

Lesson 1

THE SOWER & THE SOILS

Mt 13:3-9, 18-23, Mk 4:2-9, 13-20, Lk 8:4-8, 11-15

I. Background of the Parable

1. Context

1. Many are following and being healed by Jesus, which leads to their amazement, Mt 12:15, 22.
2. In contrast, the Pharisees are constantly watching Jesus in order to discredit or trap him, Mt 12:2, 14, 24, 38.
3. Jesus is ready to teach about the kingdom, primarily in parables, Mt 13:3, 11, 18, 24...

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

1. Sower: One who scatters seed.
2. Wayside: Roadway of hard packed dirt or stones.
3. Rocky soil: Shallow soil over rock.
4. Seed: That which gives life, probably a grain of wheat in this story.
5. Fruit: The product of a plant that is useful and that has the ability to reproduce.
6. Heart: The inner man, that part of a person that thinks and plans and feels emotion.

II. Understanding the Parable

1. The sower scatters seed in the field, in expectation of a fruitful harvest. **The seed** represents the word of the kingdom, the gospel. The field is the hearts of people, Mt 13:3, 19.
2. Some seeds fall on **the road**, where there is no soil to cover them, and the birds eat them. This represents those who hear the word without understanding. There is never any life because Satan snatches away the word, Mt 13:4, 19.
3. Some seeds fall on **shallow soil** over rocks, and the plants grow quickly at first, because the shallow soil is warm. But soon they are scorched by the heat of the sun, because the roots cannot go down through the stone for water. This represents those who receive the word with great joy, and begin their new life quickly, but are not able to stand the trials of life. There is no depth of trust in Jesus, the water of life, Mt 13:5-6, 20-21.
4. Some seed fell in **thorny ground**, ground that had not been cleared of thorns, and the thorns quickly crowded out the good plants, taking the needed sunlight and water. This represents those who fail to put Jesus first in their lives. They are choked by the things of this world. Riches become more important to them than Jesus. Therefore they fail to produce any fruit. They are worthless, Mt 13:7, 22.
5. Other seed fell on **good ground** that was well prepared, and yielded a fruitful harvest. This represents Christians who trust in Jesus because of their right

understanding of the gospel, who produce things of eternal value by their lives, Mt 13:8, 23.

6. All the plants that lived were part of the kingdom of God because they had **life in Jesus** through the gospel seed. Those who died and those who produced no fruit will be cast out of the kingdom. See Jn 15:1-5.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parable

1. Secure or Vulnerable... hear AND understand

People must hear and understand the message of the kingdom in order to have spiritual life. Jesus emphasized that if we don't understand as well as hear, we open ourselves to Satan's attack and theft of the good news. What causes people to not understand the gospel? What attitudes cause one to reject the message of God, Acts 28:25-28?

2. Rooted in Jesus...

Those who receive the word into their hearts and come to Jesus must become rooted in Jesus to survive tests and bear fruit. How can we be rooted in Jesus? How can we help others to become rooted in Jesus? How can we help others stand the tests of their faith, Rom 5:1-11?

3. Selfish Living... it's deadly

Those who do not repent of selfish living will be choked by the cares of this world. What are the thorns, the things of this world that choke out our spiritual life? (The lust of the flesh, of the eye, & the pride of life.) Name some things that are a problem for you personally, 1 Jn 2:15-17.

4. Fruitfulness... flows from good and honest hearts

People who want to be fruitful in their lives must put their trust in Jesus, and never give up. If we follow Jesus faithfully, we will produce useful spiritual fruit in our lives, and we will lead others to Jesus so that God's family multiplies. How many people have you led to Jesus? We must desire to bear much fruit to the glory of God, Jn 15:1-8.

5. Church Work... sowing the seed

Sowing the seed of the kingdom is the work of the church, Eph 3:8-21. As we sow, preaching the gospel, we do not need to know where every seed will fall, but let them fall where they will. The word will bring forth fruit according to the condition of the heart of those who hear. We must trust God for the increase, 1 Cor 3:6-9.

6. Every Person... needs to hear

Although some people will not receive the gospel into their hearts, we do not know who they are. We should preach the gospel to every person, Mk 16:15-16.

IV. Memory Verse - Mt 13:23

THE LANDLORD & THE TENANTS

Lk 20:9-19

I. Background of the Parable

1. Context

- a. Jesus had just cleansed the temple, when he found sellers taking advantage of the common people. It was a den of robbers, Lk 19:45-48.
- b. Jesus was teaching the common people in the temple area, 20:1.
- c. The chief priests and experts in the law wanted to know Jesus' authority for cleansing the temple and teaching, 20:2.
- d. Jesus would not answer them until they answered his question about the origin of John's baptism (also about authority), 20:3-8.
- e. The chief priests and experts in the law knew Jesus had spoken the parable against them, 20:19.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. The question and answer dialogue Jesus used in his teaching was common due to Greek influence.
- b. Vineyard: a garden when grape vines for making wine were being grown.
- c. Tenants: those who leased property. Payment for leasing a garden/field was usually a portion of the produce.
- d. Heir: the one who would inherit the property.
- e. Cornerstone: the perfect stone laid at the corner so the building would be true/straight.

II. Understanding the Parable

1. The owner had planted a vineyard, but due to an extended absence, he leased the garden to tenants. Later, he thought they would respect his son, so sent him to collect the "rent."

2. The tenants were supposed to pay for their lease by giving the owner a portion of the fruit at harvest.

- a. They refused to pay for their lease and they treated the owner's servants with harm and shame.
- b. They later presumed that if they killed the son who was the heir that they would inherit the vineyard.
- c. They thought wrong! The owner would kill those tenants and give the inheritance to others.

3. Those listening to the parable were shocked by the owner's response, so Jesus quoted Psalms about the cornerstone to convince them.

4. The chief priests and the experts in the law knew correctly that the parable was spoken against them.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parable

1. The Jews Were Tenants... not owners!!

As tenants, the Jews with their leaders were supposed to care for God's kingdom as tenants would care for a garden/field. The Jews did not care for the kingdom properly, but they thought they would gain God's inheritance through their own self-righteousness, rather than through the righteousness of God's son, Jesus. They killed God's son and God rejected them as evidenced in Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70.

2. What About Us???

We, the church, have the potential to become like those tenants. We can reject the message of God's servants and become more interested in keeping the produce of God's vineyard for ourselves. How? We can mistakenly think that the produce of this world is the inheritance we have from God. Our inheritance is above, Rom 8:17-18; Col 3:1-4. We can forget that we are supposed to share the message of God's inheritance (the gospel) with others. Our service is to be ambassadors of God, 2 Cor 5:17-21. We can also reject the righteousness of Jesus, God's son, thinking that our own righteousness is sufficient to gain God's inheritance, Gal 2:15-21.

