
3. A divided house or kingdom is destined to fall.
4. It is imperative that believers unify and work together in harmony. Unity strengthens the Church.
5. Satan's kingdom is destined to fall.

### XXXIII. PARABLE OF THE STRONG MAN

- A. "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house." (Matthew 12:29-30 NKJV)
- B. "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house." (Mark 3:27 NKJV)
- C. "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils." (Luke 11:21-22 NKJV)
  1. Before one can steal from a strong man, he must first immobilize the strong man.
  2. Satan cannot steal from a strong believer unless he finds a way to immobilize him.
  3. We must immobilize the devil; then we can take back what he has stolen.
    - a. We must not believe the devil or agree with him. We must recognize him for who he is.
      - (1) Satan is a liar and the source of lies. (John 8:44)
      - (2) Satan is a thief. (John 10:10)
    - b. We must not complain but rather praise God in all things.

- (1) Complaining overwhelms the spirit of man. (Psalm 77:3)
  - (2) God inhabits our praise. (II Chronicles 20:22; Psalm 22:3)
- c. We must believe God, believe what He says about us, and speak the Word of God.
- (1) God is the source of truth. (John 14:6; Romans 3:4)
  - (2) Jesus countered the attacks of Satan by speaking the Word of God. ( Luke 4:1-13)
  - (3) God is for us; who can successfully be against us? (Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 8:31)

#### XXXIV. PARABLE OF PROGRESSION

- A. And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." (Mark 4:26-29 NKJV)
- 1. Seed produces progressively: first the blade; then, the ear; afterward, the full corn in the ear.
  - 2. A farmer does not concern himself with the production of the seed; he just sows the seed, believing that it will produce the desired results.
  - 3. The Word of God progressively grows in our hearts. We do not understand how it produces, but we must believe that it will produce and bring forth fruit.
  - 4. When our lives produce fruit, God reaps the harvest.
- B. Only Mark records this parable.

## XXXV. PARABLE OF A MAN TAKING A LONG JOURNEY

A. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning--lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" (Mark 13:32-37 NKJV)

1. The man going to a foreign country left someone to watch his estate. He did not say when he would return; therefore, the servant must constantly be alert so that his master does not return without his awareness.
2. The Lord has given us authority and charge over His house. We do not know when the Lord is going to return; we just know that He will.
3. We must keep ourselves in a state of preparedness as we wait for and anticipate the Lord's return.

B. Only Mark records this parable.

## XXXVI. PARABLE OF THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

A. Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch. (Matthew 15:12-14 NKJV)

B. And He spoke a parable to them: "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?" (Luke 6:39 NKJV)

1. A blind man cannot successfully lead a blind man.
2. Those who do not have revelation knowledge of the Word of God and the Spirit of God cannot successfully lead others in the ways of the Lord.

3. Religion is blind to the spiritual ways of God; consequently, all who follow religion will also be blind to the ways of the Spirit.

### XXXVII. PARABLE OF THE FRUIT TREES

- A. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them." (Matthew 7:15-20 NKJV)
- B. "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." (Luke 6:43-45 NKJV)
  1. A good tree does not produce bad fruit; a bad tree does not produce good fruit.
  2. The type fruit produced is dependent upon the internal workings of the tree.
  3. Sinners do not produce good fruit; however, they can do good works.
  4. Believers do not produce bad fruit; however, they can do bad things.
  5. We are known by the fruit produced through our lives. Godly people should display the character of Jesus.
  6. Our mouth does not just speak from the heart, but from the abundance of the heart.
  7. It is extremely important that the Word of God and the Spirit of God be the abundant portion of our hearts.

