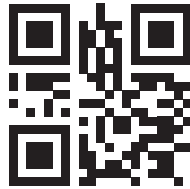


Parables of Jesus



Parables of Jesus



Free Grace
International

2 Circle Road, Longview, TX 75602 • 903-757-2904

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PARABLES OF JESUS

The parables of Jesus are earthly stories with a heavenly meaning. Jesus is the master teacher so His parables have lessons for all people to learn. We've added bubbles next to the Bible passages that are focused primarily on describing the lessons He has for believers.

PARABLE	REFERENCE	PAGE
1. Good Shepherd	John 10:1-18	7
2. Four Soils	Matt. 13:3-23, Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:4-15.	11
3. Ten Minas	Luke 19:12-27.	15
4. Wedding Banquet	Matthew 22:2-14	19
5. Lost Sheep and Coin	Matthew 18:12-14, Luke 15:4-10	23
6. Lost Son	Luke 15:11-32.	27
7. Lost Son's Brother	Luke 15:11-32.	31
8. Unforgiving Servant	Matthew 18:23-34	35
9. Persistent Widow	Matthew 18:1-8	39
10. Good Samaritan	Luke 10:30-37.	43
11. Tax Collectors Prayer	Luke 18:9-14.	47
12. Wise/Evil Servants	Matthew 24:45-51, Luke 12:42-48	51
13. Shrewd Manager	Luke 16:1-8.	55

Parable Of The Good Shepherd

John 10:1-18



BOTTOM LINE.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who loves, knows, and saves His followers, offering them eternal security and a personal relationship with Him through faith.

Parable Of The Good Shepherd

**JOHN
10:1-18**

Pharisees
False
Teachers

Receive
Eternal Life

Jesus

Gentiles

1 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a **thief and a robber**. 2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. 7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be **saved**, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. 11 "I am the **good shepherd**. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 And **other sheep** I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. 17 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."



CONTEXT

This passage is where Jesus talks about being the Good Shepherd. At this time, Jesus is teaching and performing miracles, and many people are following Him. Some people believe He is the promised Savior, while others, especially religious leaders, doubt and oppose Him. Shepherding was a common job, so when Jesus talked about shepherds and sheep, the people understood the imagery. Jesus used this story to explain His special relationship with His followers and His purpose on Earth.

STORY ELEMENTS

Jesus: He is the main figure, referring to Himself as the Good Shepherd.

Sheep: These represent the people who believe in and follow Jesus.

Shepherd and the door: Represent Jesus, who cares for and protects the sheep.

Thieves and Robbers: These are people who try to harm or mislead the sheep.

Hired Hand: Someone who looks after the sheep for money and runs away when danger comes.

Wolf: Symbolizes danger or enemies of the sheep.

LESSON

Jesus being the gate means that He is the only way to eternal life. Just as sheep enter the pen through the gate, people must come to God through Jesus. Salvation is a free gift given to anyone who believes in Jesus for eternal life.

JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD, LOVES HIS FOLLOWERS SO MUCH THAT HE WILLINGLY LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THEM.

Unlike a hired hand who runs away at the first sign of danger, Jesus stays and protects His sheep. This shows the depth of His love and commitment to us.

Jesus knows His followers personally and deeply. This relationship is mutual; the followers know and trust Jesus just like sheep trust their shepherd. Believers have a secure and personal connection with Jesus.

Jesus has the authority to lay down His life and take it up again. This shows His divine power and His control over life and death. His resurrection proves that He is the true Savior and has power over sin and death.

The Good Shepherd ensures that His sheep are safe. Believers can be confident in their salvation because it depends on Jesus, not on their own efforts. Since Jesus is the one who saves and keeps His sheep, they are secure in Him forever.

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who loves, knows, and saves His followers, offering them eternal security and a personal relationship with Him through faith.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the main message of John 10:1-18 in the New Testament?
2. Why did Jesus use the imagery of shepherds and sheep in His teachings?
3. What do the sheep represent in Jesus' story about the Good Shepherd?
4. Who are the thieves and robbers mentioned in the story, and what do they symbolize?
5. How does Jesus' behavior as the Good Shepherd contrast with that of a hired hand?
6. What does Jesus mean when He says He is the gate for the sheep?
7. How does Jesus' willingness to lay down His life demonstrate His love and commitment to His followers?
8. What does Jesus' authority to lay down His life and take it up again show about His divine power?
9. Why can believers feel secure in their salvation according to the lesson from John 10:1-18?

Parable Of The Four Soils

Luke 8:4-14



BOTTOM LINE

Receive God's word with an open heart, do not get distracted from it,
and the outcome will be great.

Parable Of The Four Soils

LUKE
8:4-15

Temptations

Open heart

The Parable
of the Sower
Explained

This
parable is
about
bearing fruit

4 And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: 5 “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. 6 Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. 8 But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundred-fold.” When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” 9 Then His disciples asked Him, saying, “What does this parable mean?” 10 And He said...

11 “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 13 But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. 14 Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

The Word
of God

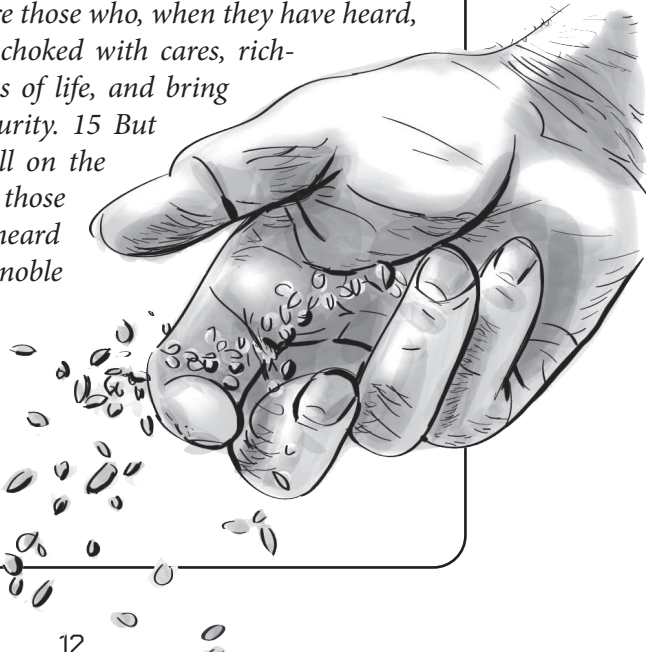
The Devil

Believe

Cares of
this world

Good
works

Also in
Matt 13:3-23
Mark 4:1-20



CONTEXT

Jesus often told parables, stories with a lesson, to teach people important things about life and godliness. In the parable you just read, He is talking to a large crowd of people, including both followers and those who do not know much about God. Jesus told the Parable of the Sower to help us understand how we should respond to God's message.

STORY ELEMENTS

Sower (Farmer): God or anyone sharing God's message.

Seeds: God's word.

Different Soils: People's hearts and their response to God's word.

Road-seed: People who hear God's message, do not believe it, and are not saved.

Rock-seed: People who believe for a little while but fall away into temptation. They are saved, but they do not grow strong.

Thorn-seed: People who believe but get distracted by life's worries and riches. They are saved but do not produce full-grown fruit.

Good-seed: People who hear, believe, and produce many good works. They live fruitful lives for God.

Crop: Mature fruit represents good works that a believer can do during his or her life on earth.

LESSON

This parable teaches that God's message of salvation is for everyone, but not everyone responds the same way. If we simply believe in Jesus for everlasting life, we are saved forever, because it is a gift from God. We do not have to do good works to earn it!

Jesus is also teaching us that we should not get pulled away from living a Godly life like the rock-seeds did. Falling into temptation robbed the rock-seed believers of their chance to do good, satisfying work for Christ.

Also, we should not get distracted by concerns, pleasures, and worries, as the thorn-seed believers did. That will take away our chance to produce a full amount of good works for the Lord.

