

The Great Parables of Jesus

in the Gospel of Luke

COURSE OUTLINE

Lesson 1 – Is the Foundation of Our Lives Strong and Permanent?	1
Lesson 2 – How Can God be Just and Loving?	3
Lesson 3 – What Kind of Hearts Do We Have?	5
Lesson 4 – Why Did Jesus Come to Rescue Us?	7
Lesson 5 – Why Does God Want Us to Have a Personal and Loving Relationship with Him?	9
Lesson 6 – How Should We be Ready for the End of the World?	11
Lesson 7 – What is the Kingdom of God and How Can We Enter It?	13
Lesson 8 – What Challenging Situations Did Jesus Experience to Rescue Us?.....	15
Lesson 9 – How Does God Show His Love for Us?.....	17
Lesson 10 – Where are We Going after We Die?	19
Lesson 11 – How Will God Make All Things Right?	21
Lesson 12 – What Should We Do with Everything that God Has Given Us?	23
Resources	25

The Great Parables of Jesus

Lesson 1 – Is the Foundation of Our Lives Strong and Permanent?

Opening Questions

1. What was the most fearful or difficult situation in life you have ever experienced?
2. If you knew that you would die tomorrow, what would you do today?

Introduction

A major earthquake can shake and collapse many buildings. A major flood can cause landslides and destroy homes. Modern innovation has enabled us to build stronger foundations for buildings. People have more confidence living in a high-rise apartment building, not being afraid that the building will collapse. Our lives are similar; what we make to be the foundations of our lives will impact us. Some people make money or power the foundation of their lives. The more money or power they have, the more secure they feel. The less money or power they have, the less secure they feel. When the global economic crisis happened in 2008, many people committed suicide because their foundation (wealth/money) collapsed. They lost hope. People commit suicide because they lose hope. They have lost *the foundation* of their lives.



To think about:

What is the foundation of my life? Is it strong? Is it the right one? Jesus teaches us to have a strong foundation for our lives that can hold us regardless of any difficult circumstances that can happen to us. He teaches of a strong foundation that cannot be destroyed—something that can give us security, happiness, joy, peace, and hope that does not end. It is rather someone than something. Someone who can give us those things and, more importantly, one who holds our lives, loves us, and is eternal.

From the Bible



Luke 6:46-49

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

Discussion Questions



1. What question did Jesus ask his listeners as he was teaching? What were some possible reactions they might have after hearing this question (v.46)?
2. How does Jesus describe a person who hears his words and does them (v.47-48)? What would happen to the house when a flood hit it? Why (v.48)?
3. How does Jesus describe a person who hears his words but does not do them (v.49)? What would happen to the house when a flood hit it? Why (v.49)?
4. The flood is a sudden hardship that comes to our lives. It can be a natural disaster, a sudden tragedy, or a crisis. Have you ever experienced any of these?
5. There are many foundations that people try to build their lives upon. Besides money, from what other sources do people try to find happiness or security for their lives?

Notes

Parable: a short allegorical story or a sentence of comparison or analogy.

Lord: a person who has authority; a master.

Ruin: the physical destruction or disintegration of something.

Eternal: lasting forever.

Luke 12:13-21

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him [Jesus], “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” ¹⁴ But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?” ¹⁵ And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” ¹⁶ And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷ and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ ¹⁸ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.’ ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’” ²⁰ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

Discussion Questions

1. What did a man in the crowd ask Jesus to do for him (v.13)? What might be his reason to ask this?
2. What was Jesus’ answer to him (v.14)? What was Jesus indirectly saying or suggesting?
3. What sin does Jesus warn us against (v.15)? What do you think “one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” means?
4. What kind of person is the man in the parable? What situation did he have (v.16-17)?
5. How would he solve his situation, and what would he say to himself (v.18-19)?
6. What did God say to him (v.20)?
7. What is Jesus’ conclusion of the parable, and what do you think it means (v.21)?



Closing Points

1. The two houses represent our lives. The foundation on which we build our lives is the one that holds and sustains us. There are many foundations that people try to build their lives upon. Some try to build their source of security or happiness on money, power, or other worldly things. A sudden hardship can destroy our lives if we do not have the right foundation. Jesus points to himself as “the rock foundation” that we should have—not *one* of the foundations but the *only* foundation for our lives. Jesus was teaching, “If you have me as your Lord and as *the rock foundation* of your life, you will never collapse. Trust your life in my hands, and I will hold and sustain your life.”
2. Jesus teaches us that we do not know when we will die and face God. We do not have control over our lives, only God does. We will stand before the judgment of God and give account of all we have done in our lives. Getting rich is not evil in God’s eyes, but how we use what we have is what matters. All our possessions are God’s gifts to us. Jesus teaches us that we need to be “rich toward God.” This is what matters the most. It means being rich in the things of God—such as using what God has given us to help others out of love for God and to give honor and glory to his name. At its essence, being “rich toward God” means having a heart that loves him—having a personal, close, and loving relationship with him. Yet, only by believing and trusting our lives to Jesus can we have such a heart, given by God’s grace.
3. Jesus came from heaven and gave up his heavenly richness. He was born as a poor man. He sacrificed himself to die on the cross for the punishment of all our sins as our substitute so that by believing in him and trusting our lives to him, we may be saved from our sins and be given a new life and a new heart—a life of a personal, close, and loving relationship with God and a heart that loves Jesus who has sacrificed himself for us.

Notes

Inherit: to receive money or property as an heir.

Inheritance (noun)

Arbitrator: a person appointed to settle a dispute.

Covet: to desire wrongfully.

Covetous (adj.)

Covetousness (n.)

Abundance: a very large quantity.

Crop: the produce of the ground when harvested as food.

Barn: a large farm building used for storing grain, hay, or straw or for housing livestock.

Grain: a small and hard seed.

Goods: possessions or merchandise.

Ample: more than enough.

Merry: cheerful and lively.

Fool: a person who acts unwisely.

Rich toward God: being rich in the things of God.

Grace: blessing given by God with no consideration of our quality of good.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

The Great Parables of Jesus

Lesson 2 – How Can God be Just and Loving?

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you understood the reason why a person does a certain thing while other people didn't understand that person?
2. How do you feel when you are forgiven by someone for your wrongdoing?

Introduction

Sometimes, when we are at an event with people whom we have never met before, such as at a dinner party, we often analyze some people in our minds because of their appearance and/or behaviors. As a religious teacher, Jesus was often invited to a dinner party, and other guests would analyze Jesus' words and acts in their minds. Normally in Israel's culture, when a host invited a guest for a dinner, the host would place his hand on the guest's shoulder and gave him the kiss of peace. The host or his servants would remove the guest's sandals and wash the guest's feet. The guest was also anointed with olive oil. The guest would feel honored or respected when the host did these things.



To think about:

We often make mistakes and ask ourselves, "Why did I do that?" We often cannot control the thoughts in our minds. We make mistakes intentionally and unintentionally. We may not understand our own hearts, but God does. The Bible tells us that God knows the secrets of our hearts and the thoughts in our minds. We all have a problem in our hearts that only God can heal it.

From the Bible



Luke 7:36-40

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked him [Jesus] to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. ³⁷ And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, ³⁸ and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." ⁴⁰ And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."

Discussion Questions

1. Pharisees were known for their self-righteousness or hypocrisy. They often times looked down on others whom they considered as sinners or religious lawbreakers. A Pharisee invited Jesus and other guests to his house for a meal. What could be a reason for a Pharisee to invite Jesus, a new religious teacher in the community, for a meal (v.36)?
2. The dining could be in the yard or inside the house with an open door. Who suddenly went into the house? Why? What can we know about her? What did she bring (v.37)?
3. What did she do when she saw Jesus (v.38)? What could have been her motive? What do you think about what she did for Jesus?
4. What did the Pharisee say to himself (v.39)? What could have been his motive?
5. Did Jesus know what was in Simon's mind (v.40)?



