



- Jesus is nearing the end of His earthly ministry. In this last year, He had received more and more opposition.
  - Called The Bread of Life
  - Healing people. “Your sins be forgiven you.”
  - Called A Glutton and a Drunk & Willful Association With Sinners.
  - Accused of Breaking the Sabbath, but He is Lord of the Sabbath.
  - Predictions of His Death
  - “Who is the Greatest?”
  - Son of David.
- Jesus is turning up the heat, and the tension is approaching the boiling point. Because He knew His time was short, He turned more and more to teaching about the Kingdom toward the end.



**How Jesus teaches with Parables:**

- 1. Makes a teaching statement.**
- 2. Illustrates with a parable.**
- 3. Concludes with a statement.**

- Jesus often spoke in parables, particularly towards the end.
- How Jesus teaches with Parables:
  1. Makes a teaching statement.
  2. Illustrates with a parable.
  3. Concludes with a statement.

Covered in this class:

- The Lost Sheep (chap 18)
- The Unforgiving Servant (chap 18)
- Workers In The Vineyard (chap 20)
- Two Sons (chap 21)
- Vineyard Owner (chap 21)

## The Lost Sheep

"See that you don't look down on one of these little ones. Here is what I tell you. Their angels in heaven can go at any time to see my Father who is in heaven. "What do you think? Suppose a man owns 100 sheep and one of them wanders away. Won't he leave the 99 sheep on the hills? Won't he go and look for the one that wandered off? What I'm about to tell you is true. If he finds that sheep, he is happier about the one than about the 99 that didn't wander off. It is the same with your Father in heaven. He does not want any of these little ones to be lost. (Mat 18:10-14)

## The Lost Sheep

- Audience: His disciples.
- Context: Jesus was talking about becoming like children in order to enter the Kingdom, and being careful not to cause harm to anyone in the Kingdom.
- A couple of differences between this parable and the version in Luke:
  - The focus is on this sheep wandering, as opposed to the focus being on the lost condition of the sheep.
  - IF the shepherd finds the lost sheep, as opposed to WHEN.

### Context...

- People will eventually sin, but we are to look out for each other.  
“Focus on the sheep wandering...”
- We Christians can drift, and even wander away.  
“If...”
- It is not a guarantee that if you wander away you will come back. How many of us have seen disciples that have wandered off? Compare that to how many you see return. That is the reality. It is dangerous to wander.

## The Lost Sheep

- Who are the righteous?
  - Pharisees. Referred to ironically. The scribes and Pharisees divided the Jewish population into two groups: sinners and righteous. Jesus may be playing off this.
  - Disciples in good standing. They are part of the Kingdom, in good hands. But beware of the “first son syndrome” (Luke 15).
- God’s heart is for those who wander away to come back to His Kingdom.

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- How eager are you at going after people who have wandered away from the Kingdom of God? What measures are you willing to take to help them return?
- We must go the extra mile for them. They are potentially in an even worse position than those who never became disciples in the first place (Heb 10).



## The Unforgiving Servant

"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.' "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt...

## The Unforgiving Servant

When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

(Mat 18:23-35)

## The Unforgiving Servant

- Audience: Peter, the disciples.
- Context: Jesus just explained the reconciliation process between two brothers in the Kingdom (vv. 15-23).
- Some translations have 77 others 70 times 7.

\* Audience: Peter, the disciples.

- Context:
  - Jesus just explained the reconciliation process between two brothers in the Kingdom (vv. 15-23).
  - Perhaps Peter was feeling challenged about forgiving people and the reconciliation process in general.
- Some translations have 77 others 70 times 7.
  - **What is that all about? Does it mean that we forgive people 77 or 490 times, but not one more?**



## Biblical Numerology 101

- 1 Unity, YHWH: The LORD is One Deut 6:4; One Body, One Spirit, etc. Eph. 4:5
- 3 Universal Divine Perfection: Father/Son/Holy Spirit; Time/Matter/Space.
- 4 Number of Creation, The World: 4 seasons; 4 corners of the earth; the 4th commandment refers to the earth.
- 6 Number of Man: Man created on 6th day; man labors 6 days only; 6th commandment is shall not murder.
- 7 Number of Spiritual Perfection: 7 days in a week; 7 seals, 7 trumpets; 7 "eternals" in Hebrews.
- 10 Divine Perfection. There are 10 commandments; 1/10 of your income is a tithe; there were 10 plagues on Egypt; 10 "I Ams" of Christ in John.
- 12 Governmental Perfection. There were 12 tribes of Israel; 12 Apostles.

- Some larger numbers are combinations of these:
  - Multiplied:  $10 \times 4 = 40$  (Trial)
  - Repeated: Lamech declares 77-fold revenge in Gen 4:24; 77 generations of Adam to Christ according to Luke 3;  $6-6-6 = 666$  (Number of the beast)

## The Unforgiving Servant

**“7-7”**

7 (spiritual perfection) repeated.

