

Bible Study Class
Clayton Presbyterian Church
Lesson 9 Jesus
The First Parables of Jesus

Lord, we need to hear the lessons of the parables for our own lives, help us listen with open minds and hearts.
Amen.

Concerning Hypocrisy, Worldly Anxiety, Watchfulness, and Jesus' Approaching Passion

Read Luke 12: 1-3

1. What is the "leaven of the Pharisees?" Why did Jesus warn His disciples about it? The leaven of the Pharisees was hypocrisy. They wanted the approval of men rather than God. Jesus knew that His disciples would have to undergo trials and withstand persecution. Whatever the disciples said would be made public. Fear of God should dominate. In today's world with instant communication, whatever someone says can be heard literally around the world in seconds.

Read Luke 12: 8-12

2. Who has Jesus promised to confess before the angels of God? Who has he promised to deny before them? Jesus promised to claim those who confess Him publicly but He will deny those who reject Him. If the disgrace of being cast out of the synagogue tempted them to deny Christ, or the honors given by their fellow-men seemed too precious to be sanctified for Christ's sake, they were to remember that the confession or denial of Jesus involved eternal honor or disgrace in the presence of the angelic host.

3. How were disciples instructed to answer when questioned by magistrates and others in power? They were to listen to the Holy Spirit.

Read Luke 12: 13-21

4. What prompted Jesus to warn His disciples to beware of covetousness? A question from a man in the crowd who wanted Jesus to help him get his inheritance. While Jesus laid down laws of justice and generosity, He didn't enforce any. The man needed to appeal to civil authorities. He warned against covetousness.

5. In the parable of the rich fool, what demonstrates the folly of laying up treasures on earth, and not in heaven? The man seems to have gained his wealthy honestly. He uses the pronouns "I" and "my" repeatedly. The

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Eastern barn is a pit or dry cistern built underground with an opening at the top. These the man proposed to enlarge by pulling down the walls or sides and extending them. He hoarded his goods instead of sharing. He thought he owned them. He tried to satisfy the hunger of the soul with food. He forgot that God could command his soul. The fool dies during the night. After death, possessions are usually dispersed.

Read Luke 12: 22-40

6. How does Jesus illustrate the principle that one should place his trust in God for the physical necessities of life? He says that crows don't plant, harvest, or build barns but God feeds them. The original for the words "little flock" indicates the extreme smallness of the band of disciples, and also the tenderness of the Master for them. They are exhorted to remember that they are the heirs of the heavenly kingdom, and that their treasures are there.

7. Who is said to seek after the things of the world? Why should God's children not be anxious about those things? The pagans seek after things of the world. God knows what you need and will provide if you are concerned with the Kingdom of God.

8. When the Lord returns, which servants will he bless? Why? The servants that He finds awake and ready. Because they have faithfully awaited His return.

Oriental weddings are at night. Watches were what we call, shifts of work. This passage reminds one of the Last Supper where Jesus sets the example of service.

Repentance Enjoined, Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

The first five verses of this chapter talk about Pilate have killing Galileans while they were offering sacrifices. Sacrifices were supposed to cleanse guilt and now these people had been killed instead of cleansed. Think of how we react to people being murdered during a church service. The Jews had a superstition that extraordinary misfortune meant extraordinary guilt. We understand that sin isn't quantified, sin is sin. There are individuals who sin but there is also the ever-present evil in world around us. We don't know who told Jesus about this incident.

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Jesus refers to an incident that isn't recorded elsewhere about 18 people who were killed when a tower fell in Jerusalem. It may have been a turret from the wall of the city that ran near the pool of Siloam. Fourfold describes this as an act of God and it was inflicted on the people of Jerusalem.

Read Luke 13: 6-9

9. In the parable of the fig tree, what happened to the tree if it didn't bear fruit? It was cut down. What lesson is to be learned from this parable? We are to witness by word and deed so others will come to know Christ. Jesus likened his hearers to a fig-tree planted in a choice place—a vineyard, the odd corners of which are still used as advantageous spots for fig-trees. Israel is often described as God's vineyard. Since some of his listeners had heard both Jesus and John the Baptist, they had ample opportunity to repent.

