

**To Speak in Parables**  
Proclamation of the Gospel in the Parables of Jesus

What does this mean?

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What is your definition of a parable?

**Definition of a Parable**

- A parable is a brief story written (spoken) to illustrate a religious lesson about life.
  - Some parables may be just illustrations.
  - They aren't very good at communicating religious lessons.
  - The focus is on the Dominion of God (and how does that relate to "life"?)

**Definition of a Parable**

- A parable is not a direct communication--"The kingdom of God is X," but is a type of communication that begs for the listener to make a judgment often radical and shocking in nature.
  - The kingdom of God is LIKE X...
  - What makes it radical and shocking?

**Definition of a Parable**

- Parables are examples of storytelling Jesus employs to demonstrate existential applications of God's nature and expectations for the kingdom of God.
- A parable is a short story utilizing aspects of everyday life to describe what the kingdom of God truly is like. Their meaning which may appear obvious can be extremely subversive and controversial.

**Definition of a Parable**

- A parable is a seemingly innocent and direct story whose meaning(s) often challenge its readers and (often subversively) reveal the Kingdom of God. Parables often provide a surprising commentary on justice applicable both in the first century and contemporarily.
- A parable is a saying of Jesus that says something about God and the Dominion of God yet defies easy explanation and has more than one layer of meaning and interpretation.

## Definition of a Parable

- A story that has at least one element that contradicts the conventional wisdom of the time. This creates a tension that challenges the traditions, culture and social structures that were counter to Jesus teachings of the kingdom of God.
- A parable is an experience. Jesus used these experiences, not even always stories, to reframe our thoughts about being a child of God. (140 characters!)

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Parables function as metaphors  
challenging or inviting the audience  
into a new or deeper experience of  
God's dominion, a dominion identified  
with those who are the  
LAST LOST LEAST LITTLE LIFELESS

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- Not every parable is parabolic. It may simply be a good illustration. (e.g., House on Rock/Sand)
- Some parables have been allegorized, and such a reading is one appropriate reading. (e.g., Sower, Tenants, Good Samaritan, Wheat & Weeds)
- Some parables have been 'historicized,' and such a reading is one appropriate reading. (e.g., Talents [in Lk], Great Supper [in Mt])
- Some actions by Jesus may be parabolic and may even be 'parabolized.' (e.g., Barren Fig Tree, Ten Lepers, Washing Feet)

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- We need to identify whether we are dealing with Jesus' "original" parable, or the parable as it appears in the Gospel, or the parable as construed in Church history. Therefore, ...
- ... we want to be aware of the interplay of the parable and the frame(s) provided for it in the Gospels, and...
- ... we want to be aware of how a parable is treated in each of the Gospels, and so...
- ... in most instances, parables encourage us to consider more than one 'meaning.'
- *How do we determine what is an appropriate and faithful reading of a parable?*

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- How did Jesus' parables contribute to his getting crucified?
- How has this study of the parables changed the way I *think*?
- How has this study of the parables changed the way I *act*?
- How might one go about preaching or re-presenting a parable?
- How do parables relate to the "Gospel"?  
How are the parables an expression of the Gospel without drawing in Jesus' death & resurrection?  
What is the good news in the parables that I can tell to others?