3. God Is Good And Just

We must see God completely. The people were shocked that the owner would kill the tenants but Jesus looked at them intently as he explained that one stone would be both the perfect cornerstone for the building and at the same time, be a stone rejected by the builders upon which people would become broken and crushed, :17-18. It's the same stone! Our perception and response allows it to be a cornerstone or a crushing stone. God/Jesus is this way. Will you accept him and let his death become a cornerstone, or reject him and his righteousness and face crushing, 1 Pt 2:6-8; Rom 11:22; Phil 3:9?

4. God Is The Authority... no one else

The final authority over the vineyard belongs to the owner, not to the tenants. God is sovereign! He can and will make his own decisions about the good of his kingdom. Preachers and teachers are not the final authority. How might you take God's authority for yourself?

IV. Memory Verse - Lk 20:13

THE WEDDING BANQUET

Mt 22:1-14

I. Background of the Parable

1. Context

- a. This is the last few days of Jesus' life, and He was teaching in the temple, 21:23. The chief priests and elders had just questioned his authority to teach, 21:23-24.
- b. He then told the parable of the 2 sons, another attempt to help the leaders see that repentance, as the tax gatherers and harlots had, was better than self-righteousness, as they had.
- c. He then told another parable, of the unrighteous stewards, to further clarify the reality that the chief priests and elders were usurping the kingdom of God, and unless they repented, they would be punished and the kingdom would be given to others, 21:43-45. The parable of the wedding banquet follows these teachings, covered in more detail in lesson 2, which you ought to review before doing this one.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

As today, wedding banquets or feasts were common practice and were frequently lavish, expensive occasions. Often held after the harvest so as many as possible could attend, they might be week long celebrations with family and friends attending from miles around.

II. Understanding the Parable

1. Jesus taught first... that the kingdom of heaven is like a wedding feast - it is a place of joy and celebration!

The gospel is good news, Rom 1:16-17, Jn 10:10 of salvation and abundant life!

2. Jesus taught... for a number of unexplained reasons many would not want to enjoy the celebration.

- a. Some simply refused to come, 22:3, no reasons given, perhaps representing the Jewish leaders.
- b. Some paid no attention, they were busy with other things, their own home, business..., 22:4-5, perhaps representing the "ordinary citizen of Israel.
- c. Some even mistreated the messengers and were punished, 22:6-7, as in the past, those that killed the prophets.
- d. One came improperly attired and was cast out for punishment, 22:11-13, again perhaps representing leaders, since they had the appearance of righteousness, Mt 23:27-28.

- 3. Jesus taught some...** newly invited, would come, would be properly attired and would enjoy the wedding celebration, i.e. would participate in the kingdom and reap its benefits, 22:9-10, 14!

III. Consideration and Application of the Parable

1. Rejoice!!... the kingdom is a celebration

The kingdom is a place of salvation, of abundant life - let your face, attitude, speech and actions show it! You are married to Christ, you walk with Him. What did Jesus say the kingdom is like? Why might you not be rejoicing? What have you forgotten? How has Satan deceived you into sorrow and dreariness?

2. The Invitation...is for all

Everyone has been invited, but few respond properly. Some make excuses, some don't, some even respond with anger, resenting the invitation so much they punish the messenger. What about you? Are you too busy to be bothered, is work so important you would trade eternal salvation for it? Have you been as kind and invited all you know to the Lord's wedding banquet?

3. Terrible Punishment... is reserved for the "rejecters"

The one came improperly dressed and those who rebelled against the messengers were terribly punished. What sort of choice will you make - to participate in the kingdom on your terms and be punished when caught or on the king's (Christ's) terms and enjoy the blessings of the feast? As Jesus said, "The way is narrow..." and yet the benefits of the narrow way are great.

4. Choose...

You can choose to live life on your terms, working, making excuses, rebelling... as you see fit, or you can answer the invitation of Christ - to the grandest celebration of all - of Him to the church, of Him to you. Which will you choose? Even to make no choice is to choose, it's to choose the inferior - so when you hear Christ's invitation to become a Christian, or to walk with Him in any way He chooses, listen carefully to how you should dress, and enjoy the celebration. To choose any other path is to choose the way of destruction. How can you tell if you're properly "dressed", and if you're on the right path?

IV. Memory Verses - Mt 22:2, 14

THE "GOOD" SAMARITAN

Lk 10:29-37

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I. Background of the Parable

1. Context

- a. A lawyer tested Jesus by asking what to do to inherit eternal life, Lk 10:25.
- b. Jesus asked what the law required, :26.
- c. The lawyer replied with the correct answer, :27.
- d. Jesus told him he had answered correctly, do this and live, :28.
- e. The lawyer wanted to escape by asking "Who is my neighbor?", :29.
- f. Jesus told about the good Samaritan to teach who is our neighbor.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. Samaritan: a person living in Samaria, the northern part of Palestine that was repopulated with pagans after the Assyrian purging of the ten northern tribes, 2 Kings 17:24. The Pharisees would have no contact with a Samaritan, even refusing to travel through the area, Jn 4:9.
- b. Jericho: a city east of Jerusalem near the Jordan River.
- c. Denarii: a Roman coin equal to about one day's wage, Mt 20:19.
- d. Priest: one who was appointed to serve in the temple at Jerusalem, 2 Chr 26:18-20.
- f. Levite: a member of the priestly tribe of Israel; a descendent of Aaron.

II. Understanding the Parable

1. The setting...

- a. A man was traveling through a dangerous area, and was wounded by robbers, :30.
- b. Since Samaria was north of Jericho, the Samaritan was traveling far from home, :33.
- c. The wounded man was traveling from Jerusalem, so likely he was a Jew. Jews avoided any association with Samaritans.
- e. The gospel is the good news of salvation and abundant life, Rom 1:16-17, Jn 10:10!

2. Jesus taught... Three people saw the wounded man and had an opportunity to help.

- a. A priest sees him and passes by on the other side of the road, :31.
- b. A Levite does the same, :32.
- c. A despised foreigner sees him and has compassion, :33.

3. Jesus showed... there are people with 2 responses to need:

- a. The ones who look and talk righteousness (the self-righteous), but do not practice love for whatever reason.
- b. Those, the Samaritan, who while not viewed as religious/righteous by the Jews, did practice love towards another in need, at great sacrifice of time and money.

