

Considering some of the Parables

When considering the meaning of a parable the first and foremost thing to consider is the picture painted. The idea is not to offer conclusions the parables will not support.

The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and The Prodigal Son (Luke 15)

It is often concluded that the lost sheep and the lost coin are referring to unbelievers, yet the context does not support these conclusions. Jesus provides the parable of the prodigal son as a supportive third witness. First of all the Lord knows who belongs to Him. The sheep belongs to the Sheppard and the coin belongs to the woman. The Sheppard and the woman are looking for what they previously had in their possession. The Sheppard and the woman are both aware that their property is missing and that it needs to be found. It is unlikely that a lost sheep would find its way back on its own; and certainly a coin is helpless to find its way back to the one who lost it. The prodigal son finds his way home because of his thoughts regarding his previous relationship he had with his father. These thoughts regarding God's Word take us from being lost to the point of being found. Another way to put it is God's word finds us when we are lost. God's people are lead by the Word to find the sheep that are lost. The Sheppard and the woman are looking for what is lost until they find it. The idea is: it's being searched for because it belongs to God's family. Some of the Pharisees and the Scribes were expressing jealousy and hostilities towards Jesus. Many of those who were considered sinners and or the lower class by these self-righteous leaders of Israel were coming to realize that Jesus was the Christ; their savior. Jesus was being revealed to those who were predestined to be adopted as sons. None of this is to say that unbelievers don't exist; certainly they do, yet these passages God has dedicated to those who have already desired and received the gift on salvation through Jesus Christ. Often people such as these take the course of getting lost right after their response to the Words of Salvation. Much of the time these persons are lacking the support of an earthly Sheppard; therefore the inevitably of getting lost shortly after the salvation experience is almost certain and God always knew this. When Jesus was on earth there were thousands responding to His ministry through faith, thousands had responded to John the Baptists ministry and were putting their trust in Messiah prior to Jesus being revealed. God the Holy Spirit makes the Words of the Gospel perspicuous and effective for people wanting a life with God. There are times when the orthodoxy of the word declines; being obscured in the shadows of greed and selfishness. Despite any attack on God's Word, in any portion of human History in the past even until now, God is still saving His elect. No amount of deviation can obscure the simplicity of God providing the Savior to a lost and dying world. In every generation God is getting His Harvest despite any and all extenuating circumstances.

The city of God continues to be built despite anything that Satan can throw at it. Despite there being any wall or obstacle of Man whether it be a manifestation of imaginations or social, geographical barriers. God's Word is able to pass through any and all obstacles created by man or Satan. The parable of the dinner feast is the perfect example of this principle. The dinner feast vividly displays three principles. First of all everybody has a chance to go to this dinner feast yet many will decline the offer from God despite He making an extenuated effort in the last minutes before it started. Secondly, God's efforts are demonstrated by the servants going to the homes to invite the people: notice that the people are (going out) to do mundane activities rather than wanting to give honors to God their creator. Thirdly, they went out in the streets of the city's to invite people in transit, and those out farther on the highways and those along the borders: those along the borders representing the outcasts/homeless of the world. As we have seen in these passages Jesus was facing a great deal of scrutiny from the religious leaders of Israel and was providing these parables to them in order that they would see their bias in regards to them having a judgmental attitude regarding Jesus' ministry to His people; and those whom He would save. Jesus would save His people from their sins just as the scriptures demonstrate. Once again some of the Pharisees would be saved; this is why Jesus was among them at times as was the case when Jesus chose to accept an invitation to a member of the Sanhedrin on the Sabbath. Jesus fully expected to see the Pharisees there; God provided an opportunity for these and others to see the light of His Word. God's provision would be another healing on the Sabbath; this miracle provided that the Pharisees and the experts of the Law could see their biased thinking. Obviously, a person would lift a person or an animal out of a hole on any day of the week. The man with the illness was in a hopeless situation and needed saved. This is a picture of us having spiritual sicknesses and them needing to be healed. On the Sabbath the Bread represented God's perfect Word providing healing/strength/fellowship with God and yet religion is helpless to see the true advantages that God has provided. In another step we see Jesus' observations: the people were having selfish interests seeking to seat themselves in the places of honor. In another passage Jesus was pointing out that the Pharisees had sat (themselves) in the seat of Moses; the Idea being: God had not placed them there; they were simply exalting themselves; and therefore, will be seated in a lower position by God; (they will be humbled). It is interesting to note that the context is in reference to the kingdom of God. So it's safe to say that God intends to save many of these evil religious types. If this were not the case many of those really wanting to live with God forever would be left out and would remain lost which we can see from the parable of the lost sheep and coin is not God's will. Many will have genuine interests regarding God when first saved yet the world the flesh and especially the Devil seeks to destroy the people of God. Despite some failing completely regarding the Spiritual life after salvation; they are still saved by the foundation which is Christ.

Jesus instructs us about spiritual things: His instructions to invite people that can not pay us back points to the fact that we can not pay back God for the salvation He has provided for us through Jesus Christ. We tend to seek honor from men rather than recognizing our spiritual depravity and the need of 100% reliance on God. We seek to honor each other rather than God. We can be repugnant to God; this parable seeks that we reach out to strangers rather than people we know. This says to invite the poor crippled lame, and the blind: this indicative to all of us; we all suffer from various weaknesses and are instructed to support one another. The point is that none of us can stand alone, and are dependant on others to be happy and healthy. The reward comes from God because we step out of our circle for Him, just as Jesus stepped out of His circle to save us. We were strangers and foreigners to Him prior to seeing His kindness. Let us go out beyond the gates and bear his reproaches.