

Bi132 The Gospels

Lesson Bi132-25 Kingdom Parables

Have you ever found a treasure in an unexpected place? Were you excited with the discovery you made? Was it valuable? The disciples probably had a similar excitement as they learned some of the priceless secrets of the kingdom of God. In our last lesson, Jesus spoke about the sower, the seed, and what conditions determine the size of the spiritual harvest. This revealed new truths about the kingdom and the work ahead of the disciples. But there was still more for them to learn.

Jesus continued that day by telling six more parables that explained three more important kingdom truths. The Jews had expected Messiah to set up an earthly political reign and deliver them from Roman rule. That's why he had to make it very clear that his kingdom was spiritual. It would be in the hearts of men and women who believed who he was and why he had come.

Jesus told them another parable after explaining the one about the kinds of soil. It is known as the **'parable of the weeds'** and it goes like this:

The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

The owner's servants came to him and said, "Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?"

"An enemy did this," he replied.

The servants asked him, "Do you want us to go and pull them up?"

"No," he answered, "Because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn" (Matt 13:24-30).

Later Jesus left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and asked for the explanation of the parable of the weeds in the field. He often answered their questions when he was alone with them. The central teaching of the story is that a day of judgment is coming. He tells them at the end to clearly hear the message of this parable, for it is very important. On judgment day those who have accepted Christ will be saved and those who have not accepted Christ and do evil will be punished eternally. So it is important for people to accept the lordship of Christ and become a part of his kingdom now. Jesus explained the story this way:

The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear (Matt 13:37-43).

Jesus told them two more stories to teach them how his kingdom will grow. The kingdom starts small, but grows large. The **parable of the mustard seed** illustrated the principle as he told them: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.” As a second illustration of growth, he shared a story that women could easily relate to, the **parable of the yeast**: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.” Both of these teach about the growth of the kingdom. The kingdom starts small but grows large like the tiny mustard seed and its huge plant. As the kingdom grows it will influence and change all of a person’s life, just like yeast changes the dough.

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: “I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.” These truths had been hidden, even from the religious leaders. Now they were explained so clearly that even a trusting child could understand.

The next two stories—the **parable of the hidden treasure** and the **parable of the pearl**—both designate the value of the kingdom for those who enter it. People who understand its value will give all they have to be a part of it. “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it” (Matt 13:44-46). Jesus was not teaching that anyone can purchase entry into the kingdom. Entry is still only by faith in Christ.

The **parable of the fishing net** has the same meaning as the first parable of the weeds. A great day of separation is coming for the righteous and the wicked. All people must be prepared for that day by being in Christ’s kingdom today. No one knows when the judgment will come. Jesus said, “Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Jesus concludes by asking if the disciples have understood the message of the parables. They say they understand. Then he said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.” When someone understands the workings of the

kingdom, they have a responsibility to share those rich truths with others. They can then encourage and strengthen others who will hear and will be led into God's kingdom. We can share not only what Jesus brought—the new, but also the truth that came through the prophets before Jesus—the old.

These parables of Jesus are **important** because they tell us about the characteristics of the kingdom. The kingdom will continue to grow until the judgment day. Belonging to the kingdom has eternal rewards.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that becoming a part of the kingdom of God is the most important thing a person can do during their life. This kingdom has no end.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What did Jesus say would happen at the end of time?
A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, "Jesus said there will be a separation of the righteous and wicked," you are correct.
2. What did the man do who found the hidden treasure in a field?
A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, "The man hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field," you are correct.
3. What is the main truth of the parables?
A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, "The main truth of the parables is that becoming a part of the kingdom of God is the most important thing anyone can do," you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to learn these parables by memory and tell them to someone who has never heard them. After telling the parables, ask this question, "Based on what Jesus emphasized in these parables, what lesson is most important to share with others?" Probably the most important lesson concerns the final separation of the righteous and the wicked, and the necessity of being ready for that day. Ask the person you are talking to if they are ready, if the judgment day should come today. Are they part of God's growing kingdom?