4. Jesus taught... a neighbor is anyone, especially anyone in need.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parable

Your Neighbor Is... anyone in need!!

Many are identified in Scripture as having a special place in the heart of God, Jdg 1:20-23;

Js 2:13-17, 1 Jn 3:16-18. Who are the needy in your life? The need may be medical, it may be financial, it may be emotional, it may be spiritual. What can you do to prepare yourself ahead of time to help?

To Help or Not To Help?...that is the choice

The so-called religious leaders chose not to help. Was it fear of being robbed? Was it a desire to remain "clean"? Was it a tight schedule - they had to get somewhere fast? Jesus doesn't say why, but they chose not to help. Why would we not help and what promises of God, positive or negative should help motivate us to make the right and loving choice?

To Help The Needy... is to help the Lord

Jesus taught this in Mt 25:31-46. What a blessing to know the Lord will honor those who honor the least by meeting their needs, even with a mere cup of water! How can you help the widows, the orphans, the helpless of your community?

The Neediest... need the Lord

The paralytic went to Jesus for physical healing and received forgiveness, then healing, Mk 2:1-11. How can you be a part of another's spiritual healing? What gospel message can you share that they might have eternal life; Mk 16:15-16; Rom 1:16-17?

IV. Memory Verses - Lk 10:36-37

THE LOVING FATHER

Lk 15:10-32

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I. Background of the Parable

1. Context

- a. The sinners drew near to Jesus and the Pharisees complained, Lk 15:1-2.
- b. Jesus used two parables to teach about the value of the lost who are found,: -9, the lost sheep and the lost coin.
- c. Jesus says there is joy in heaven over sinners who repent, :10.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. Prodigal: wild, wasteful, riotous, :13.
- b. Famine: shortage of food, probably because of drought, :14.
- c. Pods: seed pods of the Carob tree, :16.
- d. Hired servant: hired man contrasted with a son, :19.
- e. Fattened calf: young ox fed specially for serving at a celebration feast, :3.

II. Understanding the Parable

1. The setting...a man of substance has two sons.

- a. The younger son demands his inheritance, :12.
- b. The father divides the inheritance between the two sons, :12.
- c. The younger son leaves his father and goes his own way, :13.

2. The parable shows the result of separation from the father.

- a. The son wastes his resources in sinful living, :13.
- b. He finds himself in a hopeless condition, :14-16.

3. Jesus showed... difficult circumstances bring repentance.

- a. The son realized his lost condition, :17.
- b. He remembered the blessings of his father's household, :17.
- c. He decided to put himself at his father's mercy, :18-19.

4. Jesus taught... the fruit of repentance.

- a. The son decided to return to his father, :20.
- b. He confessed his unworthiness, :21.

5. The love of the father.

- a. The father was waiting, looking and saw him coming, :20.
- b. The father received him with great joy and celebration, :20-24.

6. Reaction of the elder brother.

- a. a. The elder brother was jealous of his father's affection, and kept looking at the unworthiness of his younger brother, :28-30.
- b. The father reminded the elder son of all the blessings he received from being always with his father, :31.
- c. The father reminded him that the younger son was his brother, and that he was lost, and is found, therefore it is right to rejoice, :32.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parable

1. God's Unconditional Love!!

The father loved both the faithful (jealous) older son and the rebellious (repentant) younger son. He rejoiced because of the return of the younger son, who had been lost from his family, and was now found, who had been dead in sin, but had now repented and returned to his father, Lk 15:7, 32. Such is God's love. Can you be happy for the way God blesses and loves others, or do you think of yourself and what you deserve first?

2. God's Love... for the lost

God looks with great compassion on the lost, and wants them to repent and return to him, Lk 15:20; Mt 15:32; 2 Pet 3:9.

As the father, God will wait, watch and ultimately forgive the repentant. Will you have the same heart? Will you act like Jesus and seek the lost, Lk 19:10?

3. God's Love... never failing

God will not fail to receive His children, if we repent and turn to Him. Rom 8:27-35, 1 Jn 1:5-10. Will you continue to have a repentant spirit, 2 Cor 7:9-11?

4. God's Love... or counterfeit love

Initially the son settled for a fake love, the love of friends when you have money. Why do people waste their lives on cheap love, i.e. sex, money, and power? How have these counterfeit types of love hurt or destroyed people you know, 1 Jn 2:15-17; Js 1:12-22?

IV. Memory Verses - Lk 15:31-32

THE RICH MAN & LAZARUS

Lk 16:19-31

I. Background of the Parable

1. Context

- a. In the midst of a crowd, Lk 15:1-2, 16:1, Jesus has just taught his disciples to act shrewdly. The details are in Lesson 6.
- b. The Pharisees, who Luke says are lovers of money, were listening to this lesson and scoffing at Jesus' teachings, Lk 16:14.
- c. Jesus then said the Pharisees' problem is that they like to justify themselves in front of people, Lk 16:15.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. Scoffing: literally, to turn up the nose at; hence an intense form of mocking, Lk 23:35.
- b. Justify: to deem or show to be right or righteous, Lk 18:14.
- c. Highly esteemed: literally, high, lofty, elevated; highly exalted, Heb 1:3.
- d. Detestable: denotes an object of disgust, an abomination, Mt 24:15.

II. Understanding the Parable

1. Dramatic contrasts between the lives on earth of the **rich man** and **Lazarus** are briefly shown, :19-21.

- a. Rich man - fine clothes, joyful, splendid living, feasting implied, :19.
- b. Lazarus - covered with sores, no food, dogs for friends and medical help, :20.

2. Death takes all, poor and rich, but even the "taking" is contrasted, :22.

- a. Rich man - died and buried.
- b. Lazarus - carried by angels to Abraham's bosom.

3. The 2 men's "after-life" is as different as their earthly life, :23-25.

- a. Rich man - torment, agony, flame.
- b. Lazarus - being comforted.

4. The gate separated the rich man **and Lazarus in life**, so the **chasm** separated them in the after-life, :20, 26.

5. Too late... the rich man learned that people can change their eternal ending by changing the way they live, repent, :30; and that how to live (caring for the poor) is found in the teachings of Moses and the Prophets, 31. Hopefully, his brothers, and the Pharisees will not be so slow to listen and learn.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parable

1. Listen & Respond... repent if necessary

We need to listen and respond to God's spokesmen - Jesus, Heb 1:1 and His messengers, Mt 28:19-20. The rich man refused to listen to God's prophets, especially regarding care for the needy. Are you listening to God's message or waiting for some spectacular sign to "show" you the way, :31? Are you listening to God or the traditions of men, Mt 15:1-9? Are you seeking God's wisdom or earthly, human wisdom, Js 1:5, 3:17?