**“70 times 7” =**

10 (divine perfection) x 7 (spiritual perfection) x 7 (spiritual perfection).

- Therefore, Jesus was putting MAJOR emphasis on forgiveness.
- In other words, you must be willing to forgive no matter how many times the offender needs to come back. It is UNCONDITIONAL.

## The Unforgiving Servant

- Servant owed master a LOT of money.
- The second servant owed the first 100 denarii. 100 denarii was a lot of money, but not what the first servant owed.
- The first servant had lost perspective on the grace he was given.
- The other servants were distressed and angry about this.
- What does the king do to the unforgiving servant? He calls in his debt and throw him in prison to get tortured until the debt was paid.

- Servant owed master a lot of money. How much?
  - 10,000 = 10 (divine perfection) x 10 x 10 x 10.
  - Another way to look at it: **Without using Google, what was the largest jackpot in history?**
    - On March 30, 2012, Mega Millions made history with the world's largest prize in any jackpot game ever: **\$656 million**. The jackpot was split three ways, by winning tickets in Kansas, Illinois and Maryland. The record still stands!
    - Imagine owing that much money!
    - The point is, there is NO WAY you can pay the debt off. Not even close. That is the magnitude of your sin, and the magnitude of God's forgiveness.
- The second servant owed the first 100 denarii. 100 denarii was a lot of money. Think \$20,000. Is that a lot of money? Of course. Is it compared to \$656 million? No!
- The first servant had lost perspective on the grace he was given. He was so focused on the money he was owed he turned to violence and retribution to get what he wanted. That is the destructive power of bitterness.
- We get hurt, and we get hurt a lot. Our friendships, our relationships, they cause us pain. People sin greatly against us. We still must forgive.
- The other servants were distressed and angry about this. Bitterness affects not just you, or the offender, but others as well. And that is not good.

- What does the king do to the unforgiving servant? He calls in his debt and throw him in prison to get tortured until the debt was paid. How long will that be? A long time. An eternity even. Eternity is a long time to pay for bitterness. Don't go to hell over that poison.
- What is the Kingdom expectation of forgiveness? Forgive as the Lord forgave you. It is the only way.

## Workers in the Vineyard

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the workers on one denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine in the morning, he saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. To those men he said, 'You also go to my vineyard, and I'll give you whatever is right.' So off they went. About noon and at three, he went out again and did the same thing. Then about five he went and found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here all day doing nothing?' "Because no one hired us,' they said to him. "You also go to my vineyard,' he told them. When evening came, the owner of the vineyard told his foreman, 'Call the workers and give them their pay, starting with the last and ending with the first...'



## Workers in the Vineyard

..."When those who were hired about five came, they each received one denarius. So when the first ones came, they assumed they would get more, but they also received a denarius each. When they received it, they began to complain to the landowner: 'These last men put in one hour, and you made them equal to us who bore the burden of the day and the burning heat!' "He replied to one of them, 'Friend, I'm doing you no wrong. Didn't you agree with me on a denarius? Take what's yours and go. I want to give this last man the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my business? Are you jealous because I'm generous?' "So the last will be first, and the first last."

(Mat 20:1-16)

## Workers in the Vineyard

- Audience: Peter, the disciples, the crowd.
- Context: Rich young ruler went away sad; Peter declared "We gave up everything! What about us?!"
- We respond to God at different times in life, but His grace is the same for each of us.
- The main point here is to be humble and grateful that you have entered the Kingdom, no matter when you did it.
- "The scandal of this parable is that we are all equal recipients of God's gifts. The scandal of our faith is that we are often covetous and jealous when God's gifts of forgiveness and life are given to others in equal measure."

- Audience: Peter, the disciples, the crowd.
- Context: Rich young ruler went away sad; Peter declared "we gave up everything! What about us?!"
  - We can feel this way, sometimes. Discipleship is hard. Peter is acknowledging that.
  - Jesus does comfort him (and us), letting us know that we will be and are rewarded richly for being in His Kingdom, but watch your heart, and He goes into this parable.
- Another kingdom parable, about effectiveness for the kingdom and God's return.
- We respond to God at different times in life, but His grace is the same for each of us.
- Did you catch that what you did before you answered the Call was effectively nothing?
- The main point here is to be humble and grateful that you have entered the kingdom, no matter when you did it. You don't get extra credit for working longer, so don't be jealous or envious of people who came to know God later in life. Don't fall for the trap of entitlement. Don't covet God's control over who is forgiven and how they are forgiven. (See Luke 15, Parable of the Prodigal Son)
- One commentary said: "The scandal of this parable is that we are all equal recipients of God's gifts. The scandal of our faith is that we are often covetous and jealous when God's gifts of forgiveness and life are given to others in equal measure."

