

Seeking God's Kingdom First

Early Parables More Obvious and Self Explanatory

Latter Parables will Shift in Complexity & Require More Explanation from Jesus

Context Is Critical to Understanding Parables

The context should inform the hearer or the reader of the truth Jesus is revealing.

This morning we're going to spend a little time discussing the principle of seeking first the kingdom of God and not worldly treasure.

I. The Context

Mykel spoke about parable of salt of the earth and light of the world.

1. These parables given as a part of Sermon on the Mount
 - Matthew 5-7 Is all considered the Sermon on the Mount
 - This was early in Jesus' public ministry
2. This was primarily a discourse given to the Disciples
 - Matthew *"Jesus was surrounded by His disciples as he began to teach...."*
 - Luke says *"He set his gaze upon the disciples as he started to teach...."*
 - Doesn't mean others weren't present, but primarily instructions to them.
3. Jesus was explaining expectations God has of disciples
 - Begins with Beatitudes
 - Salt & Light in the World - believers should be set apart and influence the culture around us.

Matthew 5:20 Becomes a pivotal Truth In Jesus' Teaching

"Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven."

Jesus Proceeds to Contrast the Life of the Pharisees with That of God's Standards

Take A Look At The Religious System Jesus Is Condemning

1. 5:21-26 Law says do not murder, do not harbor anger.
2. 5:27-32 Law says do not commit adultery, don't even look at others lustfully.
3. 5:33-37 Do not make false vows and pile up oaths and invoke God's name.
4. 5:38-47 Do not misrepresent what an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth means.
Instead, do not repay evil with evil but love others, even when it seems impossible.

Mat. 6:1-18. Jesus Begins to Address The Matter of Hearts & Priorities

- 6:1-18 *"Do not put on a show with your righteous deeds because....."*
Vs. 1b *"Otherwise you have no reward with your Father in Heaven."*
Vs. 2b *"If you want glory for your offering now, then you'll get it now"*
Vs. 5b *"If you want praise for your prayers now, then you'll get your praise now."*
Vs. 16b *"If you want to be noticed for such great fasting, then you'll get your notoriety and reward now."*

Now Jesus Gives The Parables

I Believe These Are Both In Regards to What He Has Just Said about The Religious System And What He Is About to Say in Vs. 25-34 about being anxious and worrying.

II. The Caution - Parables

Read Matt. 6:19-24

Luke 12:15-21 (This is the parallel passage that Luke records. Luke places a greater emphasis on the Rich Fool who clearly loves his possessions and loves the excess)

1. Store Up Treasures in Heaven, Not Worldly Materialism Vs. 19-21

- Greek word is THESAUROS. We get the word thesaurus meaning a lot of synonyms. Similar words in excess that mean the same thing.
- It carries the connotation of storing up in excess.
- Jesus reveals that the Rich Fool in Luke was very pleased with his excess
- His excess became his savior.
- He believed his troubles would all be satisfied through the excess he had accumulated.

Illustration: ***"You can't take it with you...." "Never seen a hearse pulling a U-Haul trailer.."***

2. Eye Is A Lamp of the Body Vs. 22-23

- This is akin to our heart being led by our treasure and desires.
- Our eyes also influence our priorities and set our course.
- If your eyes are impure they will set you on an impure path.
- **Clear** = more literally means ***healthy, sincere, harmless, without guilt.***

Illustration: Camera lenses directly impact the quality of the image inside

- **Job 31:6-7** ***"Let the Lord weigh me with accurate scales and let God know my integrity. If my step has turned from the way, or my heart followed my eyes, or any spot has stuck to my hands...."***

3. No One Can Serve Two Masters Vs. 24

- This probably had a little greater understand in the ANE with bond-servants
 - Disciples would have clearly understood that a man belongs to only one person.
 - Positionally we have been bought. Practically we go back & forth.
- **I Tim. 6:10** ***"For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil and some who have longed for money so badly they have actually wandered away from the faith."***

There Are 2 Ways We Store Up Treasure for Ourselves In This Life

1. The Treasures of Monetary & Material Stockpiling. This is the Obvious One

- We reveal a love for money when our financials place more trust in the provision than the Provider.
- Jesus is not saying don't plan for retirement, college, medical expenses.
- Are we stockpiling excess without any consideration for glorifying God?
- Jesus said the Rich Fool laid up treasure for himself.
- He clearly had more than he needed for living.
- Luke Vs. 33 Jesus reveals the Fool should have sold his excess and given to charity.