## XXXVIII. PARABLE OF TWO DEBTORS

A. Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he said, "Teacher, say it." There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." And He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." (Luke 7:36-50 NKJV)

1. Although he did not verbally express himself, the one who had sinned the least criticized the most.
2. One who receives more forgiveness is more appreciative.
3. Demonstrations of thankfulness are rewarded.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

## XXXIX. PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

A. And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you. So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:25-37 NKJV)

1. Not all questions are presented for the sake of learning the truth.
2. The story of the injured man and the three men who came upon him reveals embarrassing truths about religion.
3. Religion shuns those who are not of like faith.
4. Religion will not inconvenience itself to help those who are dying and cannot help themselves.
5. As believers, we are responsible for helping those who cannot help themselves.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

#### XL. PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT FRIEND

A. And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:5-13 NKJV)

1. In this parable, a friend goes to a friend in behalf of a friend and refuses to go away empty-handed.
2. This parable teaches the rewards of persistent intercession.
3. Our heavenly Father awards our persistence.
4. Those who truly desire the Holy Spirit and make that request known to their heavenly Father will not go away disappointed.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

## XLI. PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

- A. Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." ' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Luke 12:13-34 NKJV)

1. The rich man had more substance than he had room to put it.
2. This man was self-centered. His interest was in self-preservation.
3. God classifies this type of mentality as foolish.
4. Although the man had great substance, he did not get to enjoy it.
5. Jesus tells us not to worry about food and clothing; God knows that we need these things.
6. He also teaches us that worry is unprofitable.
7. Just as God provides for the birds and flowers, He will also provide for those who will trust Him.
8. We are admonished to lay up treasures in heaven, where they are safe and secure.
9. Where one's treasure is, there will his heart be also. If our treasures are in heaven, our hearts will be focused on heavenly things. If our treasures are in earth, our hearts will be focused on earthly things.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

## XLII. PARABLE OF READINESS

- A. "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 24:42-51 NKJV)

B. "Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?" And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more." (Luke 12:35-48 NKJV)

1. "Waist girded and lamps burning" indicate a state of readiness.
2. We must constantly be looking for the return of the Lord. "The Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."
3. When the Lord returns, He will bring each servant into accountability; therefore, servants of the Lord must be faithful, wise, self-disciplined, and occupied with the Master's business.

### XLIII. PARABLE OF THE CLOUDS AND WIND

- A. Then He also said to the multitudes, "Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. And when you see the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is. Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?" (Luke 12:54-56 NKJV)
1. The religious world is more in tune with the natural than the spiritual.
  2. The things that are occurring around us should alert us to the inevitable events recorded in the Word of God.
  3. As believers, we must be conscious of the signs of the times.
- B. Only Luke records this parable.

### XLIV. PARABLE OF THE UNFRUITFUL FIG TREE

- A. He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' " (Luke 13:6-9 NKJV)
1. God is looking for fruit in our lives. He has little tolerance for nonproductive Christians.
  2. The Holy Spirit acts as our intercessor and deals with hearts in an attempt to make us productive.
  3. Failure to respond to the Holy Spirit will result in destruction.
  4. We must follow this pattern and intercede for those under our influence, doing all that we know to enable them to become fruit bearers.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

#### XLV. PARABLE OF GUEST PROTOCOL

A. So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just." (Luke 14:7-14 NKJV)

1. One who attempts to promote himself will be brought down; one who humbles himself will be exalted.
2. Friends should not be our main focus in life; those in need should be our main focus.
3. We should reach out to those who cannot repay us, realizing that we will be paid with eternal rewards.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

## XLVI. PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER

A. Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" Then He said to him, 'A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' " (Luke 14:15-24 NKJV)

1. The great supper was prepared for the benefit of others, but they refused to come.
2. Three different excuses were given: I must go look at the real estate I purchased (priority on possessions); I must go test the oxen I purchased (priority on work); and I must spend time with my wife (priority on family).
3. As a result of the excuses of those first invited, their supper invitation was withdrawn.
4. Others from all walks of life were invited to the supper.
5. God has extended an invitation to us. We must not allow anything to take precedence over the invitation.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

## XLVII. PARABLE OF BUILDING A TOWER AND GOING TO WAR

A. Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it-- lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:25-33 NKJV)

1. This parable is preceded by an admonition to put Jesus first place in our lives.
2. One who does not deny himself **cannot** be a disciple of Jesus.
3. One who begins construction without sufficient funds to complete the building will be embarrassed.
4. A king with an army of ten thousand does not go against a king with an army of twenty thousand without making careful calculations.
5. Conditions of peace are better than defeat and destruction.
6. One who chooses to become a disciple of Jesus should first count the cost.
7. The cost for following Jesus is self-denial. Nothing can take precedence over Jesus. A true disciple becomes the slave of Jesus.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

## XLVIII. PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN

- A. "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:8-10 NKJV)
1. A woman who has ten coins and loses one will not be content until she finds the lost coin.
  2. When the lost coin is found, she shares her joy with others.
  3. Jesus is not satisfied with maintaining those who have not gone astray. He aggressively seeks the lost.
  4. The Body of Christ must follow His example and seek to recover those who are lost.
  5. When a sinner is born again, there is much joy in the presence of angels.
- B. Only Luke records this parable.