Notes

Anoint: to rub with a substance (usually oil).

Pharisees: religious leaders of the Jewish community.

Hypocrisy: claiming to have moral standards or beliefs that one does not really possess.

Recline: to lean or lie back in a relaxed position.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Sinner: someone who sins against God; a law breaker.

Alabaster flask: a container made of translucent stone for costly perfume.

Ointment: a substance used on the skin for medicinal purposes or as a cosmetic.

Prophet: a messenger of God proclaiming the will of God.

Luke 7:41-50

⁴¹ “A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” ⁴³ Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.” ⁴⁴ Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” ⁴⁸ And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” ⁴⁹ Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?” ⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”



Discussion Questions

1. What parable did Jesus tell Simon (v.41-42)? Why did the moneylender cancel the two people’s debts?
2. When the moneylender canceled their debts, who would have to bear the loss of the money?
3. What was Jesus’ question to Simon, and what was his answer (v.42-43)?
4. What did Jesus say to Simon about the woman, whom Simon considered as a sinner? How was she different than Simon (v.44-46)?
5. The Bible teaches us that everyone is a sinner. We daily sin against God in our thoughts, words, and actions. Sin is a spiritual debt. We owe God righteousness that we cannot pay. Do you think Simon, a religious leader, would identify himself with the one who owed five hundred denarii or with the one who owed fifty denarii? Why?
6. What did Jesus tell Simon about the woman (v.47)?
7. What did Jesus say to the woman, and what did other guests think about it (v.48-50)?

Closing Points

1. The woman, whom Simon considered as a sinner, did all the things that Simon as a host failed to do for Jesus and even did these exceedingly. Thus, Jesus revealed to Simon his pride and self-righteousness. Unlike Simon, the woman understood her many sins against God. Her act showed her heart of repentance. She trusted her life to Jesus and put her faith in him. As a result, she received forgiveness.
2. By forgiving the woman’s sins, Jesus claimed to be God himself because no one can forgive sin other than God. Other guests might not believe in Jesus’ authority to forgive sins. Simon was blinded by his sins and self-righteousness and would not acknowledge his sins (debts) against God. We must be careful of our own sins and self-righteousness because our sins and pride blind us spiritually. We cannot see our own weaknesses.
3. The woman, having acknowledged her sins, putting her faith in Jesus, and trusting her life to him, received forgiveness from Jesus. She went home in peace. She had peace with God and a new life in Jesus. Likewise, when we trust our lives to Jesus and put our faith in him, we have peace with God and a new life in Jesus.
4. God is a loving, holy, and just God. He loves us and wants to save us. He is holy and just and must punish all sins. Jesus came from heaven to this world to sacrifice himself to die bearing the punishment of all our sins against God. He came to bear the woman’s sins and all our sins, so he can save us and give us *permanent peace*. He invites us to trust our lives to him.

Notes

Moneylender: a person whose business is lending money to others who pay interest.

Debtor: a person who owes debt or money.

Denarius (denarii—plural): an ancient Roman silver coin; a fair wage for a full day of work.

Faith: confidence or trust in someone or something.

Parable: a short allegorical story or a sentence of comparison or analogy.

Righteousness: the quality of being righteous—blameless or morally right with God.

Repentance: turning away from our sins and wrong doings with true regret and sorrow and turning our hearts to God.

The Great Parables of Jesus

Lesson 3 – What Kind of Hearts Do We Have?

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever planted a plant from a seed? How did you do it?
2. What are some reasons that students don't always pay full attention to their teachers' lectures?

Introduction

As children growing up, we sometimes did not listen to the words of our parents. We might be thinking of something else that was more important to us at that moment, or perhaps we were playing or daydreaming. However, at some other times, we really did listen to them, and their words helped our lives. When Jesus Christ was teaching, many people often came to hear him. Unlike the community religious teachers, Jesus taught with authority and power from God, and people were often amazed. They were often confused as well because Jesus used parables in his teachings. Some people listened to him and truly followed him. Some just came to listen to him because joining a large crowd was exciting. They did not come to truly listen to Jesus and follow him.



To think about:

Parents like to see their children sincerely listen to them because they want their children to be good children. The Bible tells us that God is *the heavenly Father* for those who believe in him and trust their lives to him. The Bible is 100% the word of God. When we read and study the Bible, God wants us to sincerely listen to him. He speaks to us through his word.

From the Bible



Luke 8:4-11

⁴And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him [Jesus], he said in a parable, ⁵“A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. ⁶And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. ⁷And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. ⁸And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.” As he said these things, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” ⁹And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, ¹⁰he said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’ ¹¹Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.”

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus was teaching a crowd of people with a parable about a sower who went out to sow his seed. What happened to the seed that fell along the path (v.5)?
2. What happened to the seed that fell on the rock (v.6)?
3. What happened to the seed that fell among thorns (v.7)?
4. What happened to the seed that fell into good soil (v.8)?
5. How do you think true followers of Jesus can know the secrets of the kingdom of God? Why did Jesus explain his parable to his disciples but not to the other listeners (v.10)?
6. What is the seed in the parable (v.11)? What do you think it means?



Notes

Parable: a short allegorical story or a sentence of comparison or analogy.

Sower: a person who sows or plants seed.

Path: a way for walking.

Soil: the ground; a mixture of organic remains, clay, and rock particles.

Disciple: a follower or student.

Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand: We cannot understand the truth of God on our own. Unless God helps us, our inclination will always be to reject his truth because we are sinful and self-centered people. We do not want a personal relationship with God. We want only the good things that he can give to us for our benefit.

The word of God: The Bible is 100% the word of God and is where we learn about God. Jesus is *the Word of God* who became a man.

Luke 8:12-18

¹²The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. ¹³And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. ¹⁴And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. ¹⁵As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

¹⁶“No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. ¹⁷For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. ¹⁸Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”



Discussion Questions

1. What does the seed that fell along the path illustrate (v.12)?
2. What does the seed that fell on the rocky soil illustrate? Why do they have no root? What do you think “in time of testing” means? (v.13)?
3. What does the seed that fell on the thorny soil illustrate? What are some examples of “the cares and riches and pleasures of life” (v.14)?
4. What does the seed that fell on the good soil illustrate? What do you think “bear fruit with patience” means (v.15)?
5. What parable did Jesus say to his disciples (v.16)?
6. What else did Jesus say to them (v.17-18)? What do you think those words mean?

Closing Points

1. All four types of soils represent the human heart. The condition of soil along the path or walking road is dry and hard. The word of God—the seed—that falls on this type of heart does not grow. The person does not have an interest for the truth of God. His heart rejects it, and the devil takes it away.
2. The soil on the rock is not deep. The word of God that falls on this type of heart will grow quickly but without root. The person seems to follow Jesus but has never had any root of faith, trust in Jesus, and love for him. He follows Jesus temporarily for his own benefit. When temptations come to his life, he will forget Jesus.
3. The thorns are worldly affections—the cares, riches, and pleasures of life that are evil in God’s eyes. These things can choke our love for Jesus. A person with this type of heart does not make Jesus the priority of his life.
4. A person with a good-soil heart, after hearing the word of God and the truth of Jesus, repents from his sins and trusts his life to Jesus. Jesus becomes the center of his life. His love for Jesus takes root, grows, and bears fruit for God’s kingdom.
5. The Bible teaches us that each of us has a bad-soil heart because we were born as sinners with a sinful heart and nature. We are self-centered people and selfish in many ways. Unless God gives us a new heart that is free from corruption, we will never have a good-soil heart. When we put our faith and trust our lives to Jesus, God makes us a new person and gives us a new heart (a good-soil heart). With a new heart given by God’s grace, our faith in Jesus will take root deeply and grow. We become the lamps of God in this dark and broken world and bear much fruit for the kingdom of God.

