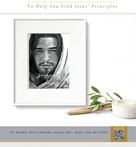
JOHN WILTON III
PRESENTS

SEEKING JESUS

CLASS 15 OF 20 · VIDEO COURSE

Visually With Points To Ponder To Help You Find Jesus' Principles



TO SEEK FOR BEFORE JESUS PRY, SEAR THY MY EYES

AND THE SOULS WHICH THOSE FOR FOUNDED, THROUGH THY LOVE OR THROUGH THY WRATH, THOSE FOR THY SAKE, THOSE FOR THY SAKE, THOSE FOR THY SAKE, THOSE FOR THY SAKE, THOSE FOR THY SAKE, THOSE FOR THY SAKE

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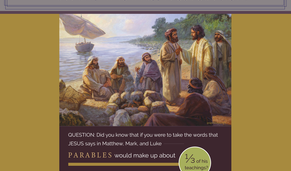
SEEKING JESUS

PARABLES

WHEN IT COMES TO PARABLES, WE ARE TO LOOK THE TRUTHS, THE PRINCIPLES FROM HIS STORY.

AND APPLY IT TO A PAGE IN OUR OWN STORY.



QUESTION: Did you know that if you were to take the words that JESUS says in Matthew, Mark, and Luke

PARABLES would make up about

1/3 of his teachings!

(Knowing this should prompt us, to study his parables)

A FEW GROUND RULES ABOUT PARABLES...

GROUND RULES

FIRST: When it comes to **interpreting parables**, remember that it's a story, not a theological treatise, so **don't push the parable too far**.

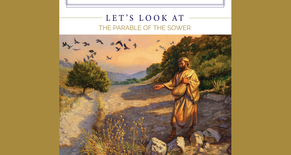
SECOND: Remember that **parables** often have **multiple interpretations.**

THIRD: Although we have traditional titles for parables like "The parable of the Good Samaritan" or "The parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard", **Jesus ONLY named one of his parables—"The parable of the Sower"**. This is important because **what we call a parable can influence how we think about it.**

"The parable of the Prodigal Son" Calling it "The parable of the Prodigal Son" forces our attention on the younger son. But what if we called the parable, "The parable of the Jealous Son"? Then we would focus our attention on the older brother. Or what if we called it "The Compassionate Father and His Two Lost Sons" drawing our minds to the father?

The titles we use will influence how we interpret the parables.

LET'S LOOK AT
THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER



*"Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, **and the birds came and ate it up.** Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."*

*And he said, "Let anyone with ears to hear **listen!**"*
(Mark 4:3-9, NKJV)

Note that the PARABLE begins and ends with a call to "LISTEN"!

WHEN THE DISCIPLES ASK JESUS FOR AN EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLE, HE SAYS:

"The sower soweth the word. And [omitted] **By the way side,** *where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.*

1

And these are they **by** *which are sown* **among thorns;** *such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.*

3

And these are they **which are sown** *on* **stony ground,** *who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness. And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution arise for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.*

2

And these are they **which are sown** *on* **good ground,** *such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."*
(Mark 4:14-20, KJV)

4

NOTICE

NOTICE THAT ALL THE GROUPS hear the word, BUT THE UNIQUE THING ABOUT THE GOOD GROUND IS THEY NOT ONLY HEAR THE WORD; they receive it, AND THEN THEY do something with it. THEY DISCLOSE FRUIT!

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Are we RECEIVING and DOING something with THE WORD?

Will the LORD say this of us ?

"And these are they, which are sown on good ground, —who hear(d) the WORD, and receive(d) it, and bring(s) forth fruit"

PONDER

"What can I do TODAY to HEAR the word? RECEIVE the word? DO SOMETHING WITH the word?"

CONSIDER THE
PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

*"We read, "And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, **Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.** I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:3-7).*

We can LEARN several great lessons from this parable.