## XLIX. PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

A. Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." ' And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry. Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' " (Luke 15:11-32 NKJV)

1. "Prodigal" means wasteful or extravagant.
2. The prodigal son asked for what was rightfully his so he could use his inheritance in a self-gratifying way.
3. After squandering his inheritance, he found himself in great need.
4. While trying to survive in an undesirable setting, he remembered his father's house and the state of his father's servants.
5. Thinking that he no longer had rights and privileges, he decided to return to his father and become one of his servants.
6. When he returned to his father, he was received back into the house as a son, not a servant.
7. His jealous brother resented his return and refused to associate with him.
8. The father reminded the pouting older son that everything he owned was available to him, but he had not requested anything.
9. Like the prodigal son, many have pursued the inheritance rather than the Father.
10. After receiving the inheritance, we have left the Father's presence and squandered the inheritance upon ourselves.
11. If we will humble ourselves, the Father will receive us back into His presence, treating us as sons.
12. Those who have stayed in the Father's presence must not be resentful and jealous of those who have left and then returned.
13. One son recognized and requested his inheritance; the other son neither recognized nor requested his inheritance.

14. We must realize that we do have a legitimate inheritance, but it is not to be squandered on self-gratification.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

#### L. PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD

- A. He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.' So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." (Luke 16:1-13 NKJV)

1. The steward was evidently guilty of the charges. In the time he was given to produce proper documentation, he devised a method that would provide for him when he lost his job.

2. The master commended the unjust steward for his cunning practices.
3. Although the actions of the unjust steward were wrong, he did take an affirmative action to protect himself.
4. The children of the world are wiser than the children of light because they are more diligent in preparing for the future.
5. One who is unfaithful with natural possessions cannot be trusted with spiritual possessions.
6. One cannot serve God and the riches of the world simultaneously; he must choose which he will pursue, possessions or Jesus.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

## LI. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

A. "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' " (Luke 16:19-31 NKJV)

1. The rich man had everything he needed but was not willing to meet the needs of Lazarus the beggar.
2. When Lazarus died, his spirit was taken to Abraham's Bosom. Nothing is said concerning the burial of his body.
3. When the rich man died, he was buried, but his spirit went to hell.
4. The rich man communed with Father Abraham, begging him to send Lazarus with water to place on his tongue.

5. Abraham told him that it would not be possible and reminded him of his previous life.
6. The rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his brothers; Abraham told him that if they would not believe the Word of God, they would not believe a supernatural appearance.
7. This truth can be realized with the resurrection of Jesus. Rather than admit the resurrection, the religious leaders bribed the guards.
8. Our resources and abilities must be used in an unselfish way.
9. One whose heart is toward God will not accumulate while those around him are in need.
10. If we sow to the flesh, we reap of the flesh; if we sow to the spirit, we will reap of the spirit.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

### LII. PARABLE OF SERVANTS' DUTIES

A. "And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' " (Luke 17:7-10 NKJV)

1. Servants are expected to serve. After doing one job, they go do the next job until they have finished all their tasks.
2. As believers, when we do what the Spirit prompts us to do, we must not look for accolades; we must realize that we did what we were supposed to do.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

### LIII. PARABLE OF THE WOMAN AND THE JUDGE

A. Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' " Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8 NKJV)

1. This parable is preceded with an admonishment to be persistent in prayer.
2. Although the unjust judge did not operate with compassion, he did grant the widow's request because of her relentlessness.
3. Although we may not see immediate results, God will answer our prayers and avenge His elect.
4. When Jesus returns, will He find faith on the earth? How persistent are we in our requests?