Notes

The devil (Satan): a rebellious angel who is the leader of evil spirits/demons.

Be saved: be saved or rescued from the consequence of their sins and rebellions against God. The Bible says that all people are sinners and will face the judgment of God at the end of their lives.

Hold fast: to continue to believe in; to remain determined or tightly secured.

Manifest: to show or reveal.

The one who has, more will be given: True followers of Jesus will produce fruit for God’s kingdom in their lives, and more fruit will be given by God. Those who are not true followers do not have fruit, “**even what he thinks that he has will be taken away**”—devoured by birds or choked by thorns.

Repent: to turn away from our sins and wrong doings with true regret and sorrow and to turn our hearts to God.

The Great Parables of Jesus

Lesson 4 – Why Did Jesus Come to Rescue Us?

Opening Questions

1. What are some reasons that we avoid helping a needy stranger on the street?
2. Have you ever put a lot of effort into helping someone (time, energy, and resources)?

Introduction

For many people who believe in God, they think that they will go to heaven if they live good lives and their good behaviors outweigh their bad behaviors. They think that doing good things will give them *credits* to enter heaven, so the more they do good things, the more credits or points they will have. In the Bible, God tells us that our good behaviors will never outweigh our bad behaviors. Imagine a huge mountain was put on one side of a weight scale and ten cars were put on the other side of the scale. Which one is heavier? A heart that does not truly love God is weight like a mountain of sin. God wants us to truly love him and not just want what he can give us. Some people just want God's gifts, including his heaven, but do not want to obey him and develop a loving relationship with him. God does not want people like this to be with him in his heaven.



To think about:

When a country has a war with another country, why do many people from both countries naturally dislike each other? The Bible tells us that the human heart is in constant rebellion against God. Spiritually speaking, we declare war against God. We do not want God to be in and to rule our lives. We want to rule our own lives. We make our own *gods* and reject the one true God who has created this universe and us. Jesus came from heaven to this world to teach us about the true kingdom of God and what God desires from us. Many people rejected Jesus' teachings, but some believed him. What did it cost Jesus to convince our hearts that Jesus loves us and wants to save us?

From the Bible



Luke 10:25-29

²⁵ And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" ²⁷ And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." ²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Discussion Questions

1. What did a lawyer ask Jesus? Why did he ask that question (v.25)?
2. What was Jesus' answer to him? Why do you think Jesus gave that answer (v.26)?
3. What was the lawyer's answer to Jesus' question (v.27)?
4. As a lawyer, he knew well about the law that God has given to his people. The lawyer's answer is the summary of all God's moral laws which is written in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. What did Jesus say about his answer (v.28)?
5. Do you think we are able to perfectly love God and other people? Why?
6. What did the lawyer ask Jesus? Why do you think he asked that (v.29)?



Notes

Heaven: God's dwelling place.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Lawyer: an expert of the Jewish law.

Eternal: lasting forever.

Eternal life: living forever in God's heaven.

True understanding of eternal life is living forever with God in a close relationship with him and in holiness and righteousness.

The Law: particularly points to a set of moral laws that God has given to guide the life of his people (past, present, and future). We can read these laws in the Old Testament part of the Bible.

Justify: to consider and prove to be right.

Deuteronomy 6:5
"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

Leviticus 19:18
"... you shall love your neighbor as yourself ..."

Luke 10:30-37

³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

Discussion Questions

1. In Jesus' parable, what happened to a man who was traveling (v.30)?
2. Who was the first person who saw the man, and what did the person do (v.31)?
3. Who was the second person who saw the man, and what did the person do (v.32)?
4. What could be some reasons that the priest and the Levite—both were religious workers—did not help the needy man?
5. Who was the third person who saw the man, and what did the person do (v.33-35)? What do you think about the Samaritan? What might be his character?
6. If you were the dying man, when you recovered, what would be your feeling towards the Samaritan—the person who saved you?
7. What did Jesus ask the lawyer, and what was his answer (v.36-37)?
8. Why do you think the lawyer did not directly say, "the Samaritan"?
9. What did Jesus say to him? Do you think he could do it (v.37)?

Closing Points

1. Jesus taught the lawyer that *knowing* what God wanted him to do—to love God and to love other people—was not sufficient. He must *do* what God wants him to do. To love God means to desire for a personal and loving relationship with him and not just wanting the things that he can give us.
2. Like the priest and the Levite, the lawyer failed to love his *neighbor*. We all fail to love other people as we should. To love other people means to show mercy to everyone, including strangers and foreigners. The Bible teaches us that only if we truly love God and have a loving relationship with him, could we truly love other people and have a good relationship with them.
3. Jesus identifies himself as the Good Samaritan in the story, and we are the person who is dying on the road. We need God to show his mercy to us by saving us from our sins. We daily sin against God in our thoughts, words, and actions, and deserve his punishment. We are *spiritually dead* in our sins. Jesus came from heaven to rescue us with his own life. He sacrificed himself to die on the cross for the punishment of all our sins as our substitute so that by believing in him and trusting our lives to him, we can receive God's forgiveness and be saved from his holy judgment. God also gives us a new life—a personal and loving relationship with him through Jesus—and gives us a new heart that enables us to truly love him and other people. The Bible tells us that "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Jesus came to save us because he loves us. Without him, we are left dead in our sins. We owe him our lives.



Notes

Jerusalem, Jericho:

Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel and was the center of religious activities.

It is at a higher altitude and is about 17 miles (27 km) from Jericho.

Priest: a person whose office is to perform religious rites; a religious leader.

Levite: a religious person who helped the work of priests in the temple of God.

Samaritan: Samaritans were mixed raced people who lived in the northern part of Israel. They were Jews who had intermarried with foreigners. They were a minority group in the Jewish land. The Jews and the Samaritans hated each other. The Jewish religious leaders made a law that if a Jew touched a Samaritan, he would become religiously unclean.

Denarius (denarii—plural): an ancient Roman silver coin; a fair wage for a full day of work.

The Great Parables of Jesus

Lesson 5 – Why Does God Want Us to Have a Personal and Loving Relationship with Him?

Opening Questions

1. What is one good thing that you have received from your father or mother?
2. Why does a true love relationship have to be mutual?

Introduction

The ancient Greek language had four different words for love: *phileo* which refers to love between close friends or brothers, *storge* which refers to love between family members, *eros* which refers to a romantic love with passion and intimacy, and *agape* which refers to God's love for us that is pure, perfect, unconditional, and self-sacrificial. In short, these four types of love are: brotherly or friendship love (*phileo*), familial love (*storge*), romantic or sexual love (*eros*), and unconditional and self-sacrificial love (*agape*).

The Bible tells us that *agape* love is what God gives us and what he is. "Love (*agape*) is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). When we trust our lives to Jesus, he gives us a new heart with *agape* love characteristics that can be nurtured and grown by God as we develop a personal, close, and loving relationship with him.



To think about:

God, as our Creator, desires us to have a good relationship with him. He wants to be our Heavenly Father, shows his love for us, cares for our lives, and teaches us to love him as we should. He wants us to know that as our Heavenly Father, we can always pray and talk to him at any time, even after midnight. God does not sleep or need to sleep. He governs the universe and is present everywhere. He knows our needs and can meet all our needs. One of the greatest prayers in the Bible is a shepherd's prayer who said, "God is my Shepherd. I have everything that I need. There is nothing that I lack."

From the Bible



Luke 11:1-4

¹ Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ² And he said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come." ³ Give us each day our daily bread, ⁴ and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation."

Discussion Questions

1. What does Jesus teach us to call God in our prayers (v.2)? What meanings or significances do you think it may have for us?
2. We should honor God's name because his name is holy (v.2). In what ways may we dishonor God's name in our daily lives?
3. We should submit to God and let him guide our lives (v.2). In what ways can we be rebellious to God—not obeying him and wanting to control our own lives?
4. How can we recognize and be thankful to God for providing us with daily food (v.3)?
5. How can we learn to be more forgiving to others who do something bad to us (v.4)?
6. How do we often make ourselves fall into temptation (v.4)?