After we believe, it is important to grow strong in our faith, like a healthy plant. But, even if we face hard times or fall away (like the rock-seed and thorn-seed), we are still saved because we have believed in Jesus. Our relationship with God can never be lost, but if we do not obey, we can miss out on the good things God has planned for us in this life, and eternal rewards in heaven.

BOTTOM LINE

Receive God's word with an open heart, do not get distracted from it, and the outcome will be great.



Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus told this story?
2. What do the different types of soil represent in the parable?
3. What does the sower or farmer symbolize?
4. How do the road-seeds respond to God's message? Are they saved?
5. What challenges do the rock-seeds face? Are they still saved?
6. What distractions do the thorn-seeds experience? Are they still saved?
7. What makes the good-seeds special? What do they produce?
8. What is the difference between being saved and producing good fruit?
9. Can you lose your salvation if you do not produce good fruit?
10. How can you become like the good-seed and produce more fruit in your life?

Parable Of The Ten Minas

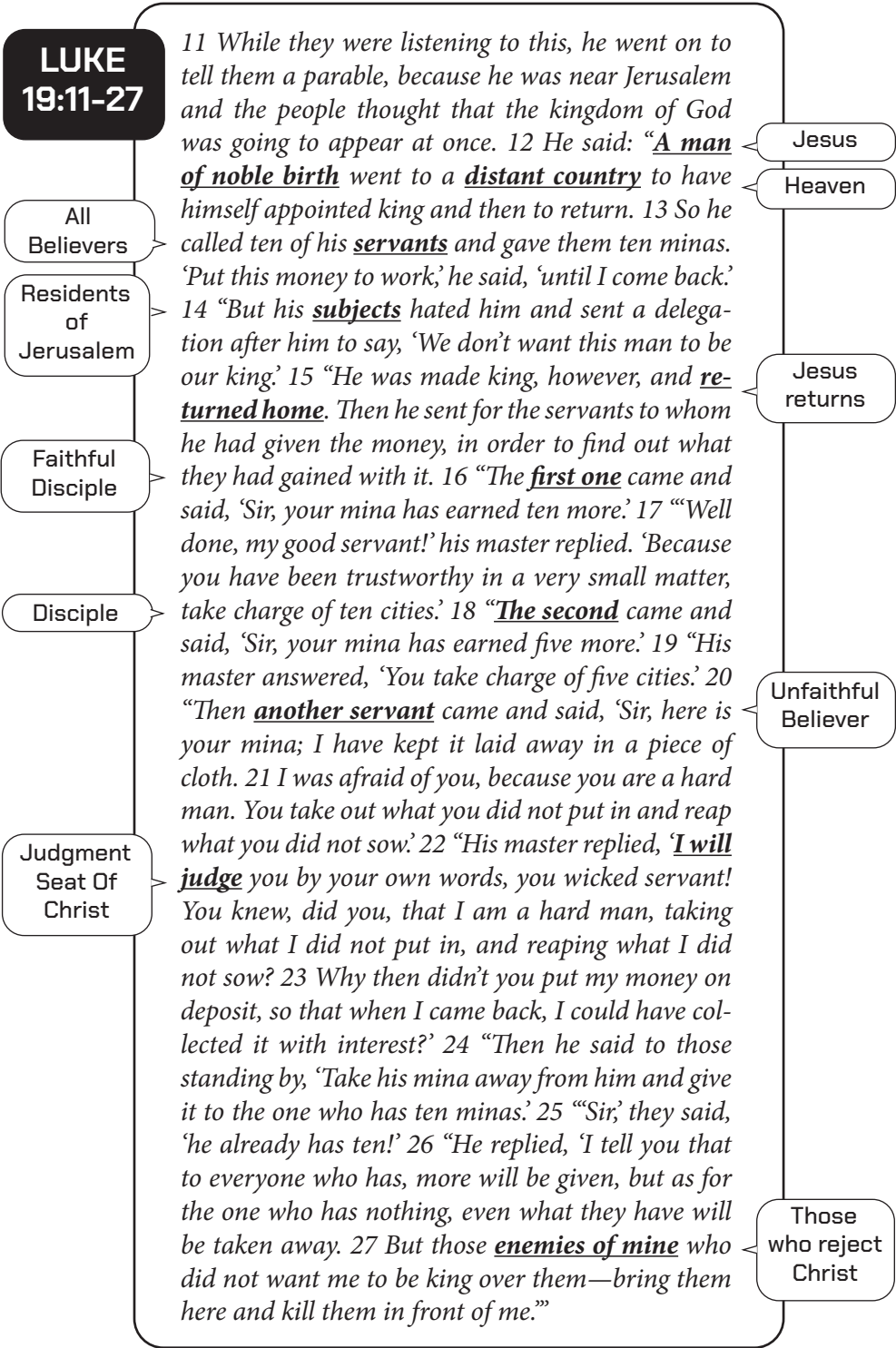
Luke 19:11-27



BOTTOM LINE

Serve Christ every day for great reward in heaven.

Parable Of The Ten Minas



CONTEXT

Jesus told the Parable of the Ten Minas because people thought He was going to set up His kingdom right away. Jesus was talking to His followers and some others who were listening. He told His disciples that He would be going back to heaven and after an unknown amount of time, He would return. When He comes back, He will see what we have done to serve Him and judge our works at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom 14:10-12; 1 Cor 3:10-4:5; 2 Cor 5:1-10). We must serve Jesus as we wait for His return.

STORY ELEMENTS

Minas: Time, talent, money, influence, or any God-given ability a believer can use to bring others to Christ and help them grow spiritually.

Ten Servants: All believers from all time.

Good Servant: Believers who go above and beyond in their faith. They will be greatly rewarded.

Adequate Servant: Believers who do some good works, but do not exceed expectations. Their reward will be less.

Wicked Servant: Believers who do no good works. They are still saved but will miss out on eternal rewards.

Enemies of the King: People who do not believe in Jesus, and are not saved.

King: Jesus, who gives us all something to work with and expects us to use it wisely.

LESSON

God gives us salvation for free when we believe in His Son, Jesus. After we are saved, God gives us time, skills, resources, influence, and other gifts. What we do with those gifts shows how much we love Him back. If we use them to their fullest, like the good servant, we get a great reward in heaven.

However, if we do some good works, but also get distracted by selfish pursuits, like the second servant, we will get less reward than we could have.

If we act like the wicked servant there will be a sad result. The wicked servant has believed in Jesus for salvation but does nothing with their spiritual potential. A saved person can continue to live like a sinner, with terrible consequences. They can not lose their salvation, but they can lose their chance to get rewards in heaven.

In addition, some refuse to believe in Jesus altogether, represented by the King's enemies. They miss salvation and rewards.

Jesus said, "Do business till I come." We are to do His work until he returns. Use your talent, time, and resources to bring others to Christ and to help them grow, and you'll find amazing rewards when we arrive in heaven.