HOW do you even notice if you're missing a sheep?
If you're a shepherd and you've got your hundred sheep grazing, can you visually tell the difference between 100 sheep grazing and 99 sheep?

This parable shows the importance of figuring out who is missing. If you're a ministering brother, a Sunday school teacher, a secretary in an organization, or serving in pretty much any calling, do you notice when someone isn't there? It's hard to be the Good Shepherd and seek after the sheep if we don't even know somebody is missing.

CONSIDER THESE WORDS
WALLACE LEVY IN CHRISTMAS

"In every sacrament meeting, our clerks count the number of sheep who returned to the fold. They store this number in a safe place for the quarterly report, and then we go home.

IF WE CONFORMED OUR WAYS TO GOD'S WAYS

we would find the names of the members who could have returned to the fold on that Sunday but didn't come. THEN WE'D GO FIND THEM!

"In a district in France, **at the end of Sunday meetings, the branch councils and missionaries together named** the members and investigators who could have been there but didn't come. They each took an assignment to contact one of those individuals that same day with this message: **"We sure missed you today. Are you OK? It's not the same for the rest of us when you can't come. Can I help? Can you come next Sunday?"**

Within two years, sacrament meeting attendance in the district increased from (just to) 215—in a region where convert baptisms are infrequent. "We should be careful not to offend members who deliberately do not want to attend. **But helping each member who only occasionally returns to the fold on Sunday to feel needed and feel our love is a simple practice that every ward and branch can begin.** Many less-active members get that way because they didn't return to the fold one Sunday and nobody seemed to notice."

HOW COULD YOU AND I ABIDE?
THE LORD AND APPLY THIS
ASPECT OF THE PARABLE OF
THE LOST SHEEP?

At the end of this parable Jesus says, **"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"** (Luke 15:10).

If you've ever felt slighted by these parables, here is good news for you.

WE ARE ALL SINNERS. **Sometimes we're the 99, but often we're the 1. We all stray from God,** and there's a lot of joy in heaven over you and me, so we don't need to worry that heaven isn't rejoicing over us. **But if we have the attitude, "I'm the best sheep ever"** then there's a parable in this chapter especially for us.

It's commonly called

THE PARABLE OF

the prodigal son

and it's the longest of all the Savior's parables.

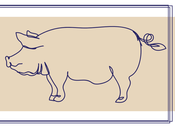
CHRIST SAYS,

"A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after ***the younger son gathered all together,*** *and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living" (Luke 15:11-13).*

Did you notice how the younger son gathered all together—most college students leave stuff at home because they know they're coming back. This younger son apparently is planning on a one-way trip.

Jesus continues, *"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country;* ***and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.*** *And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him" (Luke 15:14-16).*

Because pigs were unclean animals, feeding swine would have been one of the lowest professions a person could possibly have. This son is at rock bottom.



But he came to himself. He returned to his father, and when he did, *"when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20).*

NOTICE that the father saw his returning son while the son was still off in the distance. **Do you think the father was looking for him?** Also note the detail **that the father ran to his son—even though in that culture it was not considered appropriate for older men to run.**

The father welcomes his son, gives him new clothes and kills the fatted calf so that they can have a great party. **The older son, who has been working in the field comes back to the house and hears the music and dancing.** When he finds out that it's a celebration for his younger brother, **HE IS ANGRY!**

Let's examine the conversation **between the father and the older brother.** Remember, Jesus begins the parable with,

"A certain man had two sons" (Luke 15:11)

In verse 28, the older son *"would not go in" (v 28)* to the party. Instead, his father *"came out" (v. 28).*

THE OLDER SON SAYS *"You never gave me a goat" (v. 29)*, the father says, *"You are always with me"* Notice how the older son frames his relationship with his brother in verse 30. *"As soon as this thy son was come…"* (v. 30) separating him.