Notes

Shepherd: a person who tends and guards sheep.

Lack: not having enough.

Disciple: a student or follower.

Hallowed be your name: means God's name is holy and should be honored and praised by all people.

Your kingdom come: means God's sovereign will and rule are established on earth and in our lives as it is in heaven.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us: means we need to be aware of our own daily sins, confess them before God, and ask for his forgiveness.

Indebted: owing.

Lead us not into temptation: means asking God not to let us be in a circumstance where the Devil can tempt us and make us sin against God.

Luke 11:5-13

⁵And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves,⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; ⁷and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? ⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

⁹And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹²or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?

¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Discussion Questions

1. Describe the parable that Jesus gives to teach about prayer. What do you think is the main teaching point of the parable (v.5-8)?
2. What else does Jesus say to teach about prayer? What do you think is Jesus’ point (v.9-10)?
3. What comparison did Jesus give between our earthly fathers and our heavenly Father? What do you think is the point of Jesus’ comparison (v.11-13)?
4. What (or who) is the most valuable gift that God gives to us as his children (v.13)? How much do we need that gift? Why?
5. What is one thing that you would like to receive from God?



Closing Points

1. Jesus teaches us that God, as our heavenly Father, knows what is best for us. He will give us what we need according to his wisdom and kindness. If God has not given us what we ask, it does not mean that his answer is “no.” It is perhaps that he wants us to keep praying and asking him persistently, because persistent prayer grows our dependence upon God and our personal relationship with him.
2. The best gift that God has given us is his own son, Jesus Christ, who came from heaven to this world to sacrifice himself and die for the punishment of all our sins on the cross as our substitute. When we believe and put our faith in Jesus, trusting our lives to him, our sins are forgiven, and God adopts us as his children. Jesus came from heaven to save us from our sins, so we may call God as our heavenly Father.
3. God also gives us his Holy Spirit to live in us when we become his children. The Holy Spirit works in us and help us grow spiritually mature. He guides our lives and gives us strength to face life’s troubles and difficulties in this world. With the Holy Spirit’s help, our personal, close, and loving relationship with God grows. We will love God more and more and become less and less self-centered or selfish, and our prayers will be more and more aligned with the will of God than our own will.
4. Jesus teaches us that God loves us, and he will not withhold anything good from us according to his perfect and wise will. We can always pray to God at any time. Our heavenly Father cares for us and knows our needs even before we ask of him.

Notes

Loaf (loaves-plural): bread that is baked in one piece.

Impudence: shameless persistence.

Serpent: a snake.

Who are evil: even bad and sinful parents normally love their children.

The Holy Spirit: the third person of the Triune God—one God in three persons (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit). The Holy Spirit guides, helps, and strengthens God’s people (children) in their lives.

Parable: a short allegorical story or a sentence of comparison or analogy.

The Great Parables of Jesus

Lesson 6 – How Should We be Ready for the End of the World?

Opening Questions

1. What comes to your mind when people talk about *the end of the world*?
2. What important characteristics does a manager who supervises other people in a company need to have?

Introduction

Suppose you are the owner of a well-known fast-food restaurant like McDonald's, and you own many stores. You hire employees and store managers to serve customers. You tell the store managers that you will visit their stores, but you don't tell them the exact time. When you come, how would you like to see your employees and store managers perform their jobs? Suppose you have also told them that when you come, there will be rewards for those who do well in their jobs, and those who don't will be fired. You did not tell your employees that you will come after five years. They wait for you to come every year but after three years they forget, and some have started to get lazy at work. Two years later, you suddenly come on a day that they do not expect.



To think about:

The Bible begins with a story of a Creator God who created this universe and humankind. He has given this beautiful world to us to take care of. Are we good managers of this world? God wants us to obey his good will for our lives and the lives of others in this world. Have we been living rightly before God? Do we love God and other people as we should?

From the Bible



Luke 12:35-40

³⁵ “Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. ³⁷ Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸ If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants!

³⁹ But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Discussion Questions

1. What are the two illustrations that Jesus used to teach his disciples about always being ready and prepared for action (v.35)?
2. What else did Jesus say to teach his disciples about being ready and prepared (v.36)?
3. What did Jesus say about the servants who were awake and prepared when their master came, and what would their master do for them (v.37-38)?
4. What do you think about this master who would serve his servants (v.37)? According to most of world's cultures, would a master reverse his role and serve his servants?
5. Jesus changed his teaching illustration or parable in v.39, but the point of his teaching is still the same. What parable did Jesus use in v.39?
6. What did Jesus say to emphasize his teaching's main point (v.40)? How do you think we should do that?



Notes

Parable: a short allegorical story or a sentence of comparison or analogy.

Stay dressed for action: dress in a way you can work or move effectively, such as the way an athlete or a waiter dresses.

Keep your lamps burning: keep enough oil for the lamp so the light will not go out.

Feast: a party.

Blessed: to experience joy and favor from God.

Truly, I say to you: Jesus' unique statement showing his authority in teaching because he is God himself.

Recline: to lean or lie back in a relaxed position.

The second watch: Ancient Israel divided their night into three watches. The first watch was from 6 pm to 10 pm. The second watch was from 10 pm to 2 am, and the **third** watch was from 2 am to 6 am.

The Son of Man: Jesus' favorite title to emphasize his humanity and heavenly kingship.

Luke 12:41-48

⁴¹ Peter said, “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?” ⁴² And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? ⁴³ Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. ⁴⁴ Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. ⁴⁵ But if that servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed in coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, ⁴⁶ the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful. ⁴⁷ And that servant who knew his master’s will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. ⁴⁸ But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

Discussion Questions

1. Peter asked Jesus if what he said was for the special twelve disciples or all his followers (v.41). Jesus replied by giving another parable about a master and his house manager. What are the two characteristics that Jesus used to describe a good manager “whom his master will set over his household” (v.42)? Why do you think that those two characteristics are important, and how do we grow in those areas?
2. The trustworthy servant is *blessed*. Jesus said this three times (v.37, 38, 43). What would happen to a servant who is not faithful and trustworthy (v.45-47)?
3. What would happen to a servant who did not know his master’s will and was not faithful either? Why would a servant manager be required to have more responsibility than the other regular servants (v.48)?
4. How do all the parables above (v.35-48) address true followers of Jesus (faithful ones) and false followers (unfaithful ones)—those who say that they are Christians, but their lives show that they are not? What promise and warning does Jesus give to them?



Closing Points

1. God has given us our daily lives, including our time, skills, talents, money, and other possessions. God requires us to use all that he has given us for the good of others out of love for him. Jesus wants all of us to always be ready for his return, because he will come at a time that we do not know or expect.
2. True followers and servants of Christ find satisfaction and joy in serving others. They imitate Jesus who says about himself, “For the son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).
3. The bad news is that none of us are faithful to God as we should, and none can serve other people as God wants us too. We are rebellious and self-centered people. We daily sin against God in our thoughts, words, and actions either purposefully or ignorantly. We belong to “the unfaithful” group and deserve severe punishment from God.
4. The good news is that there is a faithful and wise servant of God who takes care of us. Jesus is the true faithful and wise servant. He came from heaven to this world to serve us. He lived a life of perfect faithfulness and obedience to God on our behalf to the end of his life. He sacrificed himself and died for us. He was “cut into pieces” on the cross bearing the punishment of all our sins and rebellions against God as our substitute so that we can be saved by believing in him. When we trust our lives to Jesus, God forgives our sins and credits the faithfulness of Jesus to us. As a result, when God sees us, he sees us as faithful servants because Jesus covers us.

Notes

Peter: One of the special twelve disciples of Jesus.

