

Jesus' Parables in Chronological Order

Four Kingdom of Heaven Parables

Parable #16 — Matthew 13:44 — Hidden Treasure

⁴⁴ “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.

Parable #17 — Matthew 13:45-46 — Fine Pearl

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.
⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Parable #18 — Matthew 13:47-50 — The Fishing Net

⁴⁷ “Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ 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. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked.

“Yes,” they replied.

Parable #19 — Matthew 13:52 — Owner of a House

⁵² He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

Kingdom of Heaven Parables #16-#19 ~ Discussion Questions

1. What could the topic of Parables #16 and #17 be entitled?
2. Was the man who found the treasure behaving unethically by doing what he did? Why or why not?
3. What is the main point of the Hidden Treasure parable (#16)?
4. Pearls are mentioned only five times in the Bible. What were they considered? (Matthew 7:6, 1 Timothy 2:9, Revelation 17:4, 18:12, 18:16, 21:21)
5. In parables 16 and 17, we can learn *six* principles about the kingdom of heaven.
 - A. What is its value?
 - B. Is it casually or easily seen?
 - C. How is the kingdom seized and made your own? (Crux of these parables)
 - D. How does the kingdom relate to joy?
 - E. Does everyone enter the kingdom under the same circumstances?
 - F. How is the kingdom made personal? (Luke 9:57-62, Matt 10:37-39, 16:24)
6. There are two types of fishing nets: a casting net that catches only the fish it is thrown over and a drag net that catches everything. Which net did Jesus refer to in Matthew 13:47? What about when he spoke of “fishers of men” (Matt 4:18-19)?
7. What did the fishermen do with all the fish (Matt 13:48)? How will this be like what the angels do at the end of the age? (Matthew, 13:49, 25:31-32, 34, 41)
8. Jesus already told a similar parable about good and bad people coexisting (#12, wheat and weeds, Matt 13:24-30). What’s the difference in the message?
9. How is the kingdom of heaven like the fishing net in parable #18?
10. We don’t like to hear about hell. Many preachers these days don’t even mention it. Some Christian radio stations have banned messages about it. Cartoonists mock it. Which prophet or person in the Bible spoke more about hell than anyone else?
11. How would you describe hell?
12. Jesus asked his disciples if they understood the eight kingdom of heaven parables. Do you? If you understand them, what did Jesus say you are to do?

Kingdom of Heaven Parables #116-#19 ~ Leader's Notes

1. What could the topic of Parables #16 and #17 be entitled?

According to John MacArthur, a good title would be “The Incomparable Value of the Kingdom.”

2. Was the man who found the treasure behaving unethically by doing what he did? Why or why not?

People frequently buried their valuables in Jesus' day. The man in this first parable was perhaps a laborer plowing a field when he discovered a buried treasure, say a bag of gold coins. The Jewish rabbinic law said that “if a man finds scattered fruit, scattered money...these belong to the finder.” So the man was actually very ethical about his discovery. He could have simply taken the bag when he found it, but he didn't. Instead, he went through all the trouble of buying the field. Also note, the treasure that was hidden in the field apparently did not belong to the man who owned the field. If he had owned it, he wouldn't have sold the field without digging up the treasure. He didn't know it was there so he wasn't being swindled..

3. What is the main point of the Hidden Treasure parable (#16)?

The point of the parable is this: a man found something so valuable that he sold everything he had in order to get it. He was so ecstatic about finding the treasure that he was willing to do whatever he needed to acquire it (honestly and legally).

Is that the way you feel about the kingdom of heaven?

4. Pearls are mentioned only five times in the Bible. What were they considered? (Matthew 7:6, 1 Timothy 2:9, Revelation 17:4, 18:12, 18:16, 21:21)

Matthew 7:6 – “Don't waste what is holy on people who are unholy [dogs]. Don't throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you.” [NLT]

1 Timothy 2:9 – I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes,

Revelation 17:4 – The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. (Rev 18:12, 18:16 similar)

Revelation 21:21 – The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

So the Bible says three things about pearls: they are holy, valuable, and used in the building of heaven.

5. In parables 16 and 17, we can learn *six* principles about the kingdom of heaven.

A. What is its value?

Priceless, incomparable value. Nothing comes close in value. Christ and His Kingdom are a treasure that is rich beyond comparison: it is incorruptible, undefiled, and eternal.

B. Is it casually or easily seen? The treasure in Matthew 13:44 was hidden; it wasn't lying on the surface of the ground. The merchant had to search for the pearl. In the same way, the value of salvation is not apparent to most people. The world looks at Christians and doesn't understand why they worship God and why they help others.

C. How is the kingdom seized and made your own? (Crux of these parables) Each of the men in the two parables finds something that he *personally* appropriates and makes his own. That shows us that you can be under the dominion of God (everyone is) but not be a member of His Kingdom. Before a person can *personally* appropriate the Kingdom, he must come to the point where he sees the value of the Kingdom. God has offered something of true value to men, yet it is incredible the extremes people go to acquire things that are worthless in the long run.

D. How does the kingdom relate to joy? In verse 44, we find that the man's response to finding the treasure was one of joy. People want to experience joy. You can find true joy by discovering the Kingdom of heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ.

E. Does everyone enter the kingdom under the same circumstances? There is one big difference between parables #16 and #17: In the parable of the hidden treasure, the man made his find by accident. In the parable of the pearl, the man was searching for pearls when he found the one of great value. One was stumbling, one was seeking, but both found the kingdom. God provides a way for everyone.