BOTTOM LINE

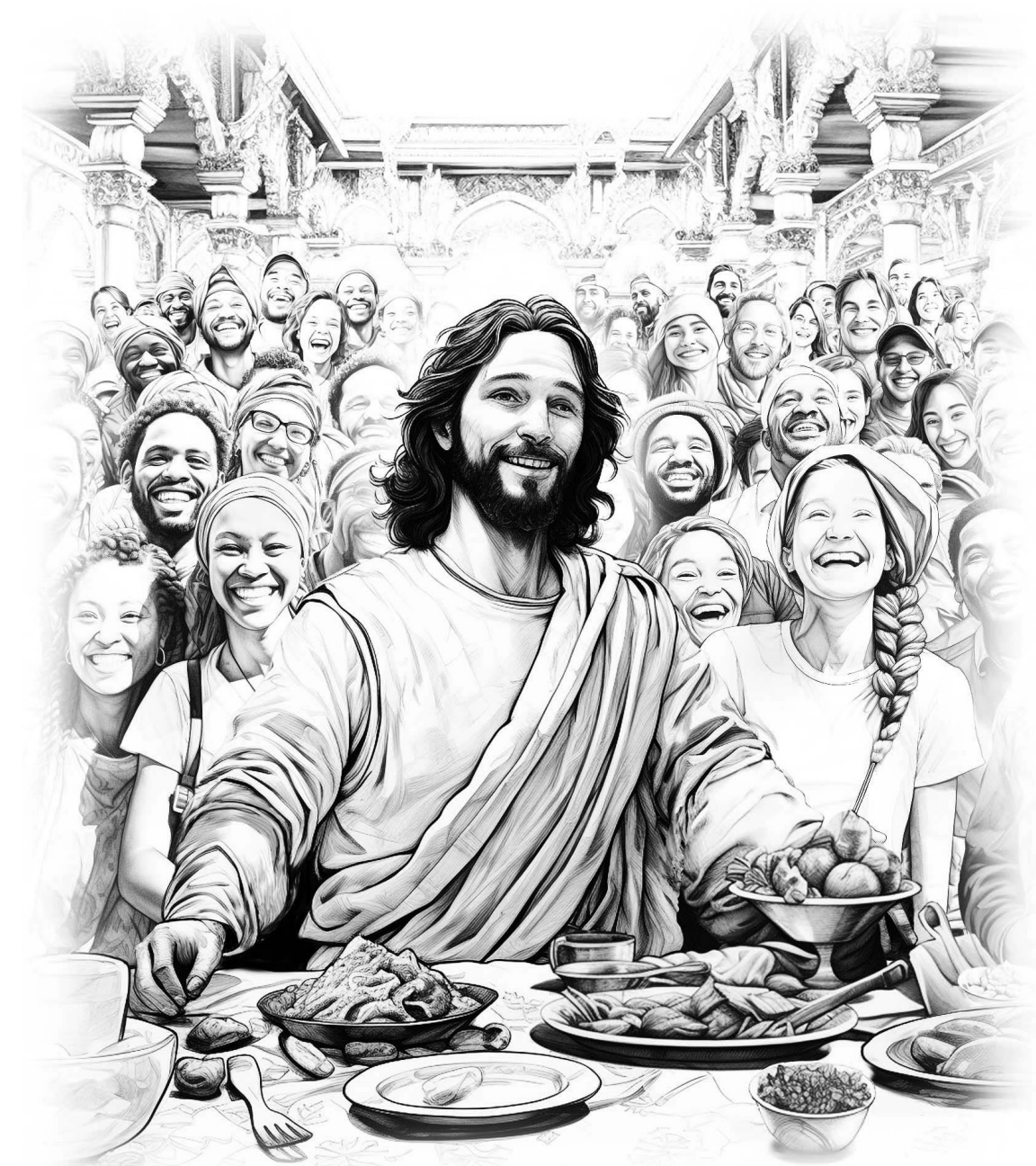
Serve Christ every day for great reward in heaven.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus tell this story?
2. What gifts or talents has God given you?
3. How can you use your talents to show love to God and others?
4. Why was the Good Servant so successful?
5. How can you be more like the Good Servant in your life?
6. Describe how the wicked servant must have been feeling on rewards day.
7. What is the difference between getting into heaven and getting rewards in heaven?
8. What do you think the King (Jesus) expects from us while He is gone?

Parable Of The Wedding Banquet

Matthew 22:1-14



BOTTOM LINE

Believe to enter the kingdom. Serve to be close to Jesus in the kingdom.

Parable Of The Wedding Banquet

**MATTHEW
22:1-14**

Rev. 19:9

Old Testament
Prophets

John the
Baptist and the
Apostles

Destruction
of Jerusalem in
70 AD

Believers

A believers
faithful service

Believers

A place in the
kingdom but not
close to the King

Chosen
for close
fellowship with
Christ in the
Kingdom

1 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said:

2 “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain **king** who arranged a **marriage** for his **son**,

3 and sent out his **servants** to call **those who were invited** to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4 Again, he sent out other **servants**, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.” ’ 5 But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6 And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. 7 But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and **burned up their city**. 8 Then he said to his **servants**, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ 10 So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together **all whom they found, both bad and good**. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 “But when the king came in to see the **guests**, he saw a man there who did not have on a **wedding garment**. 12 So he said to him, ‘**Friend**, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the servants, ‘**Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**’

14 “For many are called, but few are **chosen**.”

God

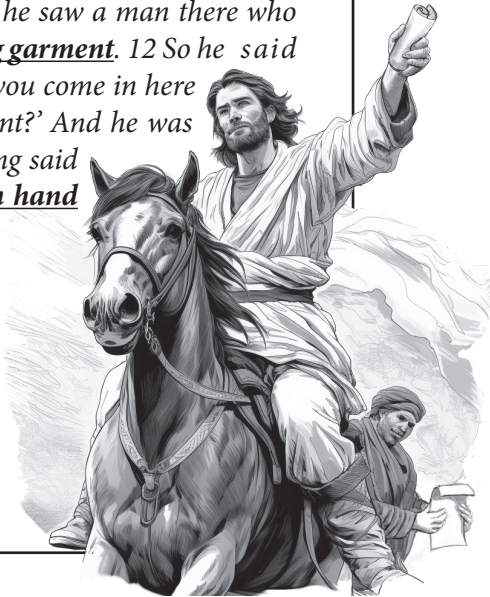
Jesus

Jews

Jews
who
rejected
Jesus

Disciples

All
Believers



CONTEXT

In this parable, Jesus is talking to religious leaders and followers who are curious but also confused about what God's Kingdom is like. He tells them the Parable of the Wedding Banquet because he wants them to understand how God is inviting everyone to be a part of His Kingdom. The story is also a way for Jesus to show that some people might miss out because they do not take God's invitation seriously.

God invites everyone to His Kingdom, but how you respond to His invitation can affect your experience in the kingdom.

STORY ELEMENTS

The King: God, who is inviting people to a heavenly banquet.

The Son: Jesus, for whom the banquet is thrown.

Invited Guests: The 1st and 2nd groups are Jews who rejected Jesus. The last group is everyone in the world who believes in Jesus.

Rejected Invitations: People who refuse to believe in Jesus for eternal life.

New Guests: Those who believe in Jesus for salvation.

Wedding Banquet: Eternal rewards with Jesus and maximum joy in Heaven.

Weeping and gnashing of teeth: Moment of regret when a believer sees the reward they could have had if they had obeyed. 1 Cor. 3:13

LESSON

The miss-dressed wedding guest got into the party. In the same way, believe in Jesus for everlasting life and you're in the Kingdom for good; no one can take that away from you. However, the wedding guest was not properly dressed, and he lost his chance to be close to the King. The proper wedding suit he was supposed to wear is like the good works we should do after we believe in Jesus. Coming in the wrong clothes to the wedding is like living our life without ever doing any good works for Jesus. We do not earn the invitation by doing good deeds, but once we believe, how we act can lead to great rewards.

When the inappropriately dressed guest is bound hand and foot, that is like having your hands tied up when you get to heaven. If we are unfaithful during our Christian life, we will have less opportunity to serve and be close to Jesus in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The outer darkness doesn't represent being cast into Hell. It represents, being in Heaven but missing out on the close fellowship that we could have had with Christ. It is like standing outside in the dark while the party is going on inside.

We do not want to miss out on the full joy God offers us. Let us work hard for Jesus so that we are ready when he returns. Let us do good works until he comes back.

BOTTOM LINE

Believe to enter the kingdom.

Serve to be close to Jesus in the kingdom.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus tell this story?
2. How does the King feel when people ignore his invitation?
3. Why did the King invite new people to his son's wedding?
4. How is the King's invitation like God's invitation to us?
5. Can you think of ways we can "put on our party clothes"?
6. What is the difference between accepting the invitation to the wedding and taking part in the wedding banquet?
7. How would you feel if you missed out on being close to Jesus in the kingdom?
8. What are some of the rewards Jesus has for those who follow Him closely?
9. How can we help others to accept God's invitation, and arrive well dressed?