Lord: a person who has authority; a master.

Cut him in pieces: an image of severe punishment.

The unfaithful: people who reject or do not want God in their lives.

Ransom: a payment demanded for the release of someone.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

The Great Parables of Jesus

Lesson 7 – What is the Kingdom of God and How Can We Enter It?

Opening Questions

1. If you have a mature fruit tree that hasn't produced fruit for three years, what would you do with it?
2. What kind of person do you want to befriend for a very long time?

Introduction

The Bible begins by telling us that there is a Creator God who has created this universe, this world (Planet Earth), and us. When God created this world, it was a perfect place for humankind to live in. When humankind rebelled against God, sin entered this world and corrupted every living being in this world. We were born with a sinful nature in us. We tend to be self-centered rather than God-centered in our thoughts, words, and actions since we were born. However, God has a plan to bring his people to his kingdom at the end of the world, where God's people will live with God forever in a new world that God will create—a world without sin and its corruption, including self-centeredness. When Jesus returns, he will renew this world and bring heaven down to unite with the renewed world—heaven on earth—making it a perfectly good place for all God's people.



To think about:

If we want to befriend someone for a long time, we want that person to be nice and get along with us well. Likewise, a holy and loving God would not want people who are selfish and bad to be in his kingdom. He wants only those who can live well with him in holiness and righteousness; people who can truly love him and love other people. How do we become one?

From the Bible



Luke 13:6-9, 18-21

⁶And he [Jesus] told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’ ⁸And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. ⁹Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

¹⁸He [Jesus] said therefore, “What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? ¹⁹It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.”

²⁰And again he said, “To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? ²¹It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened.”

Discussion Questions

1. In Jesus' parable, what did the man look for in his vineyard? Did he find it?
2. What did he ask his vinedresser (gardener) to do? Why (v.7)?
3. What was the vinedresser's request (v.8-9)?
4. What may “the cutting down of the tree” mean when Jesus returns and finds that some people still reject God in their lives—do not have *good fruit* for him?
5. Jesus taught his listeners about the kingdom of God with two parables. What is the first parable, and what do you think it means (v.19)?
6. What is the second parable, and what do you think it means (v.20-21)?



Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Holy: spiritually pure or perfect; uncorrupted by evil or sin.

Parable: a short allegorical story or a sentence of comparison or analogy.

Vineyard: a plantation of grapevines.

Vinedresser: a gardener.

Manure: animal waste used as fertilizer.

The unfruitful fig tree: represents people who are sinners and rebellious before God. There is no “good fruit” that we can produce for God because of our sins. God is giving people time now to turn their hearts to him. The time will come when Jesus suddenly returns to this world to judge all people.

Mustard seed: a very small seed.

Leaven: a substance, such as yeast, to make dough rise.

Luke 13:22-30

²² He [Jesus] went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. ²³ And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them, ²⁴ “Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

²⁵ When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ ²⁶ Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ ²⁷ But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’ ²⁸ In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. ²⁹ And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.

³⁰ And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

Discussion Questions

1. What question did someone ask Jesus (v.23)? What was Jesus’ answer, and what do you think the parable means (v.24)?
2. In Jesus' parable, what would the master of the house tell those who knocked at his door (v.25)? How did they try to convince him to open the door, and how did he answer them again (v.26-27)?
3. What will be in hell—*the place for workers of evil* (v.28)?
4. Where will people who enter the kingdom of God come from (v.29)?
5. What did Jesus say to conclude his teaching (v.30)?



Closing Points

1. Like a mustard seed, the kingdom of God begins very small through Jesus and his few disciples, but it has been growing throughout the world. Jesus has said about his sheep (his people scattered in different nations) that he will gather all of them to himself: “they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd” (John 10:16).
2. Like leaven or yeast that is added to flour to make it ferment and rise. The kingdom of God is rather unseen or undetectable, but it is powerful to transform people’ lives. How God works in our hearts, drawing us to believe and trust our lives to Jesus Christ by faith and forgiving and saving us from our sins, is unseen and powerful.
3. Jesus said that many people thought they would enter Heaven, but God would reject them and even called them “workers of evil.” Many people think that they do things for God, but they actually do things for their own benefits. Their motives are self-centered. That is why God says that they are “workers of evil.” God will put them in Hell—a place for those who reject God and do not want to have a personal and loving relationship with him. They will weep and gnash their teeth—being angry at God. Their true character and evil hearts will be exposed.
4. In his parable, Jesus speaks of himself as the master of the house. He opens the door only to those whom he has a personal and loving relationship with. He is also the narrow door (the only door) to God’s kingdom. There is no other way to enter the kingdom of God but through Jesus. He shows the door to us. He came to this world to save us by sacrificing himself. When Jesus returns to this world, he will: (a) bring judgment to those who reject him and will put them in hell, and (b) bring a great and joyful party for all his people from all nations in his kingdom.

Notes

Jerusalem: the capital city of Israel.

Saved: saved from sin and the judgement of God.

Strive: to make great effort.

That place: refers to Hell.

Gnashing of teeth: grinding of one’s teeth – a picture of *anger*.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: ancestors of the Jewish people.

Prophets: a messenger of God.

Recline at table: a picture of *dining*.

Recline: to lean or lie back in a relaxed position.

Some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last: Jews as the first who received the *gospel* (good news of Jesus Christ) or special revelation about him will become the last ones to enter God’s kingdom. Non-Jewish people as the last who receive the gospel will become the first ones to enter because they believed first.

The Great Parables of Jesus

Lesson 8 – What Challenging Situations Did Jesus Experience to Rescue Us?

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever tried to find something that fell on the floor, and it took quite an effort for you to find it?
2. Have you ever hiked in a national park or a place where there are dangerous animals?

Introduction

Jesus liked to use parables when he was teaching because people could relate well with the stories and the characters in the parables. Besides ordinary people, Jesus' audience included religious leaders, many of whom were self-righteous. They did not lead and teach people in the way God wanted them to. They misled people and wanted to hold onto their power. Jesus was not afraid to publicly disapprove them and point out their hypocrisy.



To think about:

How much will you help someone you love when a big trouble comes to him/her? Because of our sins and rebellions against God, we are in big trouble. We deserve to be punished with death. We are lost and cannot save ourselves. The Bible tells us that God loves us. How does God prove his love for us? That is why Jesus came from heaven to this world. He was born as truly and fully man to take the punishment of all our sins as our substitute.

From the Bible



Luke 15:3-10

³ So he [Jesus] told them this parable: ⁴ “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. ⁸ “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? ⁹ And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ ¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Discussion Questions

1. In Jesus' first parable, what did the shepherd do when he lost one of his sheep (v.4)? If you were the shepherd, what challenging situations and dangers might you experience as you did that?
2. What did the shepherd do to the lost sheep when he found it? Why do you think he did that? What was he feeling (v.5)?
3. What did he do when he returned home (v.6)?
4. What did Jesus say to his audience (v.7)? What do you think it means?
5. In the second parable, what did the woman do when she lost one of her coins (v.8)? If you were the woman, how would you “seek diligently” in a house with a dirt floor?
6. What did she do after she found it? What was she feeling (v.9)?
7. What did Jesus say to his audience (v.10)? What was Jesus' main point in his teaching?
8. How do the man and the woman point to Jesus himself who “sought diligently” and sacrificed himself to find and rescue us (his lost people)?



Notes

Parable: a short allegorical story or a sentence of comparison or analogy.

Hypocrisy: claiming to have moral standards or beliefs that one does not really possess.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Sinner: someone who sins against God; a law breaker.

Repent: to turn away from our sins and wrong doings with true regret and sorrow and to turn our hearts to God.

Repentance (noun).

Silver coin: was worth a fair salary for a full day of work.

Luke 20:9-18

⁹ And he [Jesus] began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. ¹⁰ When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. ¹³ Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ ¹⁴ But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.’ ¹⁵ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.”