The First Great Group of Parables

Jesus had used parables before, this appears to have been the first occasion when he strung them together so as to form a discourse. Parable comes from the Greek *paraballo*, which means, "I place beside" in order to compare. It is the placing of a narrative describing an ordinary event in natural life beside an implied spiritual narrative for the purpose of illustrating the spiritual.

Read Mark 4: 3-20

10. Briefly summarize the parable of the sower. Explain its meaning. Fourfold Gospel tells us that Orientals live in cities and towns. The field may be some distance away. The seed is the Word of God, some hold for a short time, others get distracted, some have deep soil and the seed turns into mature plants and they bear fruit. The fields in Palestine are unfenced and have road or footpaths leading to them. These paths become very hard packed so that any seed that fell on the path wouldn't root. The seed that fell on the rocky soil had only a thin layer of soil and no way for the roots to reach through the rocks for water. Palestine has a large variety of thorns. Some grow so tall and thick that one commentator says that even a horse can't push through them. The good soil will produce thirty

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or even a hundredfold. All these types of soil can be found next to each other. These last are believers who share their beliefs and cause others to believe. Imagine the people listening to Jesus and seeing someone sowing seeds in the distance.

11. Why did Jesus teach in parables? What prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in regard to the parables of Jesus? Jesus was teaching in parables so that only those who were truly interested would understand. He was telling them that these weren't just pretty descriptions. He was urging them to seek for the underlying message. Isaiah 6:9-10 God commanded Isaiah to teach, even though the people with hardened hearts were made worse by his teaching rather than better. Hopefully their example would cause their children and grandchildren to see their pain and try to avoid a similar fate. Sometimes the children of alcoholics avoid liquor for this same reason.

Read Mark 4: 30-34

12. In the parable of the mustard seed, what characteristic of the seed is emphasized? Why? What lesson is to be learned from this parable? Its small size as a seed, but the plant itself becomes like a tree. In Palestine, some are ten feet tall. Show Picture. The Christian faith grew from the eleven disciples into the world's largest religion with over 2 billion followers.

Matthew 13:33 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast, which a woman took and hid in a bushel of wheat flour until the yeast had worked its way through all the dough."

13. What characteristic of leaven does Jesus use to teach a lesson? What is that lesson? In Oriental cooking yeast isn't saved separate from bread. You have what we would call a "starter dough" that is mixed with the larger new dough. The leaven makes the whole dough rise. Leaven represents the quickness, quietness, thoroughness, and sureness with which gospel truth diffuses itself through human society. Christians as leaven make the world a better place even when it seems that our numbers are small.

Read Matthew 13:44-50

The three parables in this section appear to have been addressed privately to the disciples. In the absence of banks and other trust repositories, the men of that day hid their treasures as best they could. But suppose the

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owner of the treasure died without telling anyone where the treasure was. The parable speaks of such a lost treasure. Technically it belonged to the owner of the field, but practically it belonged to him who found it. The finder purchases the field.

14. In the parable of the great treasure, what did the man do who found the treasure? What is the lesson of this parable? He covered it and then sold everything so he could buy the field. To follow Christ is to give up other things and focus on following Him.
15. What is the lesson of the pearl of great price? The love for God should overshadow our other interests and desires in life. In this parable, the buyer is looking for a pearl.
16. What lesson is to be learned from the parable of the net? We are all in this world together, but in the final analysis Christ will separate the good fish from the bad. The good are rewarded and the bad are sent to eternal punishment.

Lord, we have heard what you told your disciples, help us be your little flock to reflect Your will to others here in Clayton. Amen.

Luke 12: 1-3	Mark 4: 3-20	Matthew 13:44-50	Luke 12: 22-40
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