

Chapter 4

Bible Concept: Parables

A parable is a story used to teach a lesson. Jesus uses parables to tell us about God and the Kingdom of Heaven. Sometimes the meaning of the story is very obvious. Sometimes the meaning of the story is hidden in the story, and we have to think about what it means.

Jesus tells parables using images and concepts familiar to the people of his day. So when Jesus tells the people the Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed, he knows the people know what a mustard seed is. As we learn to read the Bible, sometimes we are not as familiar with the images that Jesus uses. Study notes in the margin or at the bottom of some Bibles will help us to understand the images Jesus uses. Also, if you have a Bible dictionary, that can help, too. For instance, if you are not familiar with how a mustard seed works, look it up in a Bible dictionary. There you can read the explanation that it is a very tiny seed that grows into a large plant. The article might even include a picture of one.

Part of the fun of reading Jesus' parables today is that we learn what life was like when he lived and taught. Since many of the people he lived with were people who depended on agriculture and fishing as their primary means of support, most of Jesus' parables reflect those themes. Most importantly parables are meant to make us think.

Modern day parables include fairy tales because they teach important moral lessons. Some television shows are parables in the way they use fiction and drama to convey their lessons. In sermons, pastors even use stories from their own life and from experiences of the congregation because often using a story everyone can understand is the best way to tell about God and the Kingdom of Heaven.

Chapter 4, Verse 41 reads:

And they were filled with awe and said among themselves, "Who is this man, that even the wind and the waves obey him?"
New Living Translation (NLT)

And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Reflect on that statement for a moment.

Modern weather predictors have a hard time getting the weather correct. Jesus has the power to change the weather just by speaking. Why do you think the Gospel writer wants us to know that?

Memory
Verses

Definition

The expressions "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven" are used frequently in the Gospels. These expressions are interchangeable and mean the same thing.

They tell of a place where God completely rules and where God's Will is done absolutely. Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God is near, and teaches any who will listen how to recognize and

Focus Story: The Parable of the Sower, 4:1-20

What seeds did you plant in your garden this last summer?

If yes, how did your garden do? Did anything fail? Did anything do better than you expected? How often did you have to weed?

If no, talk with someone who did plant a garden. Ask this person these questions about their garden. How do they feel when something they planted succeeded or failed?

In Jesus' parable, there are 4 types of soil and later Jesus explains these types of soil. What are the soil types and Jesus' explanation for each?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Who is the farmer?

Why does God scatter the seed of faith on all types of soil?

Talk about a time when you were really excited about God and being a part of the church.

Talk about a time when you were really not excited about God or being a part of the church.

How do you see God working in your life when you are excited and when you are not excited about being part of the church?



*praying
together*



Praying together as a family is a special time. Light a candle to remember that God is present in your midst as you pray. Start a prayer journal tonight and write in the names of those for whom you pray. Each time you pray, write in your journal what you are praying for.

Pray together:

O gardener of our hearts, help us to have good soil that our faith may grow with deep roots. Send us to share our faith with others, that their hearts may be open to your word.

Amen

Talk about people you know who are really excited about their faith. Ask God to keep blessing them with faith. Talk about people you know who are really not interested in the church at all, ask God to scatter seeds of faith in their hearts.

Conclude your time by saying the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen