

This reading from the gospel today is part of a series of parables that are attributed Jesus. Parables are stories he used to illustrate the lessons he was teaching. He would explain them to his disciples but not so much to others. In fact in this same chapter of Matthew His disciples asked him why he spoke to the crowds using parables. He told them;

**“13** This is why I speak to them in parables: “Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

**14** In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: “ ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

**15** For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’

**16** But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.

**17** For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”

So how do you feel? Do think you understand and know what Jesus is teaching us? Jesus has opened our eyes and ears to understand his lessons for us. They are not historic but the stories deal with people and their relationship with each other and with God. These stories differ from things like fairy tales and fables. They do not have animal characters or make-believe involved in them. They tell us about people and real-life situations that anyone could be involved with.

Ok We are going to do something different this morning. A quiz, well sort of. Do you know how many parables appear in the Gospels? 46 according to one source I read and 37 from another. In any case there are quite a few. More than I expected.

Some are very short like the story of the valuable pearl that a man found and he buried it in a field; and others, like the prodigal son seem much longer. When I studied them for this homily, I was surprised at the stories that were considered parables.

- [List of Parables in Order](#) Brief descriptions and scripture references for all 46 parables.
- [Parables #1-2-3-4](#) New cloth, New wine. Lamp on a stand. Wise & foolish builders.
- [Parables #5-6](#) Moneylender forgives unequal debts. Lamp on a stand (2nd time).
- [Parables #7-8](#) Rich man builds bigger barns. Servants must remain watchful.
- [Parables #9-10](#) Wise and foolish servants. Unfruitful fig tree.
- [Parable #11](#) Sower of seeds into four types of soil.
- [Parable #12](#) Weeds among good plants. “Kingdom of Heaven”.
- [Parables #13-15](#) Growing seed. Mustard seed. Yeast. “Kingdom of Heaven”.
- [Parables #16-19](#) Hidden treasure. Pearl. Fishing net. Owner of a house. “Kingdom of Heaven”.
- [Parables #20-21](#) Lost sheep. The sheep, gate, and shepherd.
- [Parables #22-23](#) Master and his servant. Unmerciful servant.
- [Parables #24-25](#) Good Samaritan. Friend in need.
- [Parables #26-27](#) Lowest seat at the feast. Invitation to a great banquet.
- [Parable #28](#) Cost of discipleship.
- [Parables #29-30](#) Lost sheep (sheep as sinners). Lost coin.
- [Parable #31](#) Lost (prodigal) son.
- [Parable #32](#) Shrewd manager.
- [Parable #33](#) Rich man and Lazarus.
- [Parable #34](#) Workers in the vineyard, early and late.
- [Parables #35-36](#) Persistent widow and crooked judge. Praying: Pharisee and tax collector.
- [Parable #37](#) King's servants given minas.
- [Parables #38-39](#) Two sons, one obeys, one does not. Wicked tenants.
- [Parable #40](#) Invitation to a wedding banquet.
- [Parables #41-42](#) Signs from a fig tree. Wise and foolish servants.
- [Parables #43-44](#) Wise and foolish virgins. Servants must remain watchful.
- [Parable #45](#) Three servants given talents.
- [Parable #46](#) Sheep and goats will be separated.

I have a question for you and I really want you to tell us the answer. Think of all the parables you have heard over your years of Bible study and coming to church. What is your favorite parable that Jesus taught?

Time.....

But why parables. Jesus taught simple lessons about life and faith and love. Great lessons that have become some of the most recognized stories in the world.

People in that time lived a simple life, they did not have a great education, they worked hard to survive. Teaching happened by word of mouth. Even scripture was pretty well confined to the Temple. So, Jesus used the familiar, the sheep and goats, coins, vineyards, and seeds and crops and fruit trees to tell his lessons.

Some of the examples are a bit of a stretch for city dwellers of today, but the stories still teach us about how to live life, how to relate to each other and to God.

Since we have opened our eyes and ears and hearts to the teachings of Jesus those stories still speak to us every time we hear them. If you have a teaching Bible or the internet at home, look up these full rich stories and enjoy the word that Jesus has left for us to learn from.