

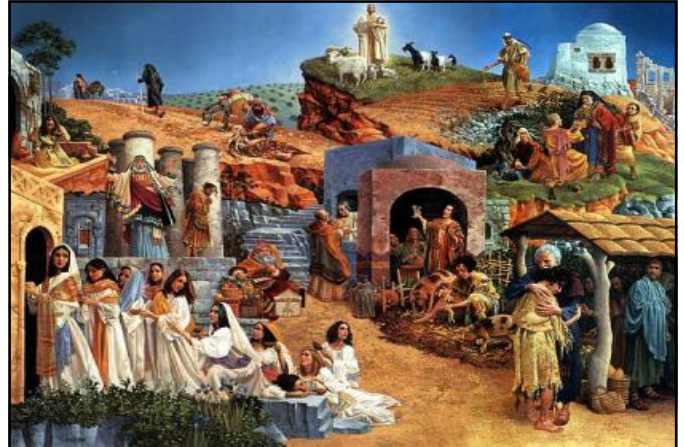
# The Parables of Jesus

## Intro



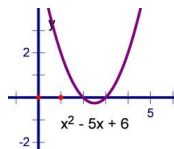
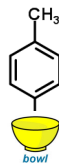
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(Courtesy of [www.BibleStudyMen.com](http://www.BibleStudyMen.com))



A Closer Look

## What is a Parable?



## "A Parable"

- a short story or word picture that illustrates a single point of spiritual truth.



- Mustard Seed
- Small Seed – Large Plant
- Growth of Kingdom of God

## Parables What Are They?

- Parable
- Metaphor
- Allegory
- Fable

## Metaphor -

“You are my sunshine.”

- Figure speech
- A word or phrase
- Literally denotes one object or idea is used in place of another
- Suggests a likeness or analogy between them
- Directly compares seemingly unrelated subjects



## Analogy -

“the URL of a web site is like the title on the tab of a file folder”

- Inference
- If two things agree with each other in some respects, they will probably agree in others
- Often used to make a difficult idea or an archaic subject easier to understand

**Allegory -****“Pilgrim’s Progress” by John Bunyon**

- Like a Metaphor but...  
Sustained longer and more fully in its details
- Like an Analogy but...  
Appeals to imagination instead of reason or logic

**Fable -****Aesop’s Fables**

- Most Equivalent to a Parable
- Fables tend to be longer than parables
- Both a short allegory with one definite moral
- There are many fables that have similar meanings to Biblical parables, but many more that present good advice that is not at all Biblical

**The Bundle of Sticks**

An old man on the point of death summoned his sons around him to give them some parting advice. He ordered his servants to bring in a bundle of sticks, and said to his eldest son:

“Break it.”

The son strained and strained, but with all his efforts was unable to break the Bundle. The other sons also tried, but none of them was successful.

**The Bundle of Sticks**

“Untie the bundles,” said the father, “and each of you take a stick.”

When they had done so, he called out to them:

“Now, break,” and each stick was easily broken.

“You see my meaning,” said their father.....

**Union gives strength.**

## Where are the Biblical Parables?

Old Testament -

- **Jews and Moabites (analogy) - Balaam**

Numbers 23:24

The people rise like a lioness;  
they rouse themselves like a lion  
that does not rest till it devours its prey  
and drinks the blood of its victims."

## Where are the Biblical Parables?

Old Testament –

- **Trees make a king (parable) - Jotham**

Judges 9:7-15

One day the trees went out to anoint a king for themselves. They said to the olive tree, 'Be our king.'

<sup>9</sup> "But the olive tree answered, 'Should I give up my oil, by which both gods and humans are honored, to hold sway over the trees?' .....

## Where are the Biblical Parables?

Old Testament –

- **Strong brings forth sweetness (riddle) -**

- **Samson** Judges 14:14, 18

"Out of the eater, something to eat;  
out of the strong, something sweet."

- Etc.....

## Where are the Biblical Parables?

New Testament–

Mostly in Synoptic Gospels

Matthew, Mark, Luke

John –

- **Shepherd and Thieves** 10:1-10

The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

- **Vine and the Branches** 15:1-8

I am the vine; you are the branches.