When they [religious leaders] heard this, they said, “Surely not!” ¹⁷ But he looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’? ¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

Discussion Questions

1. How did Jesus begin his parable (v.9)?
2. Why did the vineyard owner send a servant to the tenants? What did the tenants do to him (v.10)?
3. What did the vineyard owner do next, and what were the results (v.11-12)?
4. What did the vineyard owner do after that? Why? What was the result (v.13-15)?
5. What would the vineyard owner consequently do to the tenants (v.16)?
6. How did the religious leaders react hearing Jesus’s parable (v.16)?
7. What did Jesus say to them (v.17-18)?



Closing Points

1. Jesus was speaking about God as the vineyard owner. The vineyard is the kingdom of God, and the tenants are the Jewish religious leaders, whom God entrusted to teach people the way of God. Instead, they misled the people. God sent his servants and messengers, such as the prophets, to warn them. However, they beat and killed his messengers. Finally, God sent Jesus, his own son, as his last messenger. Here, Jesus foretold that he would be killed by the religious leaders. God would destroy the tenants and give the vineyard (the kingdom of God) to the care of followers of Jesus from many other nations. The religious leaders understood this and said, “Surely not!”
2. The builders point to the religious leaders, and the building points to the kingdom of God. There was a stone that the builders rejected to be used for the construction. Jesus spoke of himself as that stone. God has made Jesus become *the cornerstone* of the kingdom of God. By quoting Psalm 118:22 in verses 17-18, Jesus was telling the people that the Old Testament prophecy pointed to him, and he fulfilled it. Jesus is the cornerstone of God’s kingdom, and all other stones (followers of Jesus) in the structure are set in reference to him. Jesus also gives a warning that for those who do not believe in him, he will bring judgment and punishment to them. They will be destroyed.
3. The man (shepherd) would face dangers and difficulty as he tried to find his lost sheep. The woman’s hands and feet would get dirty as she tried to find her lost coin. Jesus was willing to leave his heaven, came to this *filthy* world, and experienced great troubles and pain. He was arrested, beaten, and killed (crucified). He sacrificed himself to save us. He died on the cross for the punishment of all our sins as our substitute so he can save us and bring us to our true *home* (heaven) with him. When we repent from our sins and trust our lives to Jesus, there is a great joy and celebration in heaven.

Notes

People: Jesus was teaching people in a temple, and some religious leaders challenged his authority.

Vineyard: a plantation of grapevines.

Tenant: renter. A vineyard owner and his tenants usually had an agreement to share the crops.

Cast: to throw.

Surely not: the religious leaders were self-righteous. They did not think they were wrong. They also considered the kingdom of God as Israel (the Jewish nation) in a literal sense, rather than in a spiritual sense—that it began in Israel and then spread to all nations.

Cornerstone: a stone that builders lay as a foundation, and all other stones are set in reference to this stone. The cornerstone shapes the position of the entire structure.

Broken to pieces; crush: Jesus’ punishment to those who refuse to believe in him.

The Great Parables of Jesus

Lesson 9 – How Does God Show His Love for Us?

Opening Questions

1. If you had a son who wants only your money but not you, how would you feel?
2. If you have learned about the love of God for you, what is one good example of it?

Introduction

When Jesus was teaching, besides ordinary people, his listeners include religious leaders of the community. They often thought that by doing good things or religious acts, it would give them *credits* to earn God's blessings or favor, so the more they do good things or religious acts, the more credits or points they will have. Their minds and hearts were corrupted with self-centeredness. Jesus teaches that God sees our hearts and wants us to truly love him, not just wanting only good things from him. God is not obligated to give us anything. When we want only God's blessings or favor, such as getting a good job, but not a truly loving relationship with him, it shows our self-centeredness and sinful nature.



To think about:

Does God want us to treat him like a Santa Claus who will bring good gifts to us if we behave well or more like a father who really wants to have a loving relationship with his children? How do we treat God in our lives? God sees and knows our hearts.

From the Bible



Luke 15:11-19

¹¹ And he [Jesus] said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'"

Discussion Questions

1. In Jesus' parable, what did the younger son ask of his father? What does this request mean? Is this a polite request? What did the father do (v.11-12)?
2. When their neighbors hear about this, what would they think about the younger son?
3. Where did the younger son go, and what did he do there (v.13)?
What kind of person do you think he wanted to be? Can money truly give us happiness and a sense of identity?
4. What happened to him later, and what did he do then (v.14-15)?
5. Do you think he wanted that job? What happened to him there (v.16)?
6. What does "he came to himself" mean? What was he thinking he would do (v.17-19)?
7. Was there a change in his attitude? Why do some people change only after encountering difficult situations in their lives?



Notes

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Sinful nature: the self-centered nature that we are born with.

Santa Claus: a legendary figure who is known for bringing gifts to children on Christmas Eve.

Share of property: inheritance.

The younger son asked his father for an inheritance before his father died. In the culture at that time, an older son received two thirds of his father's inheritance, and a younger son received one third of it. To give the younger son an inheritance, the father needed to sell one-third of his land and give the money to him.

Squander: to waste in a foolish manner.

Reckless: without thinking or caring about the consequences of an action.

Famine: lack of food; hunger.

Perish: to die.

Luke 15:20-32

²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate. ²⁵ "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹ And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Discussion Questions

1. What did the father do when he saw his younger son at a distance? What do you think about the father's act (v.20)?
2. How did the son express his regret? Did the father question or rebuke him for what he did? What did the father do for his son (v.21-22)?
3. What else did the father do for his son (v.23)? What significance would this have?
4. What did the father say about his son (v.24)? Why do you think he said that?
5. How did the older brother react to his father's celebrating the return of his younger brother? Why (v.28-30)?
6. What did the father say to his older son (v.31-32)? What do you think about it?



Closing Points

1. Jesus identified the Jewish religious leaders in the person of the older brother. They thought they could inherit the kingdom of God by obeying their religious rules, like the older brother obeying his father's command. The older brother was as lost as the younger brother. The older brother wanted only his father's property, just as the younger son did. Now the younger son wanted the love of his father and a loving relationship with him, but the older son never wanted that. The religious leaders did not want a loving relationship with God, but wanted only what God can give them—a good life, heaven, etc. They were self-centered and as lost as other people.
2. Jesus identified us in the person of the younger brother. We are all lost. But unlike the younger son in the parable who had a bad older brother, we have a good older brother who cares about us. Jesus is our *true older brother*. God the Father is compassionately waiting for us to come back to him. He has sent Jesus for us. Jesus was willing to leave his home in heaven and came to look for us and to bring us home, even though it cost him his life. Jesus sacrificed himself to die bearing the punishment of all our sins on the cross as our substitute. When we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him, God forgives us and gives us the righteousness of Jesus as our *spiritual robe* that covers our sin and shame. Jesus restores our identity as God's children and gives us a new life in him. One day, Jesus will return to this world and bring us home. He is now preparing a great celebration in heaven for all his people.

Notes

Robe: a long, loose outer garment. It was an expensive piece of clothing.

Calf: a young cow. In that culture, only a big celebration had a **fattened calf**. It means neighbors were invited to celebrate. The father restored the honor and social status of his son, not only to his family, but also to the community.

Dead, lost, found: Jesus purposefully used these terms to describe that we are not just lost in this dark and corrupted world, but also are *spiritually dead* because of our sins. We are separated from God. Jesus came to this world to find and save us from our sins by sacrificing himself. We are *spiritually lost* and cannot save ourselves, but we are *found* by Jesus who saves us.

Angry: the father's remaining property and wealth would be the older son's inheritance. He did not want to take his brother back and sacrifice any of his property.

The Great Parables of Jesus

Lesson 10 – Where are We Going after We Die?