Parable Of The Lost Sheep And Coin

Luke 15:1-10



BOTTOM LINE

God rejoices when someone who is lost finds their way back to Him.

Parable Of The Lost Sheep And Coin

LUKE
15:1-10

1 Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." 3 So He spoke this parable to them, saying:

Self-righteous

Jesus

God seeking the lost

Faithful

Believer who has strayed from God

4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the nine-ty-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' 7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

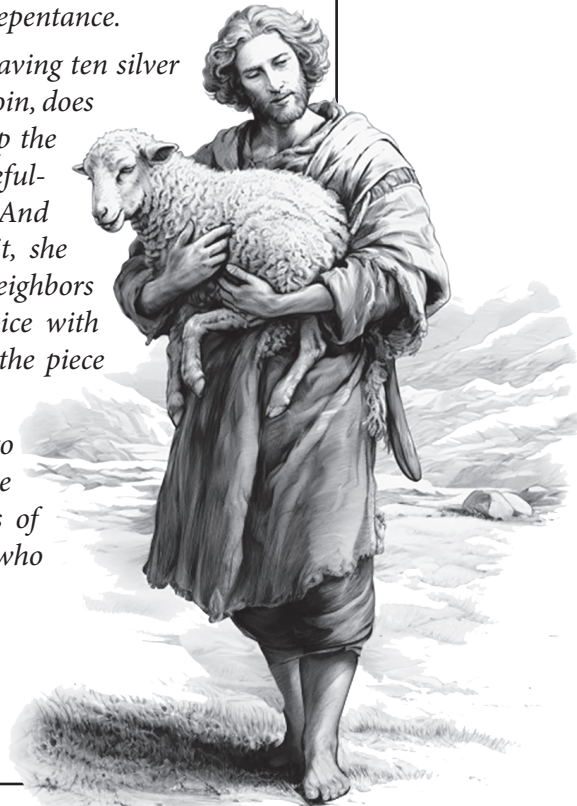
Also in
Matt 18:12-14

Believer who has strayed from God

8 "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!'

Turns away from sin to God

10 Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."



CONTEXT

Some Pharisees and scribes didn't like that Jesus was talking to people they called "sinners." Jesus knew that everyone needed to hear His message, not just the people who thought they were already good. So, He told three stories to help the Pharisees, and us, understand how much God loves everyone, even those who might be considered lost. In this lesson, we will look at the first two stories, The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. In the next lessons, we will consider the lost son and his brother. Although unbelievers can learn something from these stories too, we will focus on what believers who have strayed from God can learn from Jesus' parables.

STORY ELEMENTS

Shepherd and Woman: God, and godly leaders who are searching for the lost.

100 Sheep and 9 coins: Those who do not need to repent.

Lost Sheep and coin: A believer who has wandered away from God and needs to repent.

Pharisees and Scribes: People who think they're earning their way to Heaven, look down on others who do not keep the rules, and think God has rejected sinners.

The Search: God's never-ending love and grace in seeking the lost.

Rejoicing: God's joy when a wayward believer is found.

LESSON

God is constantly working to bring people into fellowship with Himself. This is true for unbelievers, just like it is true for those who have already believed. God's love is for everybody.

Unsaved unbelievers are not in fellowship with God. As soon as we believe in Jesus for the first time, we start our Christian life in good fellowship with the Lord, but we can lose our way and get out of fellowship with God.

Notice that the parable ends with the word *repents*. This is what a believer who is living in sin must do to return to fellowship with God. We must confess our sins to the Lord and change our behavior. When we do that, we come back to the Lord, as He rejoices.

As believers, we can lose our way and fall out of fellowship with God, but we can never lose our eternal life because Jesus holds it for us.

The Holy Spirit is constantly working on us so that we will come back. Fellowship is restored for us as soon as we repent.

All of Heaven rejoices when a believer who is lost is brought back to God. God's love is so big and amazing that He is happy when anyone who has lost their way returns.

BOTTOM LINE

God rejoices when someone who is lost finds their way back to Him.

Discussion Questions

1. What does the joy of finding the lost sheep teach us about God's love?
2. How did the scribes and Pharisees view themselves?
3. Why did they complain about Jesus eating with sinners?
4. Why did Jesus tell this story to the Pharisees and scribes?
5. What does it mean to repent?
6. What does a believer who is living in sin need to do to have fellowship with God?
7. What does a non-Christian need to do to have fellowship with God?
8. How can you help someone who is lost find their way back to God?

The Parable Of The Lost Son

Luke 15:11-24



BOTTOM LINE

God is always happy when His children who stray from Him come back.

Parable Of The Lost Son

LUKE
15:11-24

Life of sin

Terrible
price for a
life of sin

Terrible
price for a
life of sin

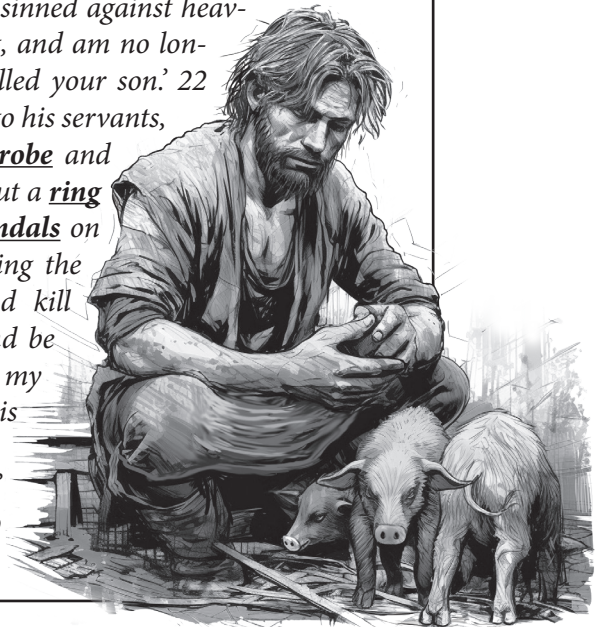
Restored
relationship
with God

11 Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. 14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. 17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."' 20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

God, the
example
for
spiritual
leaders

Repented

Repented



CONTEXT

Jesus continues with His third parable after telling stories about The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. He is talking to a group of Jewish people that includes religious leaders and regular people. The religious leaders are upset because Jesus shows compassion to "sinners." The religious leaders think that is a bad thing. So, Jesus tells this story to help everyone understand how God's love works, even for those who make mistakes. Most religious leaders did not believe in Jesus, but the "sinners" who were listening were believing in Him, so this story has something to teach both unbelievers and believers alike.

STORY ELEMENTS

Father: God who shows incredible love and forgiveness and is an example of how He wants spiritual leaders to be. The father is patient and accepting of both of his sons, just like God is patient and accepting of sinners.

Younger Son: A believer who has strayed away from God and needs to return.

The Far Country: A life away from God, full of sin and hardship.

The Fatted Calf: The celebration and joy that God feels when one of His children comes back to Him.

LESSON

In this parable, we see how damaging it is to go our way and turn our back

on God. Straying from God may bring pleasure for a short time, but it always results in a bad outcome in the long run, just like it did for the son who went to the far country.

Sin brings great suffering. People who pursue sin can lose their happiness, friends, career, family, and life. There is the loss of closeness with God a person can experience if they believe in Jesus but decide not to follow Him. In addition, running from God means we will lose the opportunity for extra reward in eternity.

BELIEVERS CAN NEVER LOSE ETERNAL LIFE, BUT MUCH IS AT STAKE FOR THOSE WHO STRAY FROM GOD'S RIGHTEOUS PATH.

It is not all sad, however. This parable teaches us a beautiful lesson about how God loves us. God's love is free and always there for us, no matter how far we stray from Him. We can do nothing to make God stop loving and pursuing us. Just like the father in the story, God is always ready for us to come to Him. When we realize we need His love and turn to Him, He welcomes us with open arms. No matter how badly you've messed up, you can still turn to God and receive His forgiveness. God's love is always available to everyone.

