

PARABLES OF JESUS

Int.

1. Aim: To discuss the parables and what Jesus was doing with them.
2. "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake He not unto them." (Mt. 13:34)
 - a. This passage tells us of the beginning of Christ's teaching by parables.
 - b. Parables of Christ found in the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John uses a different word.
 - c. Parables make up more than one-third of the recorded teaching of Jesus.
3. One of the greatest desires that enters into the minds of teachers, is to be able to teach in the most understandable and unforgettable way possible.
 - a. We try to find the most presentable way possible to teach our lessons.
 - b. Teaching by use of parables is one of these ways of teaching.
 - c. No doubt, it must be a very good way of teaching because it has been used by some very outstanding people down through time.
 - d. We find parables being used by the prophets of Old Testament days, and Jesus Christ of the New Testament era.
4. Jesus Christ was the master teacher of all time. He used several methods of teaching and the parable was one of the more effective ways.

Discussion

I. WHAT IS A PARABLE?

- A. A parable involves the idea of “placing one thing by the side of another.”
1. The word “parable” is an anglicized form of the Greek term *parabole*.
 2. In the King James Version it is translated
 - a. “comparison” once (Mk. 4:30);
 - b. Twice it is rendered “figure” (Heb. 9:9; 11:19);
 - c. Once “proverb” (Lk. 4:23);
 - d. And, forty-six times it is simply found as “parable.”
 3. The word is a derivative of two roots -- **para** meaning “beside” and **ballo** “to throw.”
 4. It thus literally suggests throwing (or placing) something beside something else for the ultimate purpose of making a comparison.
- B. A general definition would be “a comparison of two objects for the purpose of teaching.”
1. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia defines a parable as “ordinarily signifies an imaginary story, yet . . . its details could have actually transpired, the purpose of the story being to illustrate and inculcate [instil] some higher spiritual truth.”
 2. Thayer, in his Greek Lexicon, describes the parable as, “A narrative, fictitious but agreeable to the laws and usages of human life, by which either the duties of men or the things of God are . . . figuratively portrayed.”

- C. A parable is not a fable
1. In a fable natural things take on unnatural traits
 - a. A fable may attribute language, discourse and reasoning to trees, birds and animals
 - b. This is not the case of a parable
 2. In a parable reality keeps its form. They do not transgress the established laws of nature.
 3. A parable is constructed to set forth a truth of a spiritual and heavenly nature.
- D. The parables are earthly stories with heavenly meanings. - Johnny Ramsey

II. WHY DID JESUS SPEAK IN PARABLES?

- A. His disciple asked him this question:
1. "Why speakest thou unto them in parables" ? Mat. 13:10
 2. The question of the disciples shows that this method of teaching was new to them - they did not understand why He was using parables
- B. Answer by Jesus in Matt. 13:11-7
1. The first reason that He spoke in parables was that only the disciples could understand their meaning
 - a. This form of teaching veils the truth from those who do not want it.
 - b. It unveils the truth to those who are ready and will receive it !
 - c. The parables were to reveal, and they were to conceal !

- d. The pillar of cloud and fire in Ex. 13 and 14
 - (1) It gave light to the Israelites
 - (2) But was a cloud of darkness to the Egyptians

2. The second reason is that the disciples used their opportunities and the unbelieving Jews did not.
 - a. To those who used them there would be given more, and to those that did not they would lose even what they had.
 - b. The unbelieving Jews had the privilege of hearing Jesus and seeing his signs:
 - (1) They were taken away by a kind of teaching which they could not understand
 - (2) They would not have more opportunities
 - c. The unbelievers do not use their eyes or their ears;
 - (1) They saw the miracles but not in the true light.
 - (2) They heard his words, but not in their true meaning.
 - (3) God gives light; but if a man blinds himself, God does not force that one to see.
 - d. In order to keep them from perverting and abusing His teaching He spoke in parables !
 - e. The parables veils the truth from those who do not want it, but unveils the truth for those who are ready for it and willing to see.
 - f. Today the same situation prevails.
 - (1) Closed Bibles and closed hearts will never lead one to obey the truth.
 - (2) It is truth heard, believed and obeyed that brings salvation.

