

Parables

Jesus used parables frequently during His time on earth. Several questions have been asked about this type of approach to ministering. Why use parables? What are they about? How should we interpret them? This article will serve as an introduction to the next articles about the parables that Jesus used. Webster defines parable as a comparison, or a story to compare to things of like qualities. These stories that Jesus used is stories that have an immediate understanding and then it also has a latent, moral story. Some describe parables by saying that Jesus put the unknown with the known that we might understand them both. They are usually set up by the word "Like." These stories usually use normal human circumstances or nature to show a heavenly moral.

Why Use Parables?

Matthew 13:10-17 says, "And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?' He answered and said to them, 'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.' But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

What Are They About?

The most prevalent of themes is the theme of heaven. Throughout the next few weeks we will cover several of the parables and their meanings. The other themes to the parables are the character of the Kingdom, the character of the King, and the character of the King's subjects. Most often the themes overlap and use more than one of the themes.

How Should We Interpret Them?

There are two problems, trying to find too many symbols in the parables,

and limiting it to one comparison. We should first look for the meaning that Jesus gives us. Usually Jesus describes the meanings of the parable to His apostles. Then we must locate the central theme to the parable. All the other themes we find must be in harmony to that theme. We must consider the context of what Jesus is saying. Most importantly we must not attribute the parables to back up doctrines that are new or foreign to the Bible.

I look forward to the next few weeks and going through some of the parables with you.

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