B. Only Luke records this parable.

#### LIV. PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND TAX COLLECTOR

A. Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14 NKJV)

1. The Pharisee **prayed with himself**, bragging about his goodness; the tax collector beat his chest and asked God to be merciful to him.
2. The tax collector was justified; the Pharisee left unchanged.
3. Those who exalt themselves will be humbled; those who humble themselves will be exalted.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

## LV. PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

A. Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')

For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.' " (Luke 19:11-27 NKJV)

1. The nobleman who went into the far country to receive a kingdom represents Jesus.
2. The servants who were to do business with money given unto them by their master represent the believers.

3. We will give an account of the gifts, abilities, and substance entrusted to us by God.
4. God will not tolerate unproductiveness. God will reward the productive.
5. Like the citizens who refused to allow the man to reign over them and were destroyed, those who refuse to submit to the kingdom of God will be judged and punished.

B. Only Luke records this parable.

#### LVI. PARABLE OF THE BREAD

A. "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." (John 6:48-51 NKJV)

1. The manna that fell from heaven was a type of Jesus who came from heaven.
2. Just as the manna sustained the lives of the Israelites, Jesus is the life and sustainer of the believer.
3. We must accept the body of Jesus as our sacrifice for sin.
4. Partaking of the body of Jesus through faith in His redemptive work gives life to the believer.

B. Only John records this parable.

## LVII. PARABLE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

A. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father." (John 10:1-18 NKJV)

1. Anyone who does not make a legal entry is a thief. The shepherd enters through the door.
2. The doorkeeper recognizes the shepherd's voice and opens the door to Him.
3. Jesus is the door to the sheepfold; therefore, everything must pass through Jesus.

4. The sheep know the voice of their own shepherd, and they follow him; they will not follow a stranger.
5. Those who accept Jesus as their Shepherd will be saved.
6. The thief comes for the purpose of stealing, killing, and destroying.
7. Jesus' purpose for coming was to give abundant life.
8. A good shepherd will give his life for the sheep. Jesus gave His life for all who will believe.
9. One who is hired to keep the sheep will not properly protect and defend them. He will run from the enemy rather than stand up to the enemy.
  - a. Many churches hire a man to lead the people; consequently, they get a hireling.
  - b. The true shepherd does not seek his own comforts; his interest is in the welfare of the sheep.
  - c. When situations get tough, hirelings resign; shepherds weather the storms.
10. The power to lay down and pick up His life was given unto Jesus by the Father.
  - a. The principle revealed is that we are not to let someone else dictate when we leave this body.
  - b. Just as Jesus' life was not taken from Him, we must not allow our lives to be taken from us.
  - c. When Jesus finished His assignment, He laid down His life; we should follow his example.

B. Only John records this parable.

## LVIII. PARABLE OF THE VINE AND BRANCHES

A. "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." (John 15:1-8 NKJV)

1. Jesus is the life-source for the believer, and God the Father is the caretaker of that life-source.
2. We are the productive part of Jesus in the earth; therefore, we must produce fruit.
3. Those who produce fruit are purged for the purpose of producing more fruit.
4. We must stay in Jesus, and He must stay in us; otherwise, we will be unable to produce fruit.
5. Anyone who does not stay in Jesus will be cut off and destroyed.
6. Those who stay in Jesus and Jesus in them can ask the Father whatever they desire and it will be granted unto them.
7. The Father is glorified when we produce fruit.
8. Disciples are recognized by their fruit production.
9. We must produce fruit of the Spirit, which exemplifies the character of Jesus, and we must produce fruit through our labor.

- a. The fruit of the Spirit is revealed in our attitude and conduct.
- b. The fruit of our labors are the things we do for the kingdom of God.

B. Only John records this parable.

#### LIX. SUMMARY

- A. Parables are simple stories that illustrate a moral or spiritual truth.
- B. Parables are not fictitious teaching; they are illustrative teaching.
- C. Parables have the unique ability of enlightening one while confusing another.
- D. Valuable messages from the Lord are often given only to those who have a heart toward the Lord.
- E. There are over fifty recorded parables used by Jesus in His various discourses.

#### LX. CONCLUSION

- A. Parables can and should be used as a teaching tool; however, not all effective teaching is accomplished through parables.
- B. Parables reveal keys or principles to the kingdom of God; therefore, it is beneficial to study and learn the meanings of the various parables.
- C. Parables may have more than one meaning or reveal more than one principle.
- D. It is imperative that we learn the meaning of the parables of Jesus; otherwise, we will fail to understand many valuable teachings of Jesus.