BOTTOM LINE

God is always happy when someone who is lost comes to Him.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus tell this story?
2. Why was the younger son unhappy in the far country?
3. What did the father do when he saw his younger son returning?
4. What does the father's love represent?
5. How is God's love different from the way people sometimes love?
6. How can we be sure that we are saved?
7. What is the difference between being saved and being close to God?
8. What do you think the celebration will be like when Jesus returns?

Parable Of The Lost Son's Brother

Luke 15:25-32



BOTTOM LINE

Rejoice when sinners come back to God.

Parable Of The Lost Son's Brother

LUKE
15:2, 25-32

Believer

Jesus

Pharisees

God

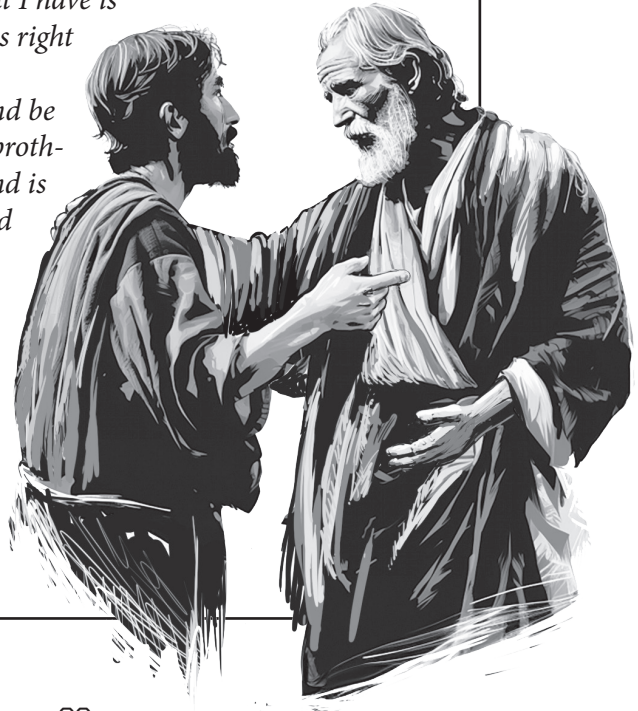
2 The Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "**This Man** receives sinners and eats with them..."

25 "Now his **older son** was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, 'Your **brother** has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your **father** has killed the fatted calf.'

28 "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was **dead** and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'

Unbelievers are spiritually dead. Believers who stray from God are alive, but they are acting like the spiritually dead.



CONTEXT

This is a continuation of the story of The Prodigal Son, but now the focus is shifted to his older brother. In verse 2, we see the Pharisees and scribes complaining about Jesus spending time with sinners. In this parable, the older brother is complaining to his father for welcoming his lost brother back, just like the Pharisees and scribes didn't want anything to do with people they called sinners.

Jesus teaches this parable to teach them and us that God welcomes back those who have strayed from Him and how all of Heaven rejoices when anyone comes back to Him.

STORY ELEMENTS

Father: God's love and forgiveness, the example of how spiritual leaders should act. However, in this half of the parable, God's attempt to bring the self-righteous older son back to fellowship reminds us that God confronts those who are self-righteous.

Older Son: Those who think they are good and do not understand why God would forgive others who have made mistakes.

The Fatted Calf: The celebration and joy God feels when someone returns to Him.

LESSON

This parable could be called The Prodigal Sons (plural) because it is the story of not just one but two sons who have abandoned fellowship with their father. Of course, the younger brother's abandonment is obvious, but the older

brother has the appearance of fellowship but wants nothing to do with his dad. Notice that the older brother isn't interested in fellowshiping with his father. Instead, he wants to party with his friends.

At this point in the story, the older brother needs to be restored to fellowship just as much as his brother needed it, but he remains unreconciled even at the end of the story. That's because, as Jesus told this story, many of his listeners, like the Pharisees, were still not repentant.

There is a word of warning for those who refuse to accept all those whom God accepts. In the same way that the father left the house to confront his son, so too will God confront all those who are self-righteous, whether believers or unbelievers.

God wants us to have the same forgiving heart as He does. The older son was angry. He thought his good behavior should earn him more love. But the father's love was plenty for both sons, just like God's love is available for all.

When Jesus taught his disciples and us to pray, he included a daily request for forgiveness and instructions to forgive others in the same way we have been forgiven. Every believer has the kind of forever-forgiveness that gets us into heaven, but we have to work on forgiving others daily. So, let us share in His joy by forgiving and accepting everyone who turns to Him, no matter how bad they have been.

BOTTOM LINE

Rejoice when sinners come back to God.

Discussion Questions

1. Is the older son angry at his father or at his brother?
2. Why do you think the older son was angry?
3. Do you think the older brother's charge against his younger brother (that of having devoured the father's livelihood with harlots) was correct?
4. How should we treat people who have made mistakes?
5. What do you make of the fact that the older son did not have a desire to make merry with his father, but rather that he wished to do that with his friends?
6. How does the father seek to correct the older son's thinking in verse 31?
7. What kind of believer does the older son represent?
8. What do we learn from the bad example of the older son?
9. Does it seem right to you our Father would welcome back into full fellowship a believer who has strayed far away?

Parable Of The Unforgiving Servant

Matthew 24:21-35



BOTTOM LINE

Forgive as you've been forgiven.

Parable Of The Unforgiving Servant

**MATTHEW
18:21-35**

God

Believers

All the
sins we have
committed
against God

God's
forgiveness
for us

Others sins
against us

21 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. 23 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain **king** who wanted to settle accounts with his **servants**. 24 And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him **ten thousand talents**. 25 But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' 27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and **forgave him** the debt.

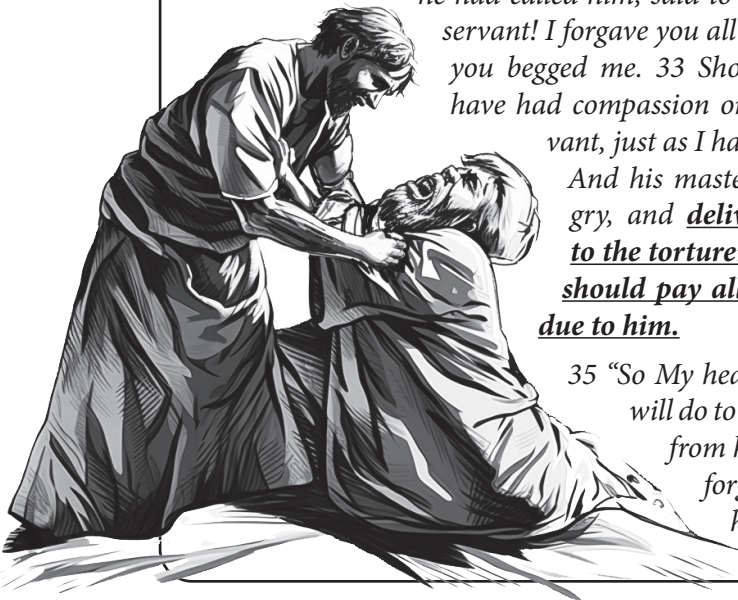
28 "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a **hundred denarii**; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' 29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' 30 And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 Then his master, after

he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34

And his master was angry, and **delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.**

The
great cost
of not
forgiving
others.

35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."



CONTEXT

Peter asks Jesus, “How many times should I forgive someone who wrongs me?” Jesus says not just seven times, but seventy times seven. Wow, that is a lot of forgiving! Then, Jesus tells a story about a king and his servants to help everyone understand what He means.

STORY ELEMENTS

The King: God, who is willing to forgive us for everything, but expects us to forgive others in return. He is kind but also fair.

First Servant: Believers, who have been forgiven a tremendous amount of sin. He forgave us more than we can ever pay back.

Big Debt: The wrong things we have done. We could never pay them all back on our own, which is why we need God’s forgiveness.

Fellow Servant: Believers who harbor unforgiveness against other believers.

