

# **The Parables**

## **The coming kingdom of God**

# The Parables

Class 1: **What is a Parable?**

Class 2: **Why Parables?**

Class 3-4: **Jesus' Parables**

The coming kingdom of God

# Why Parables?

Jesus' answer

**(Mark 4:23–25 ESV)**

“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” And he said to them, “Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.””

# The Parables

## Thematic Groupings

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The coming reign/kingdom of God (6 parables)

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The grace of God's reign/kingdom (9 parables)

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The challenge of discipleship (11 parables)

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The call to repentance (7 parables)

# **The Parables**

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

The mustard seed

The growing seed

The leaven

**The sower**

**The weeds among the wheat**

**The fishnet**



# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Mark 4:2–9 ESV) Parable: The Sower**

“And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, 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. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.””

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

## **Parable: The Sower**

- Why does the sower seemingly scatter indiscriminately?
- Or is the sower only accidentally sowing on the unprepared ground?
- Wouldn't it be more logical to first plow and prepare the land, thus only scattering on the good soil?



# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Isaiah 28:24–25 ESV)**

“Does he who plows for sowing plow continually? Does he continually open and harrow his ground?

When he has leveled its surface, does he not scatter dill, sow cumin, and put in wheat in rows and barley in its proper place, and emmer as the border?”

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Jeremiah 4:3 ESV)**

“For thus says the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem:  
“Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.”

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Hosea 10:11–12 ESV)**

“Ephraim was a trained calf that loved to thresh, and I spared her fair neck; but I will put Ephraim to the yoke; Judah must plow; Jacob must harrow for himself. Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the LORD, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.”

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

## **IVP NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY SERIES**

“Later literature, however, repeatedly speaks of plowing after sowing (although some plowed both before and after sowing); farmers who knew their fields apparently felt comfortable sowing first, then plowing the seed into the ground (Jub. 11:11; Jeremias 1972:11 and 1966b; see especially P. Payne 1978:128-29, contending that both practices occurred)”

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

## **IVP NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY SERIES**

“Italy and Sicily averaged fivefold or sixfold return on grain sown; irrigated fields in Egypt averaged around a sevenfold yield for wheat (N. Lewis 1983:121-22). The average Palestinian harvest may have yielded seven and a half to ten times the seed sown.”

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Genesis 26:12–14 ESV)**

“And Isaac sowed in that land and **reaped in the same year a hundredfold**. The LORD blessed him, and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him.”

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(John 15:4–5 ESV)**

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, **he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.**”

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Mark 4:14–20 ESV)**

“The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.””



# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

## **Summary: The sower**

- The emphasis of this parable on the coming kingdom of God is the seemingly indiscriminate sowing, and the abundance of the yield
- Only God knows the heart, which is the ground on which the word is sown. On multiple occasions, Jesus marvelled at the faith of Gentiles who received his words in faith, despite not being his intended audience.

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

## **Summary: The sower**

- Agriculturally, a tenfold yield was considered a very good harvest, anything more was rare. Yet the good ground of the parable's harvest yields 30, 60 & 100 fold.
- Likewise, the word of God, received in faith, brings about fruit that exceeds any natural expectation (Gen. 26:12, John 15:5)

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

## **Summary: The sower**

- Do I only sow the word only where I see fit?
- Do I mishandle and reject parts of God's word, thinking I can hold on to the rest of it with its promises?
- Am I myself motivated by the word of God, or by my desires?
- Do I pursue my desires or do I pursue righteousness?
- Do I understand that my life is of little and passing value without the word of God? Or do I give my life for the wealth, pleasure and sorrow of this world?

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Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

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# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Matthew 3:11–12 ESV)**

““I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.””

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Isaiah 11:1–5 ESV)**

“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.”



# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Matthew 13:24–30 ESV) Parable: The weeds among the wheat**

“He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”””



# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Matthew 13:37–43 ESV) Parable: The weeds among the wheat**

“He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Matthew 13:47–50 ESV) Parable: The fishnet**

““Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Leviticus 11:9–10 ESV)**

““These you may eat, of all that are in the waters. Everything in the waters that has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat. But anything in the seas or the rivers that does not have fins and scales, of the swarming creatures in the waters and of the living creatures that are in the waters, is detestable to you.”

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Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Matthew 13:47–50 ESV) Parable: The fishnet**

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# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

**(Romans 11:25 ESV)**

“Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

## **Summary: The weeds among the wheat, the fishnet**

- The emphasis of the parable of the weeds among the wheat is both of God's (the landowner's) patience, and the need for patience on the part of the worker - even once the weeds and wheat can be identified by their fruit.
- The parable of the fishnet takes this emphasis a step further - the contents of the fishnet are unknown to the fishermen until they pull the net ashore. Only then will the catch be judged/sorted.

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

## **Summary: The weeds among the wheat, the fishnet**

- There is time for repentance and transformation, God's dividing word is transformative, it can change us from tares to stalks of wheat, from detestable fish to acceptable ones, but the time of harvest and catch-sorting is fast approaching, when the division, the separation will be final.

# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

## **Summary: The weeds among the wheat, the fishnet**

- As the sower, am I sowing the good seed I have received from God? As Jesus did, nothing more, nothing less?
- As the fisherman, am I dragging the net? Or line-fishing and releasing catches I don't like?



# The Parables

Theme 1: The coming kingdom of God

## **Summary: The weeds among the wheat, the fishnet**

- As a servant, do I tear out the weeds now, with little care for the stalks of wheat, the collateral damage, that comes with them?
- God's patience and care for all people was a stumbling block to Israel, is it for me?
- As the produce, am I wheat or tare? The good or the bad fish? Do I just look the part of the wheat, or am I actually growing from the good seed of the sower so that he will identify me as wheat when harvest comes?

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