

# **The Parables**

**The grace of God's reign**

# The Parables

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

Class 2: **Why Parables?**

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

The coming kingdom of God

Class 5-6: **Jesus' Parables**

The grace of God's reign

# **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

## 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)

# 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**

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**The workers in the vineyard**

**The two sons**

**The two debtors**

**The Pharisee and the tax collector**

The lost sheep

The lost coin

The prodigal son

The great feast

The wedding garment

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Hebrews 4:15 ESV)**

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

**(Hebrews 5:1–2 ESV)**

“For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness.”

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Isaiah 65:5 ESV)**

“...who say, “Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you.” These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.”



# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Matthew 9:11 ESV)**

“And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples,  
“Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?””

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Luke 7:39 ESV)**

“Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.””

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Luke 15:2 ESV)**

“And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.””

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Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

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The prodigal son

The great feast

The wedding garment

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

## Tax collectors & sinners

- Religious & social outcasts
- Included thieves, adulterers, those holding dishonest occupations, unclean

## Self-righteous & powerful

- Religious & social elite
- Included priests, scribes, elders, Pharisees etc.

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Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Matthew 20:1–8 ESV) Parable: The workers in the vineyard**

““For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. **After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day**, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and **whatever is right I will give you.**’ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, **beginning with the last, up to the first.**’”

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Matthew 20:9–16 ESV) Parable: The workers in the vineyard**

“And when **those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius**. Now when those hired first came, **they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius**. **And on receiving it they grumbled** at the master of the house, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and **you have made them equal to us** who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or **do you begrudge my generosity?**’ So the last will be first, and the first last.””



# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Matthew 19:30 ESV)**

“But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

**(Luke 13:30 ESV)**

“And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

**(Mark 9:35 ESV)**

“And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.””

**(Matthew 23:12 ESV)**

“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Luke 5:29–32 ESV)**

“And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them.

**And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled** at his disciples, saying, **“Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”**

And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.””

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

## **Summary: The workers in the vineyard**

- The emphasis lies in the second half of the parable - on the equal payment of the workers who worked varying lengths of shifts from a full day down to only one hour, and the earlier workers' reaction.
- The eleventh-hour workers represent the outcasts, the "tax collectors and sinners" who humbly answered Jesus' call
- The earlier workers represent the self-righteous, who grumble and despise their master on account of his grace

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

## **Application: The workers in the vineyard**

- Do I feel worthy of more honour than my brother or sister on account of merit - on account of the perceived greater works that I do in God's vineyard - thereby begrudging the grace, the goodness of God?
- Do I recognize how undeserving I am of God's grace despite my efforts, and rejoice in thankfulness at his compassion?

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Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

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- Included thieves, adulterers, those holding dishonest occupations, unclean

## Self-righteous & powerful

- Religious & social elite
- Included priests, scribes, elders, Pharisees etc.

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Matthew 21:28–32 ESV) Parable: The two sons**

““What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.”

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# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Matthew 23:2–3 ESV)**

“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.”

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Matthew 5:16 ESV)**

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so **that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father** who is in heaven.”

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(2 Peter 2:1–2 ESV)**

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and **because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.**”

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

## **Summary: The two sons**

- The first son, who reluctantly does his father's will represents the "tax collectors and sinners" who followed Jesus.
- The second son, who professes to do his father's will, but does not, in the end, do it, represents the "self-righteous and powerful" who rejected and envied Jesus, refusing to follow him.

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

## **Application: The two sons**

- Our words will never, in this mortal life, be in perfect concert with our actions; what matters is what we do when we periodically become aware of the disparity.
- Am I convicted and moved to repent like the first son, like David was from Nathan's parable? Like the "tax collectors and sinners" who heard Jesus and repented? Or am I self-righteous, hardened in my error like the second son, like the scribes and Pharisees?

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Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Luke 7:41–43 ESV) Parable: The two debtors**

“A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.”



# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Matthew 23:23 ESV)**

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.”

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(James 2:9–10 ESV)**

“But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.”

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# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

## **Summary: The two sons**

- The debtor with the greater debt represents the “tax collectors and sinners” who followed Jesus.
- The debtor with the lesser debt represents the second, “self righteous and powerful” group who rejected Jesus out of pride and envy.

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

## **Application: The two debtors**

- Do perceive my sin and God's forgiveness of it a light thing?
- Is the depth of my gratitude for God's grace in forgiving my debt motivating? Or do I love less than I should, thinking that I'm already righteous? Does my love and gratitude motivate me, like the woman in Simon's house, to seek and to serve the Lord?

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Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Luke 18:9–14 ESV) Parable: The Pharisee and the tax collector**

“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

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**(Isaiah 65:5 ESV)**

“...who say, “Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you.” These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.”

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**(Isaiah 65:5-7 ESV)**

“...who say, “Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you.” These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day. Behold, it is written before me: “I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will indeed repay into their lap both your iniquities and your fathers' iniquities together, says the LORD;”

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Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Luke 3:12–13 ESV)**

“Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.””



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Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Psalm 51:1 ESV)**

“Have mercy on me, O God...”

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

**(Psalm 51:17 ESV)**

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”

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## **Summary: The Pharisee and the tax collector**

- The Pharisee represents the self-righteous. His prayer lists the sins he's refrained from and his virtuous deeds, along with thanks to God that he isn't sinful in the ways others around him are. His attitude and prayer does not lead to justification with God.
- The tax collector represents the repentant sinner, whose sincere remorse and plea for mercy justifies him with God, even before he has taken steps in his life to change his ways.

# The Parables

Theme 2: The grace of God's reign

## **Application: The Pharisee and the tax collector**

- Does my personal prayer justify me with God?
- Am I selling a narrative about myself to God that minimizes or ignores my sin? That emphasizes my virtues?
- Am I seeking awareness of my sin, filled with remorse for it, and seeking God's mercy?

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