Small Debt: Harboring unforgiveness against other people. The wrongs against us are tiny compared to the enormous debt God forgives us for.

Torturers: The results of unforgiveness in our lives. God disciplines unforgiving believers in various ways, but he promises to discipline those who need to change.

LESSON

There are two main kinds of forgiveness. **Forever Forgiveness** is what we get when we believe in Jesus, along with a forever home in Heaven. **Daily**

Forgiveness is when we forgive others around us. It allows us to have fellowship with God and people.

The king forgave the first servant’s huge debt. That is like the **Forever Forgiveness** we get the exact moment we believe in Jesus for salvation. All our wrongs were forgiven forever, and we have a forever home in Heaven. However, that doesn’t mean we are suddenly made perfect. We still have to work hard to show **Daily Forgiveness** to others.

The fellow servant doesn’t forgive a small debt he is owed by another servant. That is like when we do not forgive others. It makes God angry, just like the king. He punishes the servant. Punishment does not mean unforgiving believers can go to Hell. We have **Forever Forgiveness**, remember? Believers are saved forever. But, if we do not forgive others, God might let us face some tough times during this life.

Unforgiveness can be one of the most destructive forces, destroying our health, relationships, and robbing us of joy and fellowship with God. Being unforgiving is torture for those who hold on to it.

Believing in Jesus for eternal life saves you forever. But being a good follower of Jesus takes work. And part of that work is forgiving others, just like Jesus forgives us. When we forgive others, we are showing God’s love to the world just as God shows His love to us.

BOTTOM LINE

Forgive as you’ve been forgiven.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus tell this story?
2. What does the big debt symbolize in your life?
3. What are the two kinds of forgiveness Jesus talks about?
4. How do we get “forever forgiveness”?
5. What does “daily forgiveness” mean for our everyday lives?
6. What does the small debt teach us about forgiving others?
7. How did you feel when the first servant didn’t forgive the second servant?
8. Can you think of a time when you found it hard to forgive someone?
9. What might happen if we do not forgive others?
10. How can we become better at forgiving, just like Jesus wants us to be?

Parable Of The Persistent Widow

Luke 18:1-8



BOTTOM LINE

Always pray and do not give up, because God hears our prayers and will answer them.

Parable Of The Persistent Widow

LUKE
18:1-8

1 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

2 saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.

3 Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.'

4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man,

5 yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' "

6 Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said.

7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?

8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

The judge had the power to help the widow.

God has the power to help you.



CONTEXT

The parable of the persistent widow appears in Luke 18:1-8, where it follows a series of teachings and parables that Jesus shares with his disciples and the gathered crowds, illustrating how to live with humility, faith, and dependence on God. One of the greatest ways to do all of that is prayer.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is teaching people about the power and importance of prayer. He knows that sometimes, people get tired and feel like giving up when their prayers aren't answered immediately. To help everyone understand why they should keep praying and not lose hope, Jesus tells the parable of the persistent widow.

STORY ELEMENTS

Unjust Judge: a story character that illustrates that even an unjust judge will eventually do the right thing if he is persuaded. How much more God will do the right thing since He is just, righteous, and Holy.

Widow: The lady who has lost her husband and is in a tough spot represents people who are in need and keep praying to God for help.

The City: The world where we live, where things do not always seem fair or go our way.

Justice: what the widow keeps asking for from the judge and represents the good things we ask God for in prayer.

LESSON

God loves us a lot and wants to help us. But sometimes, He waits a little while to answer our prayers. Sometimes, He doesn't give us what we want. That doesn't mean He is not listening; He is just teaching us to trust Him more.

For those who have believed in Jesus for salvation, praying helps us grow. It helps us become better followers of Christ.

It is like talking to your best friend; the more you talk, the closer you get! When Jesus comes back, He wants to find people who have faith, who trust Him, and who talk to Him through prayer. Do not lose heart. Keep on praying to your heavenly father who always cares about you.

Receiving eternal life is a free gift you get when you believe in Jesus, but being a good follower takes effort, like praying, even when it is tough. But do not worry! God is always listening and will answer your prayers when the time is right. Keep on praying, and do not ever give up. God hears our prayers and will answer them in His perfect timing.

To be ready for Christ's return, we need to continue to pray, believing He hears us and knows what is best for us.

BOTTOM LINE

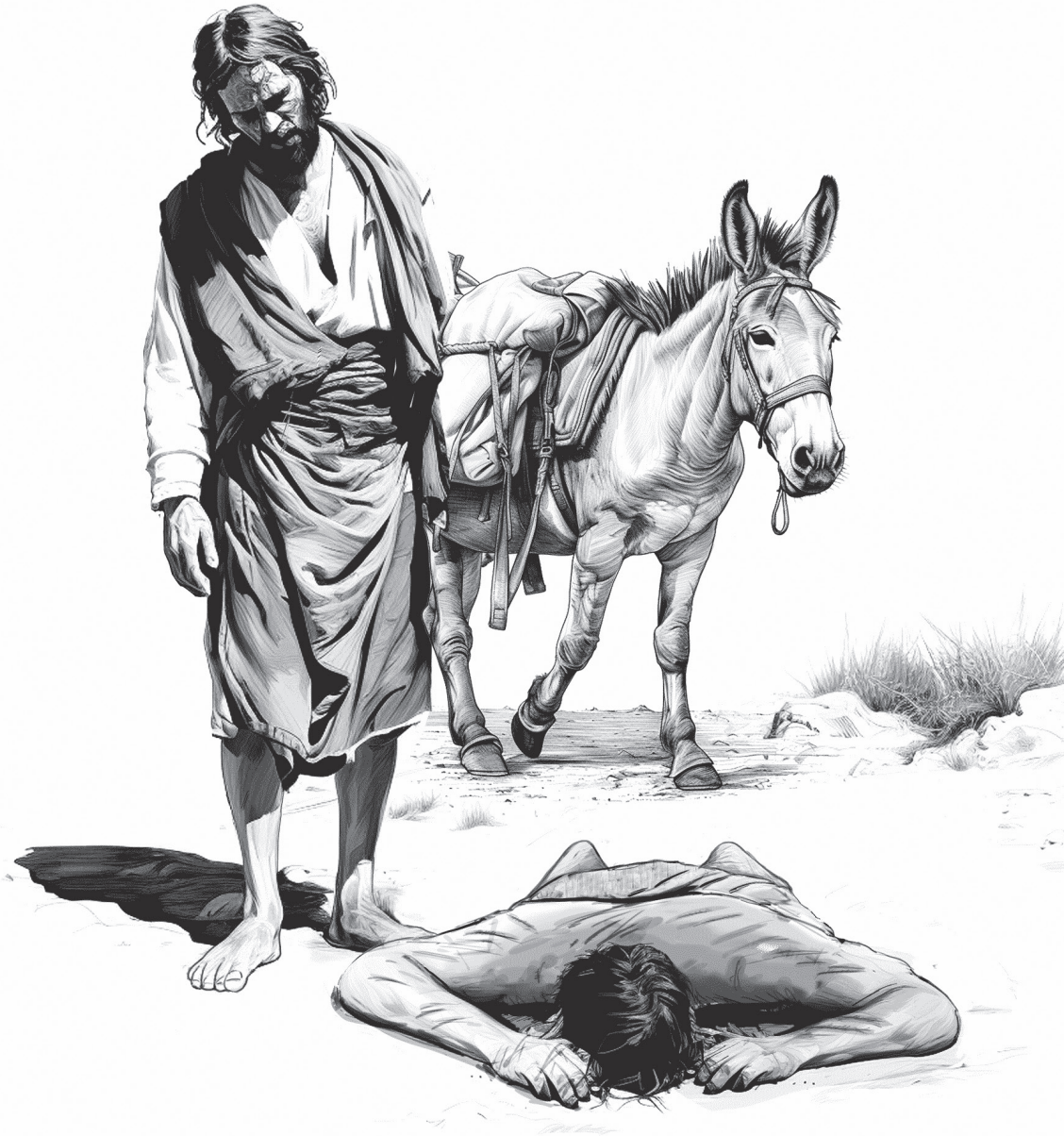
Always pray and do not give up, because God hears our prayers and will answer them.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus tell this story?
2. Why did the widow keep asking the judge for justice?
3. How is God better than the unjust judge?
4. Why should we keep praying even when it seems like nothing is happening?
5. What is something you've prayed a long time for?
6. How can prayer make you a better follower of Jesus?
7. What does Jesus want to find when He comes back to Earth?