2. Seek God's... values and priorities

The Pharisees and the rich man valued and loved money, clothes..., Lk 16:14, 19. God detests those things and loves people, especially the needy and defenseless, Js 1:27. God exalts the humble and the servant-minded, Lk 18:9-14, 22:25-27. When you study ask yourself, "What is important to God?" or "Who and what does God value?"

3. Please God...

Don't live to please, impress, or look good in the eyes of others. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for justifying themselves in the eyes of others, Lk 16:15, 18:9, 14. Are you doing what is right to impress the preacher, spouse, father-in-law, official... or because God saved you, says its best for you, and commands it...?

4. Today... live to please God, don't wait

The rich man had no tomorrow's. Once dead, you cannot change your destiny, nor can you help anyone else change theirs. In contrast to the rich man, the unjust steward was shrewd, in part, because he acted promptly, Lk 16:6. Are you doing what good you can today or waiting until you're richer, wiser, healthier, more experienced...?

IV. Memory Verses - Lk 16:15, 31

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Jn 10:1-18

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I. Background of the Parable

1. Context

- a. Jesus had just healed the blind man and the Pharisees threw him out of the synagogue, Jn 9.
- b. Jesus claims to have come into the world to provide a double-sided judgment, 9:39.
- c. Jesus used these parables to describe the difference between himself and the Pharisees, especially as leaders.
- b. a. Those who heard the parables were divided over Jesus - was he demon-possessed or was he sent by God since he could heal the blind, 10:19-21?

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. Sheep pen: an open enclosure where different herds of sheep were protected overnight.
- b. Shepherd: one who cares for sheep and leads the sheep, rather than drives them, 10:3.
- c. Thief/Robber: a thief steals by cunning/stealth, a robber steals by threat or violence.
- d. "The sheep listen to his voice": with many herds in one sheep pen, sheep would learn the voice of their shepherd and follow only him.
- e. "He calls his own sheep by name": Palestinian shepherds had names for each sheep.
- f. The hired man: the person who was paid for taking care of other people's sheep.

II. Understanding the Parable

1. Jesus told this (actually, two parables combined) to address the concept of who really cares for the people of God, who are described as the sheep.

2. Thieves/robbers do not enter by the gate to the sheep pen.

- a. The thieves come only to slaughter for their own benefit.

- b. They climb over the fence - they try to trap people cleverly through insincerity, :1.
- c. They do not know the sheep - they seek not the understanding of the people or their condition.
- d. They drive the sheep - through threats and violence they force people's actions.
- e. They are strangers to the sheep - they sound different from Jesus at any time, :5.
- f. They seek to slaughter the sheep - they seek their own benefit, not the people's, :10.

3. Jesus as the gate - (1st parable) through which the sheep enter to be protected, and where Jesus provides full life, :7-10.

4. Jesus as the good shepherd: knows his sheep and lays down his life for his sheep. The sheep also know him, 10:14-18.

- a. a. Jesus has other sheep that are not in the (Jewish) sheep pen that will follow him and join the original sheep to become one flock with one shepherd, :16.
- b. He enters by the gate - he comes to people in a straight forward, genuine fashion, :2.
- c. He calls the sheep by name - he knows the people personally & understands them, :3.
- d. He leads the sheep - he goes ahead of the people, providing a clear example, :4.
- e. He uses a familiar voice to call the sheep - he sounds the same whether then or now; :4, 14.
- f. When the sheep are threatened, He will willingly lay down his life for them, :11.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parable

1. Jesus - The Perfect Leader!

Jesus presented this parable to describe the characteristics of a true leader. Jesus was and is the perfect leader.

He provided safety for the people, he knew and understood the people, he was genuine, he led by example, he spoke consistently with God, and he was willing to lay down his life for them. Today's preachers church leaders, shepherds, and deacons should follow the leadership example of Jesus. Will you?

2. The Pharisees - terrible leaders

The Pharisees were blind to the fact that they were terrible leaders of God's people, 9:41. As usual, the Pharisees

misunderstood Jesus and how to lead God's people, 10:19-21. They were not genuine, they did not understand the people, their voices were not similar to the actual message of God, they were only seeking their own profit/desires, and they would abandon the people in times of danger. Jesus described them well as thieves, robbers, and hired men. In like manner, preachers today can be terrible leaders of God's people, having the same characteristics as Pharisees. Will you lead like a Pharisee, or Jesus?

IV. Memory Verse - Jn 10:10

lesson 9

VALUE OF THE KINGDOM & PEOPLE

Hidden Treasure & Costly Pearl Mt 13:44-46

Lost Sheep & Coins Mt 18:12-14 Lk 15:3-10

I. Background to the Parables

1. Context

- a. Mt 13 - Now Jesus has taught a number of parables about the kingdom. See Lesson 6, Context for more details.
- b. Mt 18 - Jesus has been asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” This parable is part of the answer.
 - a. Lk 15 - Jesus is responding to the criticism of the Pharisees and Scribes that he receives and eats with tax-gatherers and sinners, a violation of common practice.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. There were few safe places for money or treasure, so frequently it was buried.
- b. Jewish (common - not Mosaic) law stated that anything found, money or goods belonged to the finder.

II. Understanding the Parables

1. **The kingdom of heaven**, pictured as treasure, has **great value**, brings **great joy** when found, and is worth

selling all to possess.

2. Pictured as a pearl of great value sought diligently by a pearl merchant, the emphasis is first on **seeking** the

kingdom, then **finding** and **doing** whatever is necessary to possess it.

3. Shepherds go after **lost sheep**, so in the kingdom Jesus goes after **the weak and lost**, i.e. children, sinners

and tax-gatherers. And, as a shepherd rejoices, so the angels and those in their presence (God, cherubim...)

rejoice when the lost are returned to safety.

4. Just as a person **diligently looks** for a lost coin, so in the kingdom Jesus and others will **diligently search** for those lost.

5. All 4 parables seem to have **3 things in common**, either stated or implied:
- a. The kingdom and/or people have great value.
 - b. Given the value, what is lost is worth any effort to find.
 - c. When found, it is certainly natural to rejoice!

III. Consideration and Application of the Parables

1. Great Value... has the kingdom of heaven

The kingdom is worth more than **anything** we might possess, Mt 6:20. Therefore both men sold **all** they had to possess it. What do you value, God and His kingdom, or something else? Do your thoughts, speech, and actions show you value the kingdom, or does looking good in front of people, money... look most valuable to you?

