

PARABLES OF JESUS

“A “parable” is an illustrative story, by which *a familiar idea is cast beside an unfamiliar idea* in such a way that the comparison helps people to better understand the unfamiliar idea.”¹ Said another way, parables are short stories that illustrate truths, focusing on common subjects to illustrate deeper moral lessons. Parables simplify the complex.

When found in Scripture, parables illustrate *spiritual* truths. “A parable utilizes the full story to produce the spiritual lesson, whereas a proverb, metaphor, simile, or figure of speech centers usually on a word, phrase, or sentence.”² The number of parables in the Bible differs among scholars from around 100 to as many as 250. Some are found in the Old Testament; more than 30 were shared by Jesus and all were recorded in the synoptic gospels. All parables are short; some are brief, e.g., Leaven in the Dough (**Matthew 13:33**).

Jesus taught in parables frequently and account for about one-third of His recorded teachings. The gospel of Mark says this about a time in Jesus’ ministry, “**He did not say anything to them without using a parable**” (**Mark 4:34**). Jesus shared this way to make His teachings on spiritual truths easier to understand, to make the complex simpler, although his disciples often needed further explanation afterward. A good example would be the many parables Jesus spoke about the Kingdom of Heaven that revealed the character and nature of those who would find it.

Parables Told by Jesus³

The Two Builders ([Matthew 7:24–27](#); [Luke 6:46–49](#))

The Sprouting Seed ([Mark 4:26–29](#))

The Children of the Marketplace ([Matthew 11:16–19](#); [Luke 7:31–32](#))

The Unclean Spirit ([Matthew 12:43–45](#); [Luke 11:24–26](#))

Tree and Its Fruit ([Matthew 12:33–37](#); [Luke 6:43–45](#))

The Strongman’s House ([Matthew 12:29–30](#); [Luke 11:21–23](#))

The Sower and the Seed ([Matthew 13:3–9](#); [Mark 4:1–9](#); [Luke 8:4–8](#))

The Wheat and the Tares ([Matthew 13:24–30](#))
 The Mustard Seed ([Matthew 13:31–32](#); [Mark 4:30–32](#); [Luke 13:18–20](#))
 Leaven in the Dough ([Matthew 13:33](#); [Luke 13:20–21](#))
 The Hidden Treasure ([Matthew 13:44](#))
 The Pearl of Great Price ([Matthew 13:45–46](#))
 The Dragnet ([Matthew 13:47–50](#))
 Treasures New and Old ([Matthew 13:52](#))
 The Moneylender ([Luke 7:41–43](#))
 The Good Samaritan ([Luke 10:25–42](#))
 The Friend in Need ([Luke 11:5–8](#))
 The Rich Fool ([Luke 12:15–21](#))
 The Master’s Return ([Luke 12:35–40](#))
 The Unfruitful Fig Tree ([Luke 13:6–9](#))
 The Great Banquet ([Luke 14:15–24](#))
 The Lost Sheep ([Matthew 18:12–14](#); [Luke 15:3–7](#))
 The Unmerciful Servant ([Matthew 18:23–34](#))
 The Lost Coin ([Luke 15:8–10](#))
 The Prodigal Son ([Luke 15:11–32](#))
 The Dishonest Steward ([Luke 16:1–8](#))
 The Master and His Servant ([Luke 17:7–10](#))
 The Widow and the Unjust Judge ([Luke 18:1–8](#))
 The Laborers in the Vineyard ([Matthew 20:1–16](#))
 The Wicked Vine Dressers ([Matthew 21:33–46](#); [Mark 12:1–12](#); [Luke 20:9–19](#))
 The Two Sons ([Matthew 21:28–31](#))
 The Wedding Banquet ([Matthew 22:1–14](#))
 Faithful vs. Wicked Servants ([Matthew 24:45–51](#); [Mark 13:32–37](#); [Luke 12:41–48](#))
 The Wise and Foolish Virgins ([Matthew 25:1–13](#))
 The Three Servants and the Talents ([Matthew 25:14–30](#); [Luke 19:11–27](#))
 The Ten Servants and the Minas ([Luke 19:12–27](#))
 The Sheep and the Goats ([Matthew 25:31–46](#))

[Parables in the Synoptic Gospels](#) as outlined at jesuschristsavior.net⁴

THE PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST			
PARABLE	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
The Lamp	5:14-16	4:21-25	8:16-18
The Speck and The Log	7:1-5		6:37-42

New Cloth on Old Garment	9:16-17	2:21-22	5:36-39
The Divided Kingdom	12:24-30	3:23-27	11:14-23
The Sower	13:1-23	4:1-20	8:4-15
The Growing Seed		4:26-29	
The Good Samaritan			10:29-37
The Friend at Midnight			11:5-13
The Rich Fool			12:13-21
The Barren Fig Tree			13:6-9
The Weeds Among the Wheat	13:24-30		
The Mustard Seed	13:31-32	4:30-34	13:18-19
The Leaven	13:33-34		13:20-21
Hidden Treasure	13:44		
Pearl of Great Price	13:45-46		
The Net	13:47-50		
The Invited Guests			14:7-14
The Heart of Man	15:10-20	7:14-23	
The Lost Sheep	18:10-14		15:1-7
The Lost Coin			15:8-10
The Prodigal Son			15:11-32
The Rich Man and Lazarus			16:19-31
The Persistent Widow			18:1-8
The Pharisee & Tax Collector			18:9-14
The Unforgiving Servant	18:23-35		
Laborers in the Vineyard	20:1-16		
The Two Sons	21:28-32		
The Tenant Farmers	21:33-45	12:1-12	20:9-19
Marriage Feast/Great Banquet	22:1-14		14:15-24
The Budding Fig Tree	24:32-35	13:28-33	21:29-33
The Faithful vs. The Wicked Servant	24:45-51	13:34-37	12:35-48
The Ten Virgins	25:1-13		
Ten Talents or Gold Coins	25:14-30		19:11-27

Closing Thoughts

The parables Jesus shared were but a portion of the many powerful teachings and statements He made for those who would listen. Parables have instructed countless millions since Jesus uttered them and have stood the test of time in unlocking spiritual truths we all need to hear. Read them all again or for the first time, do what they instruct, and be blessed!

This is an introduction on the **Parables of Jesus**. Here are a few resources you may wish to explore:

¹ [Meaning of Parable defined \(What is a Parable, and How is it Interpreted?\) \(simplybible.com\)](http://simplybible.com)

² [The Parables of Jesus - Full List with Bible Verses \(biblestudytools.com\)](http://biblestudytools.com)

³ [How many parables are in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

⁴ [THE PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST \(jesuschristsavior.net\)](http://jesuschristsavior.net)

[38 Parables of Jesus — Life, Hope and Truth \(bibilium.com\)](http://bibilium.com)

[Parables of Jesus \(biblestudyguide.org\)](http://biblestudyguide.org)

[What Were the Parables of Jesus? \(christianity.com\)](http://christianity.com)