## Two Sons

"What do you think about this? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 'I will not,' the son answered. But later he changed his mind and went. "Then the father went to the other son. He said the same thing. The son answered, 'I will, sir.' But he did not go. "Which of the two sons did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "What I'm about to tell you is true. Tax collectors and prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God ahead of you. John came to show you the right way to live. And you did not believe him. But the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. You saw this. But even then you did not turn away from your sins and believe him.  
(Mat 21:28-32)

## Two Sons

- Audience: The chief priests and the elders.
- Context: They were questioning Jesus' authority. Jesus responded with a piercing question of His own.
- The scribes and Pharisees divided the Jewish population into two groups: sinners and righteous. That's how they view the world.
- Jesus cares about one thing only: Repentance! It is key to getting into the Kingdom.

- Audience: The chief priests and the elders.
- Context:
  - Jesus had entered Jerusalem. It is mere days before He would be crucified, and He knew it.
  - They were questioning Jesus' authority. Jesus responded with a piercing question of His own.
- The scribes and Pharisees divided the Jewish population into two groups: sinners and righteous. That's how they view the world.
- The parable is referring to those two groups, but not in the way the religious leaders meant.
  - "Sinners" (tax collectors, prostitutes, etc.) may not have responded to John the Baptist or any other prophet before, but Jesus is here and now they're responding.
  - The religious leaders pride themselves on the teachings of the prophets, and yet are completely missing the point of it all: Jesus the Messiah.
- The bottom line is repentance.
  - Just because you claim to be in the Kingdom, it doesn't mean that you actually are.

- It is easy to take pride in who your church or religious heritage, but what are YOU doing?
- Repent. That is the way of the Kingdom.



## Vineyard Owner

"Listen to another story. A man who owned some land planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it. He dug a pit for a winepress in it. He also built a lookout tower. He rented the vineyard out to some farmers. Then he went away on a journey. When harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the renters. He told the servants to collect his share of the fruit. "But the renters grabbed his servants. They beat one of them. They killed another. They threw stones at the third to kill him. Then the man sent other servants to the renters. He sent more than he did the first time. The renters treated them the same way. "Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. "But the renters saw the son coming. They said to each other, 'This is the one who will receive all the owner's property someday. Come, let's kill him. Then everything will be ours.' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard. Then they killed him..."

## Vineyard Owner

..."When the owner of the vineyard comes back, what will he do to those renters?" "He will destroy those evil people," they replied. "Then he will rent the vineyard out to other renters. They will give him his share of the crop at harvest time." Jesus said to them, "Haven't you ever read what the Scriptures say, 'The stone the builders didn't accept has become the most important stone of all. The Lord has done it. It is wonderful in our eyes'? (Ps 118:22,23)

"So here is what I tell you. The kingdom of God will be taken away from you. It will be given to people who will produce its fruit. Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces. But the stone will crush anyone it falls on." The chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' stories. They knew he was talking about them. So they looked for a way to arrest him. But they were afraid of the crowd. The people believed that Jesus was a prophet. (Mat 21:33-46)

## Vineyard Owner

- Audience: The chief priests and the elders.
- Context: They were questioning Jesus' authority. Jesus responded with a piercing question of His own, and then the Parable of the Two Sons.
- God sent prophet after prophet to collect the harvest of Israel's heart (repentance), but they kept killing them.
- Jesus was God's last ditch and ultimate effort to call Israel to repentance.
- Since Israel wouldn't listen, God would go to the Gentiles for His harvest.

- \* Audience: The chief priests and the elders.
- \* Context: They were questioning Jesus' authority. Jesus responded with a piercing question of His own, and then the Parable of the Two Sons.
- \* God is the owner, The religious leaders are the renters, the vineyard is the people of Israel, and by extension the world (Gentiles).
- \* Who are the owner's servants? The prophets! He sent prophet after prophet to collect the harvest of Israel's heart, but they kept killing them.
- \* Who is the son? Jesus! He was God's last ditch and ultimate effort to call Israel to repentance.
- \* Who are the other renters? Other humble leaders, and the Gentiles. God's plan from the get go was to bring the Kingdom to the Gentiles through Israel and unify all of His children, but Israel rebelled. Therefore, it is through anyone who would humble themselves that He will advance the Kingdom.
- \* How do you think this would make the primary audience for this parable feel? Angry! So much so, they were (ironically) looking for ways to kill Jesus.
- \* Lessons:
  - Leaders are not owners and masters. The harvest belongs to God alone.
  - Stubbornness is dangerous. It blinds and deafens you to God's message.

- God will use anyone who would humble themselves to advance His Kingdom.

## Next Week: More Kingdom Parables!



- \* Next week we will cover four more parables.
- \* Clue: This picture is related to what we will discuss next week. Come back to find out!