2. Seek the Kingdom... with passion

Since the kingdom is so valuable, seek it with all your heart, Mt 6:33. Remember Jesus' promise, "Seek and you shall find," Mt 7:7-8." What is the kingdom and how will you know if you've found it? What does Mt 12 teach about the kingdom? How would others know you're seeking?

3. Rejoice... in the kingdom

Those who found "the treasure" rejoiced. Let your face, heart, friends and family see your joy, Phil 4:4. Why would you not rejoice? What might be missing? What could you do about it?

4. Seek the Lost... they have great value

The parables of the sheep and coin teach the losts' value, and therefore the need to diligently seek for and rejoice over their repentance and salvation, 2 Cor 5:18-20. Do you care about others or only about the kingdom and its blessings for you? How can you use your gifts and talents to help the lost find God and His kingdom? Do you see the lost only as deserving punishment or that God loves to grace the lost as they seek Him?

IV. Memory Verse - Mt 13:44

KINGDOM GROWTH

Mustard Seed Mt 13:31-32; Mk 4:30-32; Lk 13:18-19

Leaven Mt 13:33; Lk 13:20-21

Barren Fig Lk 13:6-9

I. Background to the Parables

1. Context

- a. a. While teaching a great multitude of people and being attacked by the Pharisees, Jesus taught about being prepared for His coming, Lk 12:42-48.
- b. Jesus taught about the struggles of the kingdom, 12:51-53.
- c. Jesus taught about repentance and judgment, 13:1-5.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. Leaven: yeast that causes bread to rise, a small amount will spread throughout the dough.
- b. Meal: ground grain, likely wheat flour.
- c. Mustard: a plant with very small seeds that grows over ten feet tall in fertile soil.
- d. Barren: producing no fruit.
- e. Fig: a tree with large green leaves that produces a sweet fruit. The fruit is hidden by the leaves in the early stages.
- f. Vineyard: a garden of fruit bearing plants.

II. Understanding the Parables

1. The parable of the **fig tree** was obviously directed at the Pharisees, Lk 13:6-9.
 - a. Like the fig tree with its large green leaves, they made a show of goodness.
 - b. Upon close inspection, there was no real fruit in their lives.
 - c. The master would give them an additional time to bear fruit, but then failing, they would be destroyed.
2. The parable of the **mustard seed**, great things come from small beginnings, Lk 13:18-19.
 - a. a. The mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds, and just so the message of the gospel seems small and foolish in man's sight, 1 Cor 1:21-25.

b. Once this seed germinates, a great plant will grow, if the soil is good, 1 Pet 1:22-25, Eph 2:17-22.

3. The parable of the **leaven**, the influence of the gospel spreads, Lk 13:20-21.

a. Just as leaven can spread throughout the meal, the gospel will spread throughout the world, Mk 16:16.

b. Leaven spreads by contact, and the influence of Jesus spreads from person to person, 1 Cor 4:6-7, 1 Pet 2:11-12.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parables

1. Do Not Make A Show...

The Pharisees did things such as fasting and prayer to be seen of men, to make a good show, but there was no good fruit in their lives. In the same way, making a show of keeping religious traditions today without having a converted heart will produce no good fruit. The Master knows if there is real fruit in our lives. Do any of us practice religious traditions just to look good to other people? What is the sweet fruit of true Christianity?

2. Bear Fruit...

The Master is patient and long suffering with His plants, but there is a limit to His patience. After sufficient time and cultivation, if there is no good fruit, the tree will be destroyed. What is the fruit God expects to find in our lives? How long will God give us to produce fruit?

3. Little Beginnings End Big... with God

God chose something that is small and foolish from the human perspective, the preaching of a simple message about God's mercy and love, to save those who believe. The seed of the kingdom seems small indeed, but it has the power to save eternally all who believe and trust Jesus. Do you sometimes feel that your work of lifting up Jesus to the world is small and useless? What big things grow from the preaching of God's word?

4. The Gospel Spreads... by personal contact

Just as yeast spreads throughout the meal, the gospel spreads by personal example and contact with other people.

People see our lives, and our influence can lead them to Jesus. Jesus said we should be lights to the world, that they may see our good works and glorify God. What things in your life encourage others to believe in Jesus? What do people see when they see your life? Why is it important to preach the gospel throughout the world?

IV. Memory Verses - Lk 13:8-9

GOD SEPARATES THE GOOD & THE EVIL

Mt 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50, 25:31-46

I. Background to the Parables

1. Context

- a. a. Jesus was discussing false expectations about the Messiah and his kingdom with true listeners and Pharisees, 12:15-24, 38.
- b. b. Jesus taught in parables in order to separate the good-hearted listeners from the bad-hearted Pharisees - a separation of understanding, Mt 13:11-17.
- c. c. Jesus willingly gave interpretation of the parables to the disciples because they were truly seeking to understand, 13:10, 18, 36-37.
- d. d. Again, Jesus spoke at length about genuineness, righteousness, and judgment after debating with the Sadducees and Pharisees concerning various points, :15, 23, 34, 23:1.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. a. In the Parable of the Weeds, 13:24-30, Jesus described the kingdom of God as a field. The weeds were literally Palestinian darnel which closely resembles wheat in its early stages, but is easily distinguished when grain sprouts. Darnel cannot be uprooted until harvest for fear of damaging the wheat crop, 13:28, 29.
- b. b. In the Parable of the Net, 13:47-50, Jesus described the kingdom of God as a fisherman's net. The bad fish were not rotten, but unclean for Jewish consumption, Lev 11:9-12.
- c. c. In the Parable of the Sheep/Goats, 25:31-46, Jesus described the judgment of the world. Goats and sheep graze together and sometimes are indistinguishable, but goats must be separated for sleeping in a different place.

II. Understanding the Parables

1. The Parable of the Weeds, Mt 13:24-30, 36-43.

- a. a. The Sower (Jesus) planted the seed (disciples of the gospel). The Enemy (Satan) planted evil seed (men

of materialism, idolatry, etc.). The two seeds produced fruit (followers), in the field (the world), 13:24-25, 37-39.

- b. b. When the grain began to sprout, it became obvious that weeds were among the wheat because they did not sprout with grain. At this time, it was impossible to separate the weeds from the wheat, 13:26-29.
- c. c. The Sower let both weeds and wheat grow together until the harvest, the end of the world. At that time, the weeds would be burned and the wheat would be gathered into the barn, 13:30, 39-43.

2. The Parable of the Net, Mt 13:47-50

- a. a. Fishermen cast a net (the kingdom of heaven) into the lake (world) and caught many kinds of fish (people).
The full net was brought to the shore, 13:47-48.
- b. b. They separated the edible good fish (disciples of the gospel) from the unclean bad fish (disciples of the world).
The good were kept and the bad were thrown away.