## How Many Parables are there?

- Depends on Definition and minor variations

- **33 – 60**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • 1 New cloth on an old coat :                   | • 23 Unmerciful servant (Kingdom of Heaven)  |
| • 2 New wine in old wineskins                    | • 24 Good Samaritan                          |
| • 3 Lamp on a stand                              | • 25 Friend in need                          |
| • 4 Wise and foolish builders                    | • 26 Lowest seat at the feast                |
| • 5 Moneylender forgives unequal debts           | • 27 Invitation to a great banquet           |
| • 6 Lamp on a stand                              | • 28 Cost of discipleship                    |
| • 7 Rich man foolishly builds bigger barns       | • 29 Lost sheep                              |
| • 8 Servants must remain watchful                | • 30 Lost coin                               |
| • 9 Wise and foolish servants                    | • 31 Lost (prodigal) son                     |
| • 10 Unfruitful fig tree                         | • 32 Shrewd manager                          |
| • 11 Sower and four types of soil                | • 33 Rich man and Lazarus                    |
| • 12 Weeds among good plants (Kingdom of Heaven) | • 34 Workers in the vineyard, early and late |
| • 13 Growing seed (Kingdom of Heaven)            | • 35 Persistent widow and crooked judge      |
| • 14 Mustard seed (Kingdom of Heaven)            | • 36 Pharisee and tax collector              |
| • 15 Yeast (Kingdom of Heaven)                   | • 37 King's ten servants given minas         |
| • 16 Hidden treasure (Kingdom of Heaven)         | • 38 Two sons, one obeys one does not        |
| • 17 Valuable pearl (Kingdom of Heaven)          | • 39 Wicked tenants                          |
| • 18 Fishing net (Kingdom of Heaven)             | • 40 Invitation to a wedding banquet         |
| • 19 Owner of a house (Kingdom of Heaven)        | • 41 Signs of the future from a fig tree     |
| • 20 Lost sheep                                  | • 42 Wise and foolish servants               |
| • 21 The sheep, gate, and shepherd               | • 43 Wise and foolish virgins                |
| • 22 Master and his servant                      | • 44 Servants must remain watchful           |
|  | • 45 Three servants given talents            |
|  | • 46 Sheep and goats will be separated       |

## Why did Jesus use Parables?

- Makes you think
- More likely to be remembered
- More likely to be put into action
- Helps make the truth expressed more a part of yourself than just a simple statement
- Coaxed the listeners into participating more actively as they considered the parables' ambiguous content

## Principles of Interpretation

### Scripture is

- \* **Clear...**i.e. that it is reasonably intelligible, being both comprehensible and unambiguous

<http://www.lionelwindsor.net/bibleresources/bible/whole/Clarity.htm>

## Clarity of Scripture

- \* **Clarity is consonant with genre and literary style**  
i.e. metaphor / parables are possible
- \* **A need for translation does not imply obscurity**  
a good translation does not clarify Scripture but conveys the clarity which is already present.

## Clarity of Scripture

**\* Clarity does not necessarily imply ease of understanding:**

hard work may be required to grasp the clear text

**\* Clarity is limited to the topics addressed by Scripture**

i.e. - The *what* of the Trinity  
Not necessarily the *how*

## Clarity of Scripture

**\* Clarity is particularly relevant with topic -**

for matters which directly concern the purposes of God,

‘those things which pertain unto salvation’.

“ the more necessary a matter, the more clear it will be (although earnest effort can discern even the less necessary matters)”

## Principles of Interpretation

***Sola Scriptura*—Scripture alone ...**

- \* Consistent with the nature and purposes of its divine author
- \* ‘Clear interpreting the Unclear’
- \* Context

## Principles of Interpretation

**Luther ‘s Comments**

- Clarity extends to the words of Scripture themselves and those words almost never appear by *themselves*.
- All Scripture has the same primary author - the Holy Spirit

## Principles of Interpretation

- God has not left us with an obscure Scripture precisely because he has left us an entire Scripture.
- If the initial impression is that a particular text is obscure, then that can only be an initial impression. The unity of Scripture takes us beyond initial impressions to the true clarity of the Word of God.

## Parables to Explore

- The Cost of Discipleship
- Unjust Steward
- Workers in the Vineyard
- Wedding Banquet
- Prodigal Son
- New Cloth / New Wine
- Kingdom of Heaven
- Master and Servant
- Rich Man and Lazarus