Parable Of The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37



BOTTOM LINE

Be merciful to others as God has been to you.

Parable Of The Good Samaritan

LUKE
10:25-
37

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" 27 So he answered and said, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.' " 28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." 29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Self
righteous

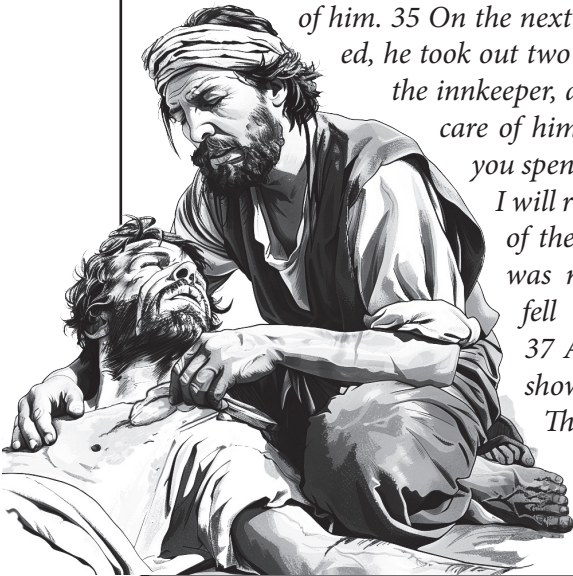
30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care

Jewish
man

Unloving
rule
keepers

Enemy of
the Jews

of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' 36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" 37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."



CONTEXT

After Jesus had been teaching about the importance of loving God and neighbors a man asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?”. To answer the man’s question, Jesus told a story about a good Samaritan. He wanted to teach people that being a neighbor isn’t about living next door to someone but about showing love and kindness to everyone, even people who are different from us or people we do not know. This lesson was not what his listeners were expecting to hear, but they understood the message clearly when he was done.

STORY ELEMENTS

Lawyer: tried to justify himself before God by following the law, but was also trying to get away with making God’s laws easier by pretending they said what he wanted them to say.

Man Traveling: anyone who is vulnerable or in need.

Thieves: the dangers and hardships that can happen to anyone.

Priest and Levite: religious leaders who knew about God but didn’t act in love.

Samaritan: those who show true kindness, even to their enemies

Jerusalem to Jericho Road: a dangerous place, representing the risks in life.

Ignoring the Man: anytime we know someone needs help, we also know God has told us to love others, and we do not do it.

Act of Kindness: anytime we show love

and kindness, especially when we do it knowing that is what God wants us to do.

LESSON

We can not justify ourselves before God—not by keeping the law, or by adjusting the laws to make them easier to follow. We can only be justified by believing in Jesus for everlasting life.

God’s love is so amazing that it is free for everyone who believes in Him for salvation! Once you believe in Him, you’re saved forever. But, being a faithful disciple means showing His love to others, just like the Good Samaritan did. Even though the man was a stranger, and even though Samaritans and Jews usually didn’t get along, the Good Samaritan stopped to help. He showed us that everyone is our neighbor.

Remember, we do not earn eternal life by being good; we are saved by faith in Jesus, but loving our neighbors will be very rewarding in this life and the next.

God wants us to live our lives by loving Him and showing mercy to everyone rather than thinking we can please God just by keeping all the rules.

So, next time you see someone who needs help, remember to act like the Good Samaritan. This will not only make God happy, but it will also allow you to gain eternal rewards.

BOTTOM LINE

Be merciful to others as God has been to you.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus tell this story?
2. How did the man feel when the priest and Levite ignored him?
3. Why did the Samaritan stop to help?
4. What does the story teach about who our neighbors are?
5. What does it mean to be a good neighbor?
6. How can you show love to people who are different from you?
7. Is being good the same as being saved?
8. How is helping others a part of being a disciple of Jesus?
9. What would you do if you saw someone who needed help?
10. How can we act more like the Good Samaritan in our daily lives?

Parable Of The Tax Collector's Prayer

Luke 18:9-14



BOTTOM LINE

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Parable Of The Tax Collector's Prayer

LUKE
18:9-14

9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'

13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house **justified** rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Tax collectors were considered the worst of sinners because they sided with Rome at the expense of their own people.

Pride

Humility

In right relationship with God



CONTEXT

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus saw that some people were acting like they were better than everyone else because they followed a lot of rules. These people looked down on others who didn't act the same way. To help them understand what really matters to God, Jesus told the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. They learned an important lesson from His story; one they probably didn't expect.

STORY ELEMENTS

Pharisees: people who think they can earn God's love by their actions. When Jesus told this story, Pharisees were people who everyone thought were wonderful, amazing, Godly people.

Tax Collector: people who are humble, who know they have made mistakes, and ask God for mercy. When Jesus told this story, tax collectors were people that everyone thought were terrible, horrible, rotten people.

Temple: where God met his people. It represents God's way for the Jews to have a relationship with Him.

The Pharisee's Prayer: reveals how prideful the pharisee was, proving he wasn't a wonderful Godly person.

Tax Collector's Prayer: reveals how humble the tax collector is, revealing he was doing better than the Pharisee, who was supposed to be godly.

Justified: his mess-ups have been made right with God because of his humble prayer.

LESSON

What God really likes is a humble heart. Being humble means knowing that we are not perfect and that we need God's help. The Tax Collector knew this, so when he prayed, he simply asked God to have mercy on him, a sinner. And guess what? Jesus said he went home right with God!

The Pharisees thought he was already good enough for God because he followed lots of rules. But that's not how you get God's forgiveness. Eternal life is a free gift from God—you can not earn it! Before you can believe in Jesus for salvation, you have to know that you can not save yourself and that you need Jesus' help. The only way to be saved is by believing in Jesus for eternal life. And once you do, you're saved forever!

The parable has an important lesson for people who are already saved as well. After we are saved, it is good to follow Jesus and be like Him, but that's different from getting saved. Following Jesus takes humility too. We must admit, in prayer, that we need God's help every day. We must confess, in prayer, when we have messed up. We must ask for His help to do better in the future. It takes humility to do these things. We must be humble to be good disciples. Humility is very important for both believers and unbelievers alike. Be humble, and it will make God happy.

BOTTOM LINE

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus tell this story?
2. What does it mean to be humble?
3. How did the Pharisee feel about himself?
4. What did the tax collector pray for?
5. Why was the tax collector's prayer better in God's eyes?
6. How might focusing on the rules mess us up in our walk with God?
7. What is the difference between being saved and being a humble follower of Jesus?
8. How can you show humility in your daily life?

Parable Of The Wise and Evil Servants

Matthew 24:45-51



BOTTOM LINE

Stay ready for Jesus' return by meeting the needs of others.