3. The Parable of the Sheep/Goats, Mt 25:31-46.

- a. a. Judgment is portrayed as the nations gathered before the throne of the King. At this time, the Son of Man will separate the sheep (disciples of Christ) from the goats (disciples of the world), 25:31-32.
- b. b. The sheep will be placed on the Lord's right side (a place of favor) and the goats will be put on his left side (a place of condemnation), 25:33.
- c. c. Judgment is based upon the way that each has treated his fellow man. A blessed inheritance will be given to those who have fed the hungry, provided for the thirsty, given hospitality to the stranger, clothed the needy, cared for the needy, and visited the imprisoned, 25:34-40.
- d. d. In the same manner, a cursed condemnation will be given to those who did not treat even the least of their fellow man in this Christ-like fashion, 25:41-45.
- e. e. Eternal reward (life) will be given to the righteous and eternal condemnation (punishment) will be given to the ungodly, 25:46.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parables

1. God Will Separate... eternally

All three parables under consideration make this point very clear. We will not remain eternally together. Therefore, we must choose the side we want to be on, the side of good/God or the side of evil/Satan. Which side will you choose, and when will you choose, Josh 24:14-15?

2. Beware...!

Be aware that the weeds (the ungodly) are mixed with the wheat until judgment. The insincere and hypocritical people may appear as godly people for a while, and we may not know who has truly chosen to serve the Lord until that last day.
Beware 2 Cor 11:13-15!

3. Be Careful...

Don't be hasty to make a judgment about the genuineness of another's character. Are you truly capable of telling a weed from the wheat at every stage of growth? You may be uprooting someone's faith, 1 Ths 5:14. Remember, the Lord sees the heart, 1 Sam 17:6. In church discipline, do we remove or do we turn away from, Mt 18; Rom 16; Titus 3...? What might be the difference between remove and turn away from?

4. Satan Works...

Be not forgetful that Satan is constantly at work. He is planting the weeds as we sleep. He is the great deceiver and he will try to devour us if we are not putting our faith in Christ, Rev 12:9; 1 Pet5:8-9.

5. Be A Sheep...

That is, be a person who treats other people like Christ would treat them. Be generous, caring, hospitable, and open-hearted to all, especially to those who may be considered the least of the human race - the poor, sick, strangers, and prisoners, 25:35-40; Js 2:14-17; Gal 6:10.

IV. Memory Verses - Mt 25:31-32

PARABLES ON OBEDIENCE

2 Builders Mt 7:24-27; Lk 6:46-49

2 Sons Mt 21:28-32

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I. Background to the Parables

1. Context

- a. a. Jesus told this story/teaching to His disciples and the multitude at the conclusion of the “sermon on the mount,” which was primarily a discussion of righteousness (life in the kingdom), Mt 5:20.
- b. b. The parable of the 2 sons was told primarily to the chief priests and elders in the temple during the last week of Jesus’ ministry, Mt 21:23, following their “test” of Him.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. a. Authority: the right to do lead/teach... It was frequently an issue between the leaders and Jesus, Mk 2:7, 16, 24...

II. Understanding the Parables

1. Jesus taught... as a summary and application to the “sermon” that there are 2 kinds of people:

- a. a. Those that hear and obey/act upon what He says. They are called **wise**, because their lives have a solid foundation - the words of Jesus, Mt 7:24-25.
- b. b. Those that hear and do not obey/act upon the words of Jesus. They are called **foolish**, because their lives have an unstable foundation, which cannot endure the “storms of life,” Mt 7:26-27.

2. Jesus taught... what true obedience was.

- a. a. The son who said, “I will” and then did not was not obedient. This represents most of the chief priests and elders, Mt 21:32.
- c. c. The son who said, “I will not” and then regretted it and did what the father asked represents the tax-gatherers and harlots, Mt 21:31.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parables

1. When Jesus Speaks... listen

In each parable, even before the people obeyed or disobeyed, they listened. As the one who is God's final spokesman, Heb 1:1-4, with words of life, Jn 6:63, we should be committed to carefully listening to Jesus. Who do listen to most - Jesus, the preacher, the news, your friends...? When their words are different from Christ's - who will you listen to?

2. When You Hear Jesus... just do it (obey)

It may seem like obedience is hard, but to obey is best; after all who knows what's best for you, the Creator or the created? James also challenges us to hear and do God's will, Js 2:22. Why would you choose not to obey - it's too hard, you look foolish...? But think about where disobedience leads - to instability and eventually, destruction, Mt 7:27.

3. Great Blessings... are for the obedient

Jesus referred to stability in the storms of life, James promised that when we obey we are blessed, Js 1:25. In fact - Jesus is the author of salvation for those who obey Him, Heb 5:8-9. Could there be any greater blessing than eternal salvation? Is there anything on earth that compares to the blessings Christ offers the faithfully obedient? Are not riches, power, prestige... all temporary compared to the eternal nature of salvation in Christ, 1 Pet 1:3-9? What are the most important commands to obey, perhaps love God, love people, live by repentant, obedient, working faith... Mt 22:37-39; Acts 2:38; Js 2:14-17...

4. The Disobedient... can become obedient

The "obedient" or "faithful" are those who do the right thing, even if they first disobey. Those who hear, experience remorse (sorrow to repentance, 2 Cor 7:9), believe and obey are the "righteous," not those who say the right things, but in real life disobey God. Are you saying "Yes" to God, and disobeying, or when you disobey, do you experience remorse and in faith, obey? One leads to life, the other to death, 2 Cor 7:10-11.

IV. Memory Verses - Mt 7:24-25

lesson 13

ARE YOU READY?

Fig Tree Mt 24:32-35; Mk 13:28-31; Lk 21:29-33

10 Virgins Mt 25:1-13

Watchful Servants Mk 13:34-37

I. Background to the Parables

1. Context

- a. These 3 parables are given during the final week of Jesus' life, in Jerusalem.
- b. A disciple praised the temple and its buildings. Jesus responded that not one stone shall not be torn down, Mk 13:1-2.
- c. The disciples then asked 3 questions, "When will these things be?", "What will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?"
- d. The 3 parables are a part of Jesus' answer to these 3 questions.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. At that time, it was customary for the bridegroom to lead a procession to his future bride's home, get his bride, then lead the procession to his home for the wedding celebration.
- b. A servant of the groom would then check people's invitations to be sure only the invited attended. Then, at the command of the groom, he would shut the door. After that absolutely no one would be allowed to enter and celebrate.