HAVE YOU EVER DONE THAT? Like if you're mad at one of your children, you say to your spouse, *"Your child is really struggling."* That's kind of what the older brother is doing here. In contrast, the father says, *"Your brother was dead and is alive again" (v. 32).* The older son is angry *(v.28)*, but the father says, *"We should rejoice."*

BOTH BROTHERS STRUGGLE WITH SIN— one of the challenges for the older brother is that his is less obvious. **The younger brother knows he's in the wrong—but the older brother thinks he is in the right.** That can make things challenging for those of us who have **THE OLDER BROTHER SYNDROME.**

BOTH BROTHERS STRUGGLE **WITH SIN**

the younger brother

KNOWS HE IS WRONG

the older brother

THINKS HE IS RIGHT

what we sometimes struggle with

THE OLDER BROTHER SYNDROME

***What happens in verse 33? Actually, there is NO verse 33—you and I** have to supply it.*

Verse 32 ends on an abrupt note: the Father said, "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found" (Luke 15:32).

Does verse 33 say,

1 *And it came to pass, the brother was angry and stomped away filled with wrath"?*

Or is it,

2 *And it came to pass, the brother softened his heart, he said, "Father, you're right." He went in and embraced his brother."*

We can **SEE OURSELVES in the parable** in many ways. Perhaps **sometimes we're the prodigal son.** We need to **come to ourselves and repent.** Maybe at times we're **the prideful older son, needing to rejoice in others good choices.** This by the way, seems to be a key point of the Savior's point in this parable.

PERHAPS in this parable we are sometimes like the father—we're waiting, we're **hoping,** we're willing to forgive. We're eager for a loved one to return. Maybe we don't spend enough time thinking about the father's painful journey. How did he feel every day waiting for his son to return? Sometimes we're that father, sitting for longer than we want, waiting for someone to return. **Take a moment to consider this parable. What relevance do you see in your life today?**

LET'S TURN TO
THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

[A few verses before this parable begins, there's a question about what to do if someone at church offends you. **Then Peter asks, "If someone trespasses against me, how many times do I need to forgive them?"** It's in the context of being offended that Christ gives this parable.]

THE PARABLE OF
the unforgiving servant

NOTE: The first servant owes his master 10,000 talents. That could be 164,000 years' worth of wages **or 6 billion dollars.**

A second servant owes the first servant 100 pence, which could be 100 days wages, **about $10,000.**

That's still a substantial amount of money, but nothing in comparison to what the first servant owes.

Jesus begins the parable saying, "When the king began to reckon, **one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents"** (Matthew 18:24). If you're a 1st century listener, you already knew this is crazy. If a story begins with, "Someone owed another person 6 billion dollars," you know there's no possible way to repay that debt.

But the servant fell down and said, "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." (Matthew 18:26). The master is merciful. The entire debt is forgiven.

Then this first servant encounters the second servant who owes him the equivalent of $10,000 and says,——
"Give me what you owe me." Notice how the second servant does the exactly what the first one did. He falls down at the first servant's feet **and says the exact same phrase. "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."** (Matthew 18:29)

But the first servant doesn't forgive. He casts the second servant into prison. When the king hears about this, he says to the first servant, **"O thou wicked servant,** I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?" (Matthew 18:32-33).

Christ concludes the parable saying, **"His lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.** So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (Matthew 18:34-35).

THE MESSAGE OF THIS PARABLE IS OBVIOUS.

A key to **DRIVING THIS PARABLE INTO OUR HEARTS** is to ask ourselves.

"If I were really forgiven 6 billion dollars, would I forgive someone else $10,000? Those numbers are so astronomical that maybe we could change it slightly. Imagine that your wealthy friend drives a Ferrari and lets you take it for a spin.