Parable Of The Wise and Evil Servants

**MATTHEW
24:45-51**

Jesus

Rewards in
eternity

Christ's
words of
judgment

This parable
is also found in
Luke 12:42-48

44 "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." 45 "Who then is a faithful and **wise servant**, whom his **master** made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. 47 Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him **ruler over all his goods**. 48 But if that **evil servant** says in his heart, 'My master is delaying **his coming**,' 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, 51 and will **cut him in two** and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. **There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

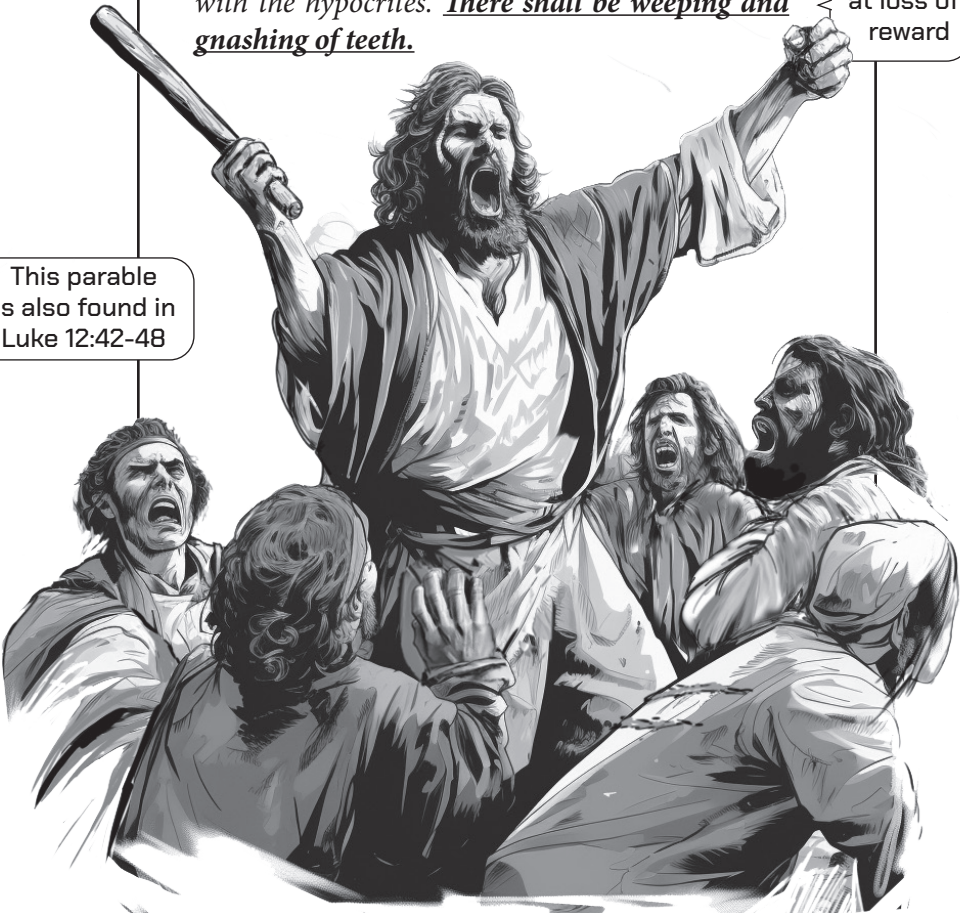
Faithful
Disciple

People
in our lives

Unfaithful
Believer

Rapture

Sorrow
at loss of
reward



CONTEXT

In the book of Matthew, chapter 24, Jesus is talking to His disciples about the end times and His return. He tells them signs to look for and how to be ready and watchful. Right in the middle of this conversation, He tells a parable about two different kinds of servants. This story helps explain how people should live as they wait for Jesus to come back.

STORY ELEMENTS

Faithful and Wise Servant: followers of Jesus who are obedient and faithful as they wait for His return.

Wicked Servant: believers who do not live expecting Jesus' return, and instead, live selfishly.

Master: Jesus, who will return unexpectedly.

Master's Delay: the generations we have waited for Jesus to return.

Servants' Responsibility: the work Jesus wants believers to do during this life.

Master's Return: Jesus' second coming, at which he will reward believers for their work.

LESSON

The owner of the house, who puts the servants in charge while he is away, represents Jesus, who will return someday.

The faithful and wise servant is in charge while the master is away. He does what he is supposed to: feeding the other servants at the right time and

taking good care of everything. The wicked servant thinks his master is taking a long time to come back, so he begins to act badly. He eats and drinks with drunkards and mistreats the other servants.

The master doesn't come back right away. This represents the many years we have waited for Jesus to return. This delay tests the true character of the servants.

While the Master is away, the servants have responsibilities, which represent the work Jesus has for us to do in this life.

The master returns unexpectedly, rewarding the faithful servant and punishing the wicked one. This represents that day Jesus will return and reward believers for their work.

Jesus wants us to know that even if it seems like He is taking a long time to return, we should always be ready and live in a way that pleases Him.

When we believe in Jesus, we have the promise of eternal life, which we can never lose even if we are not faithful. However, in addition to our free salvation, the coming reward for being faithful is better than anything this world offers.

The big lesson here is about being faithful and ready. We should live every day as if Jesus could return at any moment!

BOTTOM LINE

Stay ready for Jesus' return by meeting the needs of others.

Discussion Questions

1. What was the faithful servant doing when the master was away?
2. What was the wicked servant doing (thinking the master wouldn't return soon)?
3. Why is it important to always be ready for Jesus' return?
4. What does it mean to be a faithful servant of Jesus?
5. How do you feel knowing Jesus will reward those who trust and follow Him?
6. What can we learn from the wicked servant's mistakes?
7. How does the return of the master surprise the wicked servant?
8. How can we help others be ready for Jesus' return?

Parable Of The Shrewd Manager

Luke 16:1-13



BOTTOM LINE

Use what God has given you to make friends for eternity.

Parable Of The Shrewd Manager

LUKE
16:1-13

1 He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. 2 So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' 3 "Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.' 5 "So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7 Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' 8 So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

Everything believers have belongs to God. We are His stewards

Unbelievers
Looking to the future

Believers
Possessions God has entrusted us with

9 "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. 10 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. 11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?

Eternal rewards

13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

CONTEXT

In the book of Luke, chapter 16, Jesus tells a surprising story to His disciples and a very important lesson. It is surprising because the main character does something that is questionable, but there's a twist in the story. Just when we think the rich man is going to be enraged, he gives a complement. Jesus shares this parable to teach a lesson about how to use the things we have in this life to prepare for our next life.

STORY ELEMENTS

Rich Man (Master): God who entrusts us with resources.

Dishonest Manager (Steward): people who are shrewd in dealing with worldly matters.

Debtors: people who either are or someday will be believers, and with whom we will share Heaven.

Manager's Plan: investing in things now that will have an eternal impact.

Master's Response: when we invest our resources in things that will have an eternal impact, and God is pleased.

LESSON

Jesus tells this story to show how sometimes people in the world are more shrewd with their resources than God's people are with the gifts God gives them.

In it, a wealthy man, who represents God, entrusts his manager, which represents us, with His money. When the manager hears he is about to lose his

job, he acts cleverly to make friends for his future by canceling debts.

He does this to ensure he will have places to go when he loses his job. In a similar way, we can use our money and resources to invest in eternity.

The rich man complements the manager for being clever. This shows us that God wants us to use the resources He is given us to invest in things that he cares about, things that will make a lasting impact.

JUST AS THE MANAGER THOUGHT AHEAD, JESUS WANTS HIS FOLLOWERS TO BE WISE AND THINK ABOUT ETERNAL MATTERS.

When we have something, whether it is money, time, or talents, we should use it in ways that show our love for God and others. This could mean helping those in need, sharing what we have, or using our skills, money, and time to tell people about God.

Jesus also reminds us that if we are faithful in little things, we can be trusted with bigger things. But if we are not wise in small things, why would anyone trust us with bigger things?

God wants us to use what He gives us wisely and for good. He is watching and loves to see us act with kindness and wisdom!

BOTTOM LINE

Use what God has given you to make friends for eternity.

Discussion Questions

1. Who was Jesus talking to when He told this parable?
2. What does that tell you?
3. What do we learn about this steward (manager) and his situation?
4. What did the steward/manager do when he saw he was about to get fired?
5. Why did the master commend the steward?
6. What do you think Jesus means when He says, “Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon [money]”?
7. What is the biggest struggle you have with money?
8. What practical changes can you make in your life to use your money to serve God rather than letting the love of money control you?

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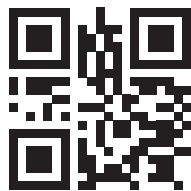
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