II. Understanding the Parables

1. Remember ...these 3 parables are part of the answer to the 3 questions, **when** and **what signs**, about the destruction of the temple, the end of the age, and the coming of Jesus.

2. The fig tree... this is a time of learning from nature, "Learn the parable...", Mt 24:32. As the **sign** of tender twigs and leaves coming out tells (**when**) summer is near, so the **signs** of Mt 24:3-31 tell **when** the destruction of the temple will take place.

3. The 10 virgins...connects with being ready for the coming of Jesus. The focus is on behaving wisely and foolishly.

- a. The foolish took no oil, so weren't prepared for any possible problem or delay.

- b. The wise took extra oil, planning ahead and spending extra money, thus preparing for possible problems/delays, which did occur.
- c. As a result the wise were allowed entrance to the wedding banquet, the foolish weren't, due to their tardiness.

4. **The watchful servants...** like the virgins, had tasks to accomplish.
 - a. Like the virgins, they didn't know **when** the master would return, Mk 13:33, 35.
 - b. Therefore, they should be watchful, :33, 35, 37.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parables

1. **Remember the Context...**

Mt 24 and 25 are frequently misunderstood because they are taken out of context. Remember the context means that you let your understanding of the Scripture come from the whole text; in this case the statements and 3 questions of Mt 24:1-4, **when** and **what signs** concerning the destruction of the temple and the end of the age, and what would be the sign of the coming of Jesus. When studying, do you focus on one verse/one story or do you let the context of the paragraph, chapter and book guide you?

2. **Be Wise...**

The 5 virgins were wise because they prepared ahead of time for possible problems. It took a little extra work, time and money - they had to go and buy extra oil. But when the delay came, they were ready. How would this apply to you and your family? To you and the church, to you and your ministry, to you and the Lord's second coming?

3. **Be Watchful...**

The signs and events concerning the destruction of the temple and the end of the Jewish age have been fulfilled. We need to consider - are there signs which precede the second coming of Jesus, and if so, what do we watch for? Predominantly the Scriptures say Christ will come as a thief, so no signs, 1 Ths 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10.

4. **Be Responsible...**

While waiting for the Lord to come, each of us needs to carry out the tasks God has given us; as an individual in relationship with God, family, church, friends, work mates, and the lost. Will God find you doing your work heartily as unto the Lord, Col 3:23 or being lazy or foolish? Will you enter the wedding feast of the Lamb or be cast into the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth?

IV. Memory Verse - Mt 25:13

FORGIVENESS & GRACE

Money Lender & 2 Debtors Lk 7:36-50
King & 2 Slaves Mt 18:21-35
Landowner & Laborers Mt 20:1-16

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I. Background to the Parables

1. Context

- a. Jesus' parable is His response to Simon's doubts and wonder that Jesus, allegedly a prophet, is letting a known sinner touch him, Lk 7:36-50.
- b. Jesus' parable of the unmerciful servant is given in response to Peter's question in Mt 18:21 and what Peter thinks is his own very generous answer.
- c. Jesus' parable of the landowner and laborers was given to clarify his statement, "The last shall be first...", Mt 19:30, 20:15-16.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. "Good" Jews did not associate with "bad" people, Lk 5:30, 7:39, 15:2, 19:7, Acts 11:2-3.
- b. Hospitality customs called for greeting and honoring your guests with footwashing, a kiss, and refreshing oil.
- c. Denarii: a day's wage
- d. The Jewish rabbis (teachers) of Peter's time taught a person was to be forgiven 3 times, no more!
- e. Day laborers were hired in the morning and paid at sunset, as the Law of Moses said, Deut 24:15; Lev 19:13.

II. Understanding the Parables

1. Simon the Pharisee understood Jesus' parable, the one who **loves the most** is the one who understands he has been **graciously forgiven most**.

2. In Mt 18, Jesus again taught that the kingdom is a place of **forgiveness**, and that personal forgiveness carries **a responsibility**.

- a. When pleaded with, the Lord forgave his slave who had a debt impossible to repay.
- b. That slave, even though begged, refused to forgive his debtor.
- c. The Lord heard of the first slave's failure to forgive (wickedness) and punished him.

3. Jesus did 2 things in the parable of the landowner and laborers: **He clarified** His “first shall be last...” statement and **He painted** another picture of the kingdom.
 - a. The first laborers hired were treated fairly, they received exactly what they agreed on, but were paid last.
 - b. The laborers hired later were paid first, and were paid generously, if you calculated wages per hour.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parables

1. God Graciously Forgives...

The kingdom of God is **the** place where grace and forgiveness rule, Col 1:13-14. Are you aware of your own sin, and the cross's grace and forgiveness? Do you deeply love God, and therefore others since you have been forgiven? Can you “see” others as needing this, or do you see only the sinner, as Simon saw? Is there a right **and** wrong way to associate with sinners?

2. God Forgives... you forgive

Forgiveness became available to all when Jesus paid sins debt at the cross, and all have access to that forgiveness through faith's repentance and baptism, Acts 2:38. The challenge of this parable is to personally extend that forgiveness to others who have sinned against you. Do you forgive others or wait for complete repayment; hold grudges or get even?

3. God Won't... if you don't

Everyone is sinned against by someone. You can either cultivate a forgiving, vengeful, or bitter heart. Remember the prayer of Mt 6:12. God can help you forgive. Are you praying this type of prayer and seeking God's help? If you trust in your own power to forgive, you'll fail.

4. God's Generous... as He sees fit

James said God is the giver of every good and perfect gift, Js 1. Rejoice in God's generosity towards you. His gifts are perfect for you and for what He's called you to be and do. Do you compare your life, circumstances... to others and find yourself grumbling or becoming self-righteous? Do you rejoice in God's greatest gift - salvation in Jesus Christ!?

IV. Memory Verse - Lk 7:47

PARABLES ON PRAYER

Persistent Friend Lk 11:5-10
Widow & Judge Lk 18:1-8
Pharisee & Tax Collector Lk 18:9-14

I. Background to the Parables

1. Context

- a. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, and He gave them the example prayer in Lk 11:2-4, often called the Lord's prayer.
- b. Continuing His teaching, Jesus taught about persistence in prayer, Lk 11:5-10.
- c. The Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom would come. Jesus taught about the coming of the kingdom, and about judgment on Israel, Lk 17:20-37. Also see Mt 24.
- d. Then Jesus taught His disciples two parables about prayer, Lk 18:1-14.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. Pharisee: a separatist, exclusively religious. They laid stress not upon the righteousness of an action, but upon its formal correctness.
- b. Tax collector: an Israelite who collected taxes for the Roman government. They were hated by the people and classed with harlots/sinners.