2. The Treasures of Self Glorification Stockpiling

- The scribes and Pharisees had manufactured lifestyles that earned them glory in the eyes of the public.
- Jesus said their treasures were Earthly and their rewards they would get in full now.
- But the treasures Jesus tells us to store up are in Heaven:
- Vs. 4 *"Your Father who sees you in secret will repay you..."*
- Vs. 6 *"Your Father who sees you in secret will repay you..."*
- Vs. 14 *"For if you forgive others, your Heavenly Father will forgive you..."*
- Vs. 18 *"The Father will repay you for what you do in secret..."*

III. The Comfort Vs. 25-34

"For this reason I say to you,"

"I've just told you not store up excess for yourselves.....don't worry, God will meet your needs."

1. First Command Jesus Gives He Reiterates 3 Times

Vs. 1. *"Do Not Be Anxious for what you shall eat, what you shall drink, nor what you shall wear."*

Vs. 31 *"Do Not Be Anxious saying what shall eat, what you shall drink, nor what you shall wear."*

Vs. 34 *"Therefor Do Not Be Anxious for Tomorrow"*

- **Proof #1 Look at the birds.**

- They don't stockpile food in storehouses, but God provides
- Aren't you worth more to God than they are since you've been made in His image

- **Proof #2 Have You Actually Added to Your Life by Worrying?**

- If anything, stress and anxiety shortens our lives

- **Proof #3 Look at the Flowers**

- They don't work and labor to clothe themselves
- On Solomon's best day his wardrobe didn't look as wonderful as God's natural creation

- **Proof # 4 Look at the Grass & Hay of the Field**

- God clothes the grass and cares for it until its life is over.
- The grass doesn't worry about water, or clothing, or sustenance.
- It is majestic one day, and at the end of its life it is used for fire.
- If God cares for the grass which is used for kindling, how much more will He care for you?

- **Proof #5 Tomorrow Has Enough Trouble of Its Own**

- Tomorrow is its own day and own circumstances. It will have its own challenges
- To worry, fuss, and try to protect yourself for what is yet to come is fruitless.

- **Proof #6 This Is the Behavior of NonBelievers**

- You should know from your own experiences that God takes care of you.
- We should understand why nonbelievers are anxious, why they worry, why they work so hard, and why they insist on stockpile provisions in storehouses to provide for themselves.

2. Second Command Jesus Gives

Vs. 33 *"Seek First God's Kingdom & His Righteousness"*

- God's promise is that in doing so, He will provide for all your needs.
- Vs. 30 Jesus reveals that our failure to trust God is a faith issue

Summary:

Storing Up Treasures on Earth Can Look Like 2 Things

1. Seeking Our Own Glory Now

- We can be more motivated for “likes” and clicks on our social media posts
- Jesus may say “Ok, you can have your glory now....”
- Maybe we want to be seen for ultra Pius behavior among our fellow believers.
- I’ve seen some pastors hand-out money on a platform to the less fortunate of society and it was ultimately for their own glory, not that of God.

2. Seeking Monetary and Financial Comfort, Not Seeking First The Kingdom of God

- This is maybe the one category in scripture where the Western Church has the greater struggle.
- Often we’re discussing persecution and other issues that we’re quite insulated from.
- But the Church in the U.S. is heavily plagued with a love of money.

- Our U.S. currency is printed “In God We Trust”
- Most of us live as though these say “In This Bill I Trust”

- Loving money over the Lord is simply when we rely on it for provision and not Him
- It is not about having money. It is about our heart and attitude toward money.
- Do we trust the Lord to provide for all our needs?
- Do we resist the temptation to stockpile significant excess in lieu of finding ways to bless others and glorify God and store up treasure in Heaven?