3. A third reason Jesus used Parables was to fulfill prophecy
 - a. I sa. 6:9-10 and Ps. 78:2 - Matt. 13:35
 - b. Their heart was not right
 - (1) Waxed gross - thick, fat, made callous or dull, filled with earthly and sensual desires
 - (2) Their state of heart made their hearing dull - they would not hear with favor the words of Jesus
 - (3) Their bad heart made them close their eyes to the evidences of his Messiahship and Divinity
 - c. They voluntarily closed their eyes against the light which had come into the world.
 - d. These parables were not understood by those whose hearts were closed !
 - e. Contrast this with the disciples - Matt. 13:16-17
 - (1) They could see and hear with profit - because of the condition of their heart
 - (2) They saw and understood things which the prophets desired to see or hear
 - (a) 1 Pet. 1:10-12
 - (b) No one could know these truths until Christ revealed them.
 - f. Jesus used parables teach the people as had been predicted by I saiah.

III. UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF PARABLES

- A. Jesus explained the first two parables - the Sower and the Tares
- B. In Matthew 13 there are 7 parables given

1. Sower 13:1-23	5. Hidden Treasure - 13:44
2. Tares 13: 24-30	6. Pearl of Great price - 13:45-46
3. Mustard Seed 13:31-32	7. Net - 13:47
4. Leaven: 13:33	

- C. In the first seven parables that launched His journey into this form of teaching technique the Savior captured the heart and core of the nature of His kingdom.
 - 1. Matthew 13 is a unique journey into the mind of Deity. We learn major points about the cause of Christ.
 - 2. In reflecting upon the parable of the Sower we can see the power of truth hindered by the hard and indifferent hearts of men.
 - a. Only a few with good and honest inclination accept the challenge of truth.
 - b. Jesus taught us to sow the seed and not personally to be discouraged when only a minority obey.
 - 3. In the parable of the Tares we can understand that Satan tries desperately to confuse the world with counterfeit religion and careless endeavor. We may have to wait until Judgment Day to see the end result of this battle between good and evil that fills us with consternation now.

4. Then, in two parables concerning leaven and mustard seed we are told valuable points that enlighten and challenge us.
 - a. It is very important for us to allow God to give the increase and take charge of keeping the roll book.
 - b. The Lord adds to the church and keeps the record accurately. Read Acts 2:41; I Corinthians 3:6-7; Revelation 3:1-5!
 - c. From a very small beginning Christianity grew to a wonderful power in the midst of an unbelieving world without the pomp and clever tactics used by false religions.
 - d. May God help us to be content with the simple sowing of the seed and never engage in the gimmicks and gadgets of carnality.

5. The next two parables are truly marvelous reminders of the incomparable value of God's kingdom.
 - a. The pearl of great price and the hidden treasure form a magnificent tribute to the blessings that attend salvation.
 - b. Worth far more than the wealth of secular enterprise is the depth of truth and redemption in Christ Jesus.

Take the world, but give me Jesus,
All its joys are but a name;
But His love abideth ever,
Through the endless years the same.

- c. The enduring quality of the gospel transcends all the charming and fleeting vanity of Satan's enchanting and devious schemes.
6. The seventh parable of Matthew 13 it is the one about the Net
 - a. Here our blessed Redeemer makes it very clear that no evil or error, however well-disguised will slip through the net when the final curtain falls.
 - b. Even if sinners can bluff their way and deceive their friends in this brief life they will face eternity without hope.

<p>You can fool the hapless public You can be a subtle fraud You can advertise your virtues But you cannot fool God!</p>
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Conclusion

1. In all of literature there is nothing comparable to the parables of Jesus
 - a. Just mention the word parable and the name Jesus comes to mind.
 - b. These earthly stories with heavenly meanings have warmed the hearts of millions for 2,000 years.
2. These parables of Jesus are inexhaustible in their teaching:
 - a. They are simple enough for the child
 - b. Yet they are profound enough for the wisest scholars
 - c. They stand as a tribute to the genius of communication skills of Jesus.

3. The purpose of parables:
 - a. To reveal the truth
 - b. To conceal the truth
 - c. To embalm the truth
 - d. To cause men to assent to truth before they understand its application.

4. Blessed is the man who reads them, comes to understand them, and lays them to heart.

5. The parables of Jesus are masterpieces of instruction and encouragement.
 - a. Let us study them carefully and savor their rich messages.
 - b. We will be wiser and better for having gathered those precious pearls which lay hidden in the parables of the Son of God.

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