II. Understanding the Parables

1. Jesus taught... about **seeking help through prayer** in the parable of the persistent friend, Lk 11:5-13.

- a. The friend had a sudden need for assistance, and went to his friend for help, :6.
- b. His request was reasonable, he asked for three loaves to feed someone else, :5.
- c. His request was heard because he woke up his friend at midnight, :8.
- d. If we understand how a friend would help us because of the trouble we caused, then we should know that God will answer our requests, :9-10.
- e. If our human fathers give good gifts to their children, how much more will our heavenly Father give good gifts to His children when we ask, :13.

2. Jesus taught... about **persistence in prayer**, and seeking justice through prayer in the parable of the widow and the judge, Lk 18:1-8.

- a. The judge in the parable was unjust, :2.
- b. The widow continually requested him to give her justice, :3.
- c. The unrighteous judge gave her justice to stop her from troubling him, :5.

d. How much more certain is our righteous God to help us when we make a request, crying out to Him day and night, :7-8.

- 3. Jesus taught... about trusting God for salvation** instead of trusting our own righteousness in the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee, Lk 18:9-14.
- The Pharisee bragged to God about his own righteousness, :11-12.
 - The tax collector humbled himself before God, and begged for mercy, :13.
 - God respected the prayer of the tax collector who admitted being a sinner.
 - By implication, God did not respect the prayer of the proud Pharisee who trusted in his ability to keep the law, and considered himself righteous.
 - The proud will be humbled, and the humble will be exalted, :14.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parables

1. God Hears... our requests

When we understand that God will help us more readily than a close friend, we should have courage to ask God for our needed help, Heb 4:15-16. Our request should be unselfish, Js 4:1-4. What kind of requests are we making to God? Are we seeking help for others, or only for ourselves and our family? Do you have confidence that God will help you?

2. Persist In Prayer... God gives justice

Just as the widow asked for help with her problem, and was rewarded for her persistence, we know that God will hear the prayers of His children and give us the needed help against our enemies. God will hear and take vengeance for His saints, Rev 6:10-11. Who is our adversary that we need God's help to overcome, 1 Pet 5:8? Why should we make repeated requests to God for help? What does it mean to pray without ceasing?

3. God Hears... humble, dependent, confessing prayer

Sometimes people believe that they are righteous because of their ability to do all the right things. However, this righteousness of our own through keeping law is a lie, because just one sin leaves us short of righteousness. We all are sinners, and depend on the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ for salvation, Phil 3:8-11. Jesus is able to give us complete righteousness through faith. How do you feel about your own righteousness before God? Are you doing so well spiritually that you can brag to God about your ability? Do you look down on other people because you see them as sinners? What does it mean to humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord, Js 4:10?

IV. Memory Verse - Lk 18:14

lesson 16

PARABLES ON RESPONSIBILITY

Lk 12:13-21, 41-48, 19:11-27

I. Background to the Parables

1. Context

- a. In Luke 12, Jesus had been in a debate with the Pharisees and Jewish lawyers.
- b. He first addresses his disciples, :1, then answers a member of the large crowd, :13.
- c. This large mixed audience was the setting for his strict parables on responsibility.
- d. In Luke 19, salvation was confused with the immediate coming of the kingdom of God, :11, so Jesus took the opportunity to address lifelong responsibility.

2. Definitions/Cultural Insights

- a. Soul: life which is given by God, 12:19.
- b. Servant: slave who is also a possession within the household, 12:43.
- c. Mina: equivalent to about 100 dollars or 4,000 rupees.

II. Understanding the Parables

1. The Parable of the Rich Fool, Lk 12:13-21.

- a. A man wanted Jesus to help him receive a portion of his father's property (inheritance). Jesus' response was hard, he would not help and that the man was greedy after possessions, and not after quality of life, 12:13-15.
- b. The rich fool only wanted to store the crops for himself, rather than be rich toward God, 12:16-18.
- c. God demanded his soul from him that very night, saying that his goods would not be stored up for his own use, 12:19-20.

2. The Parable of the Unwise Servants, 12:41-48.

- a. This parable was spoken by Jesus to emphasize the previous lesson about watchfulness, 12:41.
- b. A faithful, wise slave is one the Master finds doing his duty, 12:42-44.
- c. The unfaithful and unwise slave is partying and feasting since he thinks the Master will not return, today. The Master will kill this slave when he returns unexpectedly, :45-46.

- 3. The Parable of the Ten Minas, 19:11-27.** When a nobleman went away to be appointed king, he gave ten servants a mina each to use to produce greater gain for the nobleman's estate, 19:12-13.
- When he returned he wanted to know what each had gained by the mina, 19:15.
 - Two servants produced ten and five minas. They were rewarded with authority over ten and five cities respectively for their initiative, 19:16-19.
 - One servant returned only the mina entrusted to him because he was afraid of losing it, knowing his master's high expectations. He was given no reward and the mina was taken away, 19:20-24.
 - The mina that had been taken away from one was given to the servant who had produced ten. This shocked the crowd! More will be given to those who produce more. To the one who produces nothing, everything will be taken away.

III. Consideration and Application of the Parables

1. God's Rich To You... be rich toward God

Don't be a fool like the man of the parable. God provides all good things. We are unable to claim anything good as a result of our own workings. God gave the good producing ground, God gave the authority to the slaves, and the Master gave the minas (talents, gifts, abilities, etc.) to the servants. All were good gifts from a good God, Js 1:16-17; Rom 8:32; 2 Pet 1:3-4. How will you use God's gifts? Will you be rich towards God, or selfish?

2. Be Faithful & Wise...

For the faithful, wise servant of Christ there is great blessing; for the neglectful, disobedient there is punishment. Again the choice is ours. Christ is both gracious and just - which do you want to receive?

3. Be Watchful...

When we start thinking that Jesus will not return soon, then we may become lazy and unproductive like the unrighteous in the parables. We must redeem the time, Col 4:5; as though the Lord were coming NOW, 2 Pet 3:1-10!

4. Be Responsible...

God demands responsible lives. Grace does not free us from responsibility. It makes us more responsible - much given, much demanded. Yes, God saves us by His grace. Now, we must live according to the abundance of His grace upon us, Eph 2:8-10; Gal 5:13-14. Responsible lives are lives that are rich toward God, faithful, wise and watchful. It is a high calling, but then God has seated us at the right hand of Christ, in the heavenlies, Col 3:1-4!!

IV. Memory Verse - Lk 12:15

