



First Lutheran Church

Gospel of Matthew

Summer 2026 Reading Challenge



Deep Dive: parables

Talking to the Kids

Place a piece of fruit in a paper bag. Let your kids see it and have them describe it to you, without using its name.

For instance, if you place an apple in the bag, they cannot say apple.

But how do they describe it? Do they compare its size to something else in the house? Do they describe its color as being similar to anything? Do they describe its aroma or its taste?

The point isn't to guess what is in the bag, but to hear how they describe what is in the bag without naming it. This is a little like creating a parable, a short story that describes what God's Kingdom is like, when we cannot fully see it.

"Oh, when I bite into this, juices burst out and run down my chin and I am in heaven as the sweet taste fills my mouth."

And sure that could describe many fruits - but it is the point. Parables don't always have a simple meaning.

Week 6: Matthew chapters 13 and 14

- Aren't parables fun? the ancient Greek word for parable means something along the lines of "something cast aside" that is something that needs clarifying or explanation. In the Gospels, these parables take on the form of riddles, figures of speech, allegories, or short lessons.
- For most of the Christian era, these parables were treated as allegories that had simple meanings that stood one and for all time. But over time, theologians have come to realize that these parables are not always so simple to dissect. Nor should they carry one meaning for all time.
- Parables do have a certain "eschatological" (that is a view looking towards the end of times) perspective, and when we read them this way, we realize they are trying to communicate some way that God's Kingdom, which is yet to come, can be experienced now. This means they are not little lessons on how to live, they are not encoded moral stories. They are helping us see a bigger picture of God's Kingdom.
- This means they are hard to breakdown, just ask a preacher anytime a parable comes up as the lesson for the day. They are hard to express in a non-parabolic way. And as we seek to understand, a lot of how we will understand the parable will depend on the situation we find ourselves in.
- We may not understand why someone would bury a treasure in a field and then buy the field. Or maybe we just found a plot of land where one day we will build our biggest house on, and we realize the value of holding that piece of property. We may not get the 4 types of soil, until we go through a rough patch and see our faith wither.
- Matthew borrows these parables from Mark, his primary source, and places them here after a section of being rejected. These parables demonstrate his vision even after being rejected, and help the reader transition into the new community which will be set forth in the coming chapters.
- Matthew also believes that to know God's plan for history culminating in the judgment of the Son of Man is to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. But that doesn't mean we have to understand those mysteries the first, or hundredth, time we read the parable.
- As you read through chapter 13 and all eight of the parables written here, which one jumps out at you as the easiest for you to understand? Which one is the hardest to understand?

Gathered by God, we live our faith with: Compassion, Grace, Gratitude, and Joy

First Lutheran Church * 116 South B Street * Monmouth, IL 61462

309-734-2106 * office@flcmonmouth.org * www.flcmonmouth.org

Pastor Jamie Gallagher * prjamie@flcmonmouth.org