F. How is the kingdom made personal? (Luke 9:57-62, Matt 10:37-39, 16:24) The kingdom is made personal by a transition. There is a transaction made to acquire salvation, but it is not with money or good works. The transaction is this: You give up all you have for all He has.

Matthew 10:37-39 – Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

6. There are two types of fishing nets: a casting net that catches only the fish it is thrown over and a drag net that catches everything. Which net did Jesus refer to in Matthew 13:47? What about when he spoke of "fishers of men" (Matt 4:18-19)?

Look up the scripture references for the answers to Questions 6 and 7.

7. What did the fishermen do with all the fish (Matt 13:48)? How will this be like what the angels do at the end of the age? (Matthew, 13:49, 25:31-32, 34, 41)

8. Jesus already told a similar parable about good and bad people coexisting (#12, wheat and weeds, Matt 13:24-30). What's the difference in the message?

You might wonder why Jesus taught the parable of the dragnet, which talks about the separation of good and evil, when He already talked about that separation in the parable of the wheat and the weeds. One reason He taught it was because the parable of the wheat and the weeds emphasizes the coexistence of good and evil, not the separation of good and evil. Another reason Jesus had for teaching the parable of the dragnet was because of His compassion for men. He wanted to warn them about hell. He said, "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return." (Matt 25:13). Jesus cautioned people not to take their sins lightly because inevitably they would be accountable before God. (Hebrews 4:13)

9. How is the kingdom of heaven like the fishing net in parable #18?

The Kingdom of heaven is like a net. That net moves through the world unseen. When the net touches the back of a fish, the creature simply swims a little further ahead of it, enjoying what appears to be permanent freedom. Men move about in this world imagining themselves to be free, fulfilling their own desires, with little knowledge that the net of judgment is coming closer and closer. Each time men are touched by the net, they move a little further along. Eventually they will find themselves hitting the part of the net in front of them. They will make a wild dash to escape, yet find themselves totally surrounded by the net. Finally, they will be dragged onto the shore, flailing as they enter death.

Men may not see God moving in the world, but He is moving. When they are touched by the gospel of Jesus Christ, or become scared by the threat of judgment, they dart away into the freedom they think is ahead of them. But sooner or later, they will find they are still caught in the net that is moving them toward judgment. The Kingdom will ultimately engulf all men, and God will separate them with His angels.

10. We don't like to hear about hell. Many preachers these days don't even mention it. Some Christian radio stations have banned messages about it. Cartoonists mock it. Which prophet or person in the Bible spoke more about hell than anyone else?

A goodly number of well-known pastors and Christians have said that Jesus spoke more about hell than about heaven. Specifically: D.A. Carson, Leon Morris, John MacArthur, Jerry Falwell, Rick Warren, Mark Driscoll, and Robert Jeffress,

But on closer analysis by Dan Wilkinson, those statements are very questionable. Dan found that in the 1,944 verses in the four gospels that contain Jesus' words, only about 60 of those verses—or about three percent of them—might be construed as either directly or indirectly referring to hell. On the other hand, there are more than three times as many verses in the gospels in which Jesus references heaven, eternal life, or his coming kingdom: 192 verses in all, or almost 10%.

When we look at the Old Testament, we find many prophets speaking about horrible things to come to those who are disobedient. If we generous and call them all hell, then Jeremiah plus his second book Lamentations would certainly be the winner in speaking of hell. I'm guessing that Isaiah might take second place, but Jesus would certainly be next in line. I'm not sure what this means and I don't consider the questions especially important, but I included it for general interest.

11. How would you describe hell?

Hell is a place of unrelieved torment and horrible misery for both body and soul. Some people think that hell will only be experienced by the inner consciousness. But hell will be experienced by the body, too. Transcendent, eternal bodies are going to be given to the damned; they will suffer in those bodies forever. The unrelieved torment in hell will be experienced by different people in varying degrees. Hell will be horrible for everyone there, but some people will suffer more than others. Hell will be endless and everlasting.

12. Jesus asked his disciples if they understood the eight kingdom of heaven parables. Do you? If you understand them, what did Jesus say you are to do?

Jesus trained the disciples to be laborers in the harvest and warn men about the coming judgment. He says here that the disciples are now like the householder in Parable #19 who dispenses supplies from his storehouse to meet peoples' needs. If someone needed clothing, food, or care, the householder gave it to him.

The householder was also wise enough to dispense both old and new things, so that the old things didn't ultimately become useless. He was a wise steward of everything he possessed.

The disciples are now householders with a storehouse filled with both old and new things. In other words, they knew the Old Testament and knew about the mysteries of the Kingdom. They could not only teach about the Old Testament and Jewish tradition; they could dispense the new mysteries of the Kingdom. They now knew more than the Jewish scribes. All that the scribes knew was the Old Testament. But the disciples had knowledge of both old and new things in perfect balance. God had called and trained them, and now wanted them to spread their knowledge. Old experiences and new observations, all have their use.

Today we are to proclaim the same message that the disciples were to proclaim: Have faith and accept the gift of life from God through Jesus, seek the kingdom of

heaven and joyfully receive it because unfortunately if you don't, you are destined to spend eternity in hell.

Some of these notes are from recorded messages of John MacArthur. More information can be found at www.biblebb.com.

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