Opening Questions

1. If you knew you were going to die and meet God tonight, what would you do today?
2. Have you ever done something that you regretted?

Introduction

What is life about? Is life simply about studying, work, making money, travel, having a family, and retirement? Is there a bigger purpose for our lives? What does the Bible say about the uniqueness of God's people? "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10). First, we are saved from our sin punishment by the grace of God. Second, when we believe in Jesus and trust our lives to him, we are made as new creations in him. Third, as God's workmanship, God gives us gifts and abilities to do good works for his kingdom and glory. We are Jesus' ambassadors who bring light and hope to the people around us in this dark and broken world. We are to bring the love of God to others through our words and acts.



To think about:

How can we bring a meaningful impact to the lives of others? We should first determine what the purpose of our lives is. If the purpose of our lives is all for our own benefits, then we live a self-centered lifestyle. If the purpose of our lives is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever, then we will live a God-centered lifestyle and will bring a meaningful impact to the lives of others.



From the Bible

Luke 17:7-10

[Jesus said] ⁷ "Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'? ⁸ Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'? ⁹ Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus spoke to his disciples and described a common life of a person who owned land and sheep and had a servant to prepare his meals, clean the house, and take care of his land and sheep. Should a good servant relax in the house after coming back from working in the field? Why? When could the servant relax (v.7-8)?
2. Would the master be thankful if his servant was diligent and hard-working (v.9)?
3. What did Jesus tell his disciples about how their attitude should be as God's servants? Why is such an attitude very important (v.10)?
4. As God's people and ambassadors (see 2 Corinthians 5:20) living in this broken world and having a lot of work for God's kingdom to help people see the light and the truth of Jesus Christ and his gospel (good news), how should we balance our work and rest?
5. How does the diligent and humble servant in Jesus' parable point to himself? How did Jesus serve God's people when living in this world? When did he "rest" (see Matthew 20:28 and Hebrews 10:12)?



Notes

Parable: a short allegorical story or a sentence of comparison or analogy.

Plow: to turn and break up the soil with a plow to prepare a seedbed.

Recline: to lean or lie back in a relaxed position.

2 Corinthians 5:20

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us."

Matthew 20:28

"... the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Hebrews 10:12

"But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God."

Luke 16:19-31

[Jesus said to his disciples and some religious leaders] ¹⁹ “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰ And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹ who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ ²⁵ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ ²⁷ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house— ²⁸ for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ ²⁹ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ ³⁰ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ ³¹ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Discussion Questions

1. What do we know about the two characters in Jesus' parable (v.19-21)?
2. Where did they go when they died (v.22-23)?
3. What did the rich man ask Abraham and Lazarus to do for him, and what was Abraham's answer to him (v.24-26)?
4. What else did the rich man ask Abraham to do for him, and what was Abraham's answer to him (v.27-31)? Why did the rich man keep asking for things?
5. How does knowing the reality of heaven and hell impact the way we live our lives?
6. How can we be *spiritually rich* before God? What can we do to help those who are in need? What should we do with all the possessions that God has given us?



Closing Points

1. The rich man was nameless and had nothing at the end. Money was the love of his heart. He never wanted a loving relationship with God but wanted only what God could give him. Those who choose to reject God in their lives will receive what they want at the end: God will reject them forever and put them in hell. Those who choose to have a loving relationship with God in their lives will receive what they desire at the end: a forever loving relationship with God in heaven.
2. The reality of hell teaches us that God is holy and just. God must punish all sins. If God were not to completely punish all sins, he would no longer be righteous. The reality of heaven teaches us that God is loving. Heaven is a place without evil, sin, corruption, suffering, and death. It is a perfect place that God has prepared for all his people.
3. Lazarus was poor, sick, abandoned and rejected. He was a man of sorrow. Lazarus in Jesus' parable points to Jesus himself, who is *the true Lazarus (the One whom God helps)*. Isaiah 53:3 tells us that Jesus was a man of sorrows and rejected by people. Jesus came from heaven and was born in a smelly manger in this world. He became poor for us to make us spiritually rich before God by giving us his righteousness (see 2 Corinthians 8:9). When we repent from our sins and trust our lives to Jesus, God forgives all our sins and spiritually unites us with Jesus. We are part of God's family and heirs of heaven. In our union with Jesus, we are all *Lazarus, the ones whom God helps*.

Notes

Feast: to eat a lot.

Sumptuously: luxuriously.

Lazarus: it means “the one whom God helps.”

Abraham's side: a metaphor for heaven.

Hades: hell; a place for people who do not want God in their lives; a place of God's judgment.

Anguish: suffering.

Chasm: a deep separation.

Torment: suffering.

Moses and the Prophets: represent the books of the Old Testament Bible (the Word of God). The Bible is sufficient for us to learn about God and his will for us.

Repent: to regret our wrongdoing and to turn our hearts to God.

2 Corinthians 8:9
“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”

The Great Parables of Jesus

Lesson 11 – How Will God Make All Things Right?

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever been treated unjustly or unfairly?
2. When we pray to God, what should our attitude be? Why?

Introduction

This broken world is full of injustices, brokenness, pain, and suffering. There are a lot of things that are not right, and we experience these in our lives. The Bible (God’s word) tells us that all of these are the impact of sin. Sin is not just something we *do*—thoughts, words, or actions that are disobeying or dishonoring God—but is also a powerful *evil force*. God’s word (the Bible) tells us, “... sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it” (Genesis 4:7). “... sin ... produced in me all kinds of covetousness [wrong desires]” (Romans 7:8). “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions” (Romans 6:12). As God’s people, we can take comfort that our lives are in God’s hands. All things (good and bad) that happen to us are under God’s control, and he uses all things for our good. “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).



To think about:

Jesus has said many times that he will return to this world to judge all people and to make all things right for his people. How will a holy and righteous God make all things right? How will God destroy sin and all its corruptions in this world without destroying us?

From the Bible



Luke 18:1-8

¹And he [Jesus] told them [his disciples] a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. ²He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. ³And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ ⁴For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, ⁵yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’” ⁶And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ⁷And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

Discussion Questions

1. How did Jesus describe the character of the judge in the parable (v.2)?
2. What did a widow want from the judge, and why did the judge finally give the widow what she wanted (v.3-5)? Do you think he did the right thing?
3. How did Jesus contrast God with the unrighteous judge in the parable (v.6-7)?
4. Will God delay giving justice to his people who suffer injustices in this corrupted world? What warning did Jesus give about his return and the rebelliousness or faithlessness of people in this world (v.8)?
5. In many places in the Bible, Jesus says that he will unexpectedly return to this world to judge all people and to make all things right for his people. How does this comfort us (see Revelation 21:4-5)?



Notes

Parable: a short allegorical story or a sentence of comparison or analogy.

Ought: should.

Adversary: rival; opponent; enemy.

Unrighteous: bad.

Elect: chosen people; God’s people, who are saved from the consequence of their sins by the grace of God through their faith in Jesus Christ.

Speedily: quickly.

The Son of Man: Jesus’ favorite title to emphasize his humanity and heavenly kingship.

Faith: confidence or trust in someone or something.

Revelation 21:4-5
“He [Jesus] will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’”

Luke 18:9-14

⁹ He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰ “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Discussion Questions

1. Who are the two characters that Jesus introduced in his parable? Why did they go to the temple of God (v.10)?
2. Tax collectors were Jewish people who worked for the Roman government to collect taxes from other Jews. They often cheated people when they collected taxes. They took more money by force and would keep the extra money for themselves. They were robbers and cheaters and were hated by others. The Pharisees considered them to be very bad people (sinners).
How did the Pharisee pray to God? How did he justify himself as a righteous person before God? What do you think his attitude towards God might have been (v.11-12)?
3. How did the tax collector pray to God? What did he say to God? What do you think his attitude towards God might have been (v.13)?
4. What did Jesus say about the tax collector and the Pharisee? Why (v.14)?
5. Can someone pray to God and being rejected by him? Why? What can we learn from this parable?



