

Parables (Mike Kaye, CE Elder)

Jesus used parables for people with hearts open to God to think, reflect and respond

A **parable** is a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson (or as some say, “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.”) The word comes from the Greek *parabolē* which means “comparison” or “illustration.” Several sources cite the study of Christ’s parables as one of the best ways to understand God’s heart and apply His kingdom principles to your life.

Jesus used common and even current visual settings for the basis of His parables. For example, picture Him in Luke 8:5 setting the scene for the Parable of the Sower: “*A farmer went out to sow his seed.*” He was teaching to a large crowd coming from surrounding towns as told in verse 4. Many had passed fields to get there; all of them would have been familiar with how fields were sown--the farmer with a bag of seed slung over his shoulder, reaching in for a handful and then casting it out in an arcing shower of grain glinting in the sun such that the seed would fall in different types of soil just as Jesus related in the parable. (No poking a hole and dropping one seed or bulb at a time like Cher does in her garden!)

Jesus used few parables early in His ministry. But that changed after the Pharisees rejected Him as their Messiah and blasphemed by claiming He cast out demons by the power of Satan (Matthew 12). In fact, in Matthew 13, His disciples asked why He now spoke in parables. And 13:11-13 relates: *He replied, “The knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. ¹²Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³This is why I speak to them in parables: ‘Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.’* He then quoted Isaiah 6:9-10; those who did not want to hear the truth would dismiss His parables as nonsense while those seeking truth would understand.

There are numerous views of how many parables Jesus presented, ranging from 30 to over 60 with most being between 35 and 40. I think Answeredfaith.com gives a good explanation: “The variance is not a sign of confusion. It is a sign of richness. The parables are so woven into Christ’s teaching that drawing hard boundaries around them is like trying to count the colors in a sunset. Here is the tension: Jesus also used metaphors, similes, proverbs, and allegories. Where do you draw the line? Whether the number is 33 or 46 or 60, the parables represent a luminous treasury of wisdom. God chose storytelling as His primary vehicle for kingdom truth, and that should tell us something about how He wants to reach our hearts.”

Sometimes Jesus gave the interpretation of a parable (like with the Sower). Other times general rules can be applied, such as: 1) consider preceding passages and introductory words for context; 2) identify the core “meat” of the story; 3) as always, compare Scripture with Scripture--there are no contradictions within God’s Word; and 4) parables illustrate doctrine.

You really should check out what you’re missing in info and fellowship!

- **Sunday, 9 am: Sermon topic of the day;** Cher Kaye
- **Sunday, 9 am: Book of Romans;** Melissa Vande Mark
- **Monday, 2:30 pm; Book of Revelation;** Mike Kaye