You're not paying attention while you're driving, **and you wreck the Ferrari. Your generous friend says, "Don't worry about it."**

Later that day, somebody breaks a pencil you loaned them. If your friend forgave you for wrecking the Ferrari, you could certainly forgive a broken pencil. In other words, in this parable we're the first servant, **Jesus is forgiving us in essence. 6 billion dollars worth of sin. So can we turn around and forgive somebody who owes us 10,000 dollars worth of sin?**

PONDER THIS TO HELP YOU FORGIVE WHEN IT'S HARD

Christian leaders Timothy and Kathy Keller frame this idea. They refer to Christ on the cross saying *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34) and write,

"If you see Jesus dying on the cross for others, *forgiving the people who killed him, that can be just a crushing example of forgiving love that you will never be able to live up to.*

But if instead you see Jesus dying on the cross for you, forgiving you, putting away your sin, *that changes everything . . .*

The joy and freedom that comes from knowing that the Son of God did that for you enables you to do the same for others."

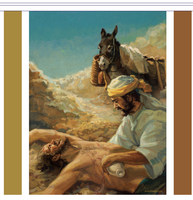
POINTS TO PONDER

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught:
"Usually did not say, "You are not allowed to feel true pain or real sorrow from the shattering experiences you have had at the hand of another. **Nor did he say,** "In order to forgive fully, you have to reenter a toxic relationship or return to an abusive, destructive circumstance."

But notwithstanding even the most terrible offenses that might come to us, we can rise above our pain only when we put our feet onto the path of true healing. That path is the forgiving one walked by Jesus of Nazareth, who calls out to each of us, ——

'Come, follow me.'"

LET'S CONSIDER
THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN



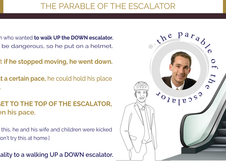
There are many applications of this parable:
We love this commentary from **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** He said,

"It's possible that the priest and the Levite looked over that man on the ground and wondered if the robbers were still around. Or it's possible that they felt that the man on the ground was merely faking, in order to... lure them there for quick and easy secure. And so the first question that the priest asked — The first question that the Levite asked was,

"If I STOP TO HELP this man, what will happen TO ME?"

But then the Good Samaritan came by. And he reversed the question.
"If I DO NOT STOP TO HELP this man, what will happen TO HIM?"

THAT'S A POWERFUL QUESTION FOR US TO CONSIDER.



LET'S END WITH
THE PARABLE OF THE ESCALATOR

There once was a man who wanted **to walk UP the DOWN escalator.** He knew it would be dangerous, so he put on a helmet.

1st. He found that **if he stopped moving, he went down.**

2nd. **If he walked at a certain pace,** he could hold his place on the escalator.

3rd. In order to **GET TO THE TOP OF THE ESCALATOR, he had to quicken his pace.**

(Shortly after he tried this, he and his wife and children were kicked out of the mall— so don't try this at home.)

We can liken mortality to a walking UP a DOWN escalator.

Because we live in a fallen world, **we face a constant DOWNWARD PULL—** it takes real effort to make progress.

President Henry B. Eyring talked about this very thing. See how it relates to this the escalator parable:

As the forces around us increase in intensity, whatever spiritual strength was once sufficient will not be enough. And whatever growth in spiritual strength we once thought was possible, greater growth will be made available to us.
Both the need for spiritual strength and the opportunity to acquire it **will increase** at rates which we underestimate at our peril." ("Always," BYU Devotional, 3 Jan. 1999)

Metaphorically, the downward speed of the escalator is increasing. We have to walk faster and faster, spiritually speaking just to keep up. But the good news is that today we have many more ways to invite the light of Christ into our lives than were available even just a few years ago.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS

What can we do to hear, to receive, and do something with **the word?**
Is there someone in our stewardship that we need **to be looking for?**
If someone comes back to the fold, **will we rejoice with them?**
Am I forgiving of others?
How can I be like the Good Samaritan today?

Sometime in the next 48 hours you or I might be in a challenging situation. If so, I hope we'll say, **"This is just like that parable..." and then we'll go and do likewise!**

SEEK JESUS DAILY

SEEKING JESUS

visuals & points to ponder / printables

all to help **F I N D** Jesus' Principles

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