Closing Points

1. Jesus was saying if an unrighteous judge would finally do the right thing, how much more would God, who is perfectly righteous, do for his people. Jesus says that his people will suffer and experience trouble in this sinful world. He never promises to take troubles away from our lives, but he promises to be with us when we suffer. Just as the widow, we can experience injustice in this world. Jesus wants us to persistently pray to God and to trust in his sovereignty and love for us.
2. To be justified by God is to be honored and treated as a righteous person by him. The Pharisee thought he could be right with God and be justified by keeping religious laws. He pridefully tried to be a righteous person. He was a self-righteous person and wanted only God's blessings and gifts but not a loving relationship with God.
3. Jesus came from heaven to this world to save us from our sins. While living in this broken world, Jesus experienced troubles and injustices. He lived a perfect sinless life before God in our place. He was arrested and crucified. He sacrificed himself to die on the cross for the punishment of all our sins as our substitute. He lived the life and died the death that we should have. When we repent from our sins and put our faith in Jesus, trusting our lives to him, God forgives all our sins, credits the honor and righteousness of Jesus to us, and accepts us as a righteous person in his eyes. Our righteous standing before God is not achieved by our own effort but is given by God's grace and is received by faith.
4. Jesus shows us true humility by: (a) his willingness to put aside his divine glory, (b) being born as a human being, (c) being obedient to God in his life, and (d) sacrificing himself as our substitute. Jesus is now at the right hand of God the Father governing the universe and praying for us as our High Priest. As his people, we can trust in him.

Notes

Themselves: Jesus was speaking to the religious leaders of the community.

Contempt: dislike and disrespect.

Pharisee: a religious leader of the Jewish community. Pharisees were known for their self-righteousness or hypocrisy.

Extortioner: a person who takes money from another by threat or intimidation.

Adulterer: one who commits adultery (sexual relationship outside of marriage).

Fast: to abstain or limit one's food.

Tithe: 10% of a personal income set apart as an offering to God.

Sinner: a person who sins.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Justify: to consider and prove to be right.

Exalt: to elevate in honor or quality.

Divine: relating to God; godlike.

The Great Parables of Jesus

Lesson 12 – What Should We Do with Everything that God Has Given Us?

Opening Questions

1. What is the purpose of investment? Why do people invest in something?
2. What would be some good characteristics of a president or a king?

Introduction

God tells us in his Word (the Bible) that all the good things we have are from him (see [James 1:17](#)). God wants us to use and invest all the things that he has given us, such as our gifts, talents, skills, money, and time, for serving others and for the building up of his kingdom in this world. This kind of investment has eternal fruit or significance. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ (the Gospel) and what God has done in our lives to others is a good investment of our time in God's kingdom. Using our money and resources to show Christian hospitality and God's love to others is a good investment in God's kingdom. All these things can help others see and experience God's love for them, and, prayerfully, they will trust their lives to him and have a personal and loving relationship with him.



To think about:

700 years before Jesus was born, a prophet (messenger) of God named Isaiah wrote about the birth of Jesus. He foretold that Jesus, the Son of God, would have an eternal government and bring peace to his people (see [Isaiah 9:6-7](#)). 700 years later, an angel of God came to Mary, who would be the mother of Jesus, and confirmed this (see [Luke 1:30-33](#)). If Jesus is the true King that our hearts long for, would it not bring great joy when we faithfully serve him and invest in his eternal kingdom?



From the Bible

Luke 19:12-19

¹² He [Jesus] said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. ¹³ Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.' ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' ¹⁵ When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. ¹⁶ The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.' ¹⁷ And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' ¹⁸ And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made five minas.' ¹⁹ And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.'

Discussion Questions

1. Among the crowd who wanted to hear Jesus' teaching, some expected Jesus to be their new political leader who would free them from the Roman government (the Roman Empire). How did Jesus begin his parable (v.12)?
2. What did the nobleman do before his departure (v.13)?
3. How did the citizens of the country feel about their new king (v.14)?
4. What did the nobleman do when he returned home? Why (v.15)?
5. What did he find from the first servant? What did he say to the servant (v.16-17)?
6. The servant did not say, "I have made ten minas more" but said, "Lord, your mina has made ten minas more." What does this show us about the servant?
7. What did he find from the second servant? What did he say to the servant (v.18-19)?



Notes

James 1:17

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights ..."

Isaiah 9:6-7

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end ..."

Luke 1:30-33

"And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High ... and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mina: equal to 100 working days of wage.

Luke 19:20-27

²⁰Then another came, saying, 'Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; ²¹for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' ²²He said to him, 'I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? ²³Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' ²⁴And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' ²⁵And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten minas!' ²⁶'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ²⁷But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.'"

Discussion Questions

1. What report did one of the servants give him? Why (v.20-21)?
2. What did he say to the servant (v.22-23)?
3. What did he order other servants to do to the wicked servant (v.24-25)?
4. What else did he say to them and order them to do (v.26-27)?
5. What are we supposed to do with all the gifts (money, skills, time, etc.) that God has given us? What are we supposed to do with the Gospel that God has given us?



Closing Points

1. The servants represent followers of Jesus. Jesus did not describe all the ten servants but only three servants to make a comparison. True and faithful followers produce fruit for God's kingdom. Some produce more than others, and God will reward them. The unfaithful and lazy follower will be punished. Often, when we are being unfaithful to God (when we sin), we bring the consequence of it on our own. We bring troubles or pain to ourselves. However, God is still a good heavenly Father who will discipline and guide us. We should not be rebellious but trust in his love for us. There are true and false followers. False followers will show that they will never repent and will always be unfaithful. True followers may sometimes be unfaithful but will repent.
2. The citizens who hate and do not want the nobleman to be their king represent the Jewish religious leaders who did not like Jesus. The citizens also point to those who do not want God in their lives. They want to rule their own lives. At the end, God will bring judgment and punishment to them.
3. The nobleman points to Jesus, but Jesus is *the true and better nobleman*. Unlike many noblemen and kings, Jesus was born in a smelly manger, a place for the animals. He was even willing to sacrifice himself for his people. We are unfaithful and rebellious to God, yet Jesus took the punishment of all our sins on the cross. When we believe in him and trust our lives to him, we receive God's forgiveness. Jesus is *the true and better king* for all his people. He is also *the true and better servant of God* who has given us a perfect example through his life and ministry on earth (Matthew 20:28).
4. After Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, he said to his disciples before he went back to heaven, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He has all authority in heaven and on earth. He has given us this *Great Commission* to go and make disciples of all nations. May we be faithful servants who bring this good news to others around us.

Notes

Severe: difficult; cruel.

Reap: cut or gather (a crop or harvest).

Sow: to plant seed by scattering it on or in the earth.

Condemn: judge.

Wicked: evil or morally wrong.

Gospel: good news. The Gospel is the *good news* that we can receive God's forgiveness and be saved from the punishment of all our sins by trusting our lives to Jesus Christ by faith. It is the *good news* of what Jesus has accomplished for us.

Sin: thought, word, or action that is dishonoring or disobedient to God.

Repent: to regret of our wrongdoing and to turn our hearts to God.

Matthew 20:28

"... the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Resources

Boice, James Montgomery. *The Parables of Jesus*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1983.

Calvin, John. *Harmony of Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. Calvin's Commentaries. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003

Duguid, Ian M., James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, eds. *Matthew-Luke*, ESV Commentary, vol. 8. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021.

Hendriksen, William. *Luke*. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978.

Hughes, R. Kent. *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.

Matthew to John. Matthew Henry's Commentary, vol. 5. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publisher, 2000.

Sproul, R.C., ed. *The Reformation Study Bible*. Orlando, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 2005.

Serendipity Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998.

The Westminster Standards. Suwanee, GA: Great Commission Publications, 2011.