

LESSON TWO PARABLES OF THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM

Jesus taught through parables to explain a spiritual truth through a natural means. This would enable the people to understand what He was teaching them. He also used parables that only those who were born spiritually would understand, as people who are not born again cannot understand spiritual things. I believe Jesus did this for a very good reason. Only those who receive His Kingdom into their lives will be able to understand and live from this higher level of living.

Jesus gave us a number of parables on the Kingdom of Heaven. Through them He wanted to teach us how important, how valuable and how precious the Kingdom of Heaven really is. He spoke on the pearl of great price and the hidden treasure to show us great value of the Kingdom of Heaven, as well as how valued we are in God's Kingdom. Jesus had brought the Kingdom with Him and He wants to give it to us. If only we would believe this and receive the Kingdom of Heaven from Jesus. But it seems we want to rather be satisfied to live out our faith for Him at such a low level compared, that we are almost non effective in our service for Him.

Let's look at Matthew. These Scriptures are from the N.K.J.V

The Kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys the field.

Again the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. Matthew 13; 44- 46

The qualities and character of Kingdom Citizens.

Let us read about how we should enter the kingdom of heaven

And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matthew 18; 2-4

1) **We should approach God in humbleness like a child.** A child has true humility and is not aware of false humility.

2) **Forgiveness is from the heavenly realm.**

Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him 10,000 talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, have patience on me, and I will pay you everything. And out of pity for him, the master of the servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, pay what you owe. So his fellow

servant fell down and pleaded with him, have patience with me, and I will pay you. He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, you wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I have mercy on you? And then in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all of his debt. So also my Heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart. Matthew 18; 23-35

So my heavenly father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses. Matthew 18; 35.

So my heavenly Father also will do to you. This is Jesus speaking. A strong passage of scripture on forgiveness. God has forgiven us our sins - we have been set free from the power of sin. He has paid the price, he became a sacrifice for our sin. He died in our place on the cross. Therefore, any debt owed to us should be insignificant in comparison to the great debt that was paid for our redemption (for forgiveness of sin). Forgiveness is essential for our growth in character if we are to become partakers of God's Kingdom.

3) Repentance is the first importance,

What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, son go and work in my vineyard today. And he answered, I will not, but afterwards 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 the father? They said, the first. Jesus said to them, Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterwards change your mind and believe him. Matthew 21; 28-32

Jesus is talking about repentance. Only those with repentant heart and to the Kingdom. What matters is living our lives for God, putting God first. The religious leaders, if you recall, were good talkers, but had "no repentance". So Jesus is saying a bold statement again here...unless it is true repentance no one can enter the kingdom of God.

4) Love is of great importance,

A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed 500 denarii, and the other 50. 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. Luke 7; 41-43

This is the parable that connects forgiveness with love. You forgive because you love God. The more we realise how much we are forgiven, the more we love God and likewise, the more we should love others.

Another scripture also says, He who is forgiven the most, loves the most. An encouraging scripture, for all of us have sinned and been forgiven.

5) True prayer is required and not self righteousness

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 I get. But the tax collector, standing afar 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. Luke 18; 10-14

This parable focuses on self-righteous believers. Believers, particularly those called to ministry have to be careful that they do not see themselves as extra spiritual. God may have used them in what they see, in a greater capacity than other believers. This is pride and being self-righteous. We are not to consider our fellow believers as being lower in their spiritual walk. Neither are we to judge others if their walk with God is more Carnal then we would expect it to be.

6) The importance of persistent prayer

And He said unto them, "Which of you who has a friend, will go to him at midnight, and say to him, 'friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he will answer from within, 'Do you not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? I tell you, though he shall not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his of his impudence he will rise and give him what ever he needs. And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Luke 11; 5-10

This is where persistent prayer starts. Passionate persistent prayers from the heart. God doesn't need us to persuade him to do things. It's not about changing God's mind. Our persistence doesn't change God - He never changes - it is God changing us! it is changing our hearts to come into line with God's desires and not ours.

7) Faithfulness in the Kingdom.

For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. The one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who have received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and made five talents more.

So also he who had the two talents made to talents more. But he who have received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his masters money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours. But his master answered

him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has 10 talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place they will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Matthew 25; 14-30

We need to be faithful with whatever God has given you personally.

8) Our responsibly is to serve and obey our King

Will any one of you who has a servant ploughing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'? Will you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants, we have only done what was our duty.' Luke; 17; 7-10

This parable refers to the importance of being a servant to the Lord, always remembering to remain humble. We should serve and obey God as our reasonable duty.

How the Kingdom of Heaven operates

For the Kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, he went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers 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.' And 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 labourers and pay them their wages, beginning with a last, up to the first.' 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 the 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 first last." Matthew 20; 1-16

This parable assures us that God's way is not the same as man's way. God's Kingdom does not operate in the same way as this earthly kingdom. The parable tells us to walk in God's grace, to be gracious to one another. God's ways, not our ways. God rewards as he sees fit. Do everything unto the Lord without complaining.

These are just a few of the Scriptures on the Kingdom of Heaven and it is easy to see from them that the Kingdom of Heaven operates very differently to the kingdom of this world or

the kingdom of darkness. This is why it is so important to study the Bible, so we do not miss what the Bible is teaching us.

The Lord is calling us to Himself right now,

Are we giving the Lord our time?

Are we studying the Scriptures?

Are we truly living out our Christian lives on a daily basis? Or are the worries and demands of this world taking up all our time? This is the reason that few are chosen.