

**Viewing parables through a first-century lens**

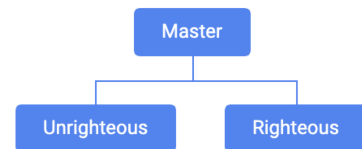
*Parable* means to “cast or lay aside.” A short fictional story is used to compare a larger truth. Scholars have calculated between 30 and 40 unique parables of Jesus.

“Parables enable the listener to see things the way God sees them.” (Brad H. Young)

“Jesus used parables as the rabbis used them: to make the complex simple.” (Daniel Lancaster)

**Parables compare at least one of three key topics** (Craig L. Blomberg):

1. The Graciousness of God (a **master** or king figure)
2. The Demands of Discipleship (a **righteous** servant)
3. The Dangers of Disobedience (an **unrighteous** servant)



**Use these three guardrails to prevent over-allegorizing** (Blomberg and Amy-Jill Levine):

1. A parable’s interpretations should contain **at least one discipleship action and speak to the heart more than the head** - Jesus’ disciples DO things with His teachings.
2. Meaning must be **relatable to Jesus’ original audience** - reject anachronisms (time errors) and anti-semitism. Instead of “Israel/Jews (bad) vs. the Church/Gentiles (good),” focus on “hearers only vs. doers” of His Words.
3. **Meaning(s) must be consistent with the whole counsel of God.** Is the suggested interpretation/application taught elsewhere in Scripture?

*Memory Verse #25:* “Then the \_\_\_\_\_ will \_\_\_\_\_ forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The one who has ears, let him \_\_\_\_\_.” (Matthew 13:43)

*Walking in His Dust: Talmidim* \_\_\_\_\_. But prove yourselves \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_, and not just \_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_ themselves (James 1:22).

**Lesson notes & questions:**

**Lesson Reflections** (review before Apply nights):

- What is at least one new thing I learned about loving God or my neighbor?
- Which topics would I like to know more about or need clarification?
- How does the Holy Spirit want me to apply the lesson’s Scripture to my discipleship?



“Go make disciples...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20)

**Word Wednesday Lesson 25 – Parables II - Matthew 13:24-43, Mark 4:26-29**

**APPLY!**

- Share any “Lesson Reflections” with the group. Recite this lesson’s memory verse and discuss what it means to you.
- **Wheat and Tares: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**
  - Retell this parable using a modern-day comparison: to what could sons of the kingdom and sons of the evil one be compared today?
  - What is Jesus teaching disciples by allowing the tares to grow alongside the wheat? How do we biblically oppose evil?
  - Read Matthew 7:22-27. Who exactly are “those who practice lawlessness”?
  - Review the list of Walking in His Dust verses for this parable. Which verse stands out to you and why? Share other applications & applicable verses.
- **Sprouting Seed: Mark 4:26-29**
  - Most likely, what does the seed represent?
  - What comes after the full maturation of the seed? What does this mean?
  - Read Luke’s version of the fourth soil (Luke 8:15). As we grow, what is the balance between our responsibility to be doers and our need for His strength? Explain in a way a brand-new believer can understand.
  - What do the following passages tell us about how we are to receive the “seed” (the Word) in our lives (Acts 17:11; James 1:21; 1 Peter 2:1-2)?
  - Review the list of Walking in His Dust verses for this parable. Which verse stands out to you and why? Share other applications & applicable verses.
- **The Mustard Seed & Woman with Leaven: Matthew 13:**
  - How would YOU interpret these two parables? Does your interpretation fall within the “guardrails” listed on the reverse side? What is the application?
  - What are common themes that unite all parables we’ve studied so far?
  - Review the list of Walking in His Dust verses for this parable. Which verse stands out to you and why? Share other applications & applicable verses.
  - *Closing thought - Read Matthew 28:20a:* If the 40 or so “mustard seeds” who are faithfully journeying through Word Wednesdays, made a disciple of one new person/year, and that disciple did the same, etc., in 5 years, we'd have 1280 talmidim! In 10 years, that’s over 40,000 talmidim! In your prayer time, pray for God to show you at least one person you can invite to Word Wednesday discipleship this week.
- **Spend the last five minutes in prayer pairs**
  - Praise for answered prayers, growth, and how God is working in your life
  - Petitions for specific challenges and intercessions for others



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## Walking in His Dust - WW#25 Discipleship Application

### Wheat and Tares

#### Graciousness of God

- Jesus desires faithful talmidim who bear fruit (Matthew 13:37)
- He would prefer a world of no evil -
  - 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.
- BUT...He elects not to remove evil that we may be tested, sanctified, and be lights -
  - John 17:15-19 “I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to keep them away from the evil one. [16] “They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. [17] “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. [18] “Just as You sent Me into the world, I also sent them into the world. [19] “And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.
- His work in growing talmidim is opposed by Satan. -
  - Revelation 12:10 ...the one who accuses them before our God day and night.
- God sees our pain and has a plan for justice
  - Revelation 2:10 (to the church at Smyrna) ‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

#### Demands of Discipleship

- Despite being surrounded by those opposed to us, we must not fear or grow weary in doing good.
  - Hebrews 12:3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.
- Not everyone who appears righteous is a genuine disciple. We are called to discern.
  - 2 John 1:7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.
- The reward of the righteous, for those who suffer with Him, will be to be gathered in.
  - Romans 8:17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.
- Other passages tell us we are not to be tolerant of evil, but from this parable, we learn that the destruction of evil is not our task, lest we become evil in the process.
  - Romans 12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written: “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.

#### Dangers of Disobedience

- The disobedient compromise and become corrupted like the darnel weed.
  - 1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in sanctification.
- The disobedient are doing the work of the enemy whether they realize it or not
  - John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.”



“Go make disciples...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20)

**Word Wednesday Lesson 25 – Parables II - *Matthew 13:24-43, Mark 4:26-29***

**Sprouting Seed**

Graciousness of God

- He will gather His own on HIS timeline, not ours - the longer He tarries, the more people can be saved.
  - 2 Thessalonians 2:3 No one is to deceive you in any way! For [the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him] will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.

Demands of Discipleship

- The disciple grows only by Jesus' strength, not our own.
  - Zechariah 4:6 Then he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel, saying, ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of armies.
- Even small actions have the potential to produce great things.
  - Luke 16:10 “The one who is faithful in a very little thing is also faithful in much; and the one who is unrighteous in a very little thing is also unrighteous in much.
- A decision to follow Jesus may not produce instant results (in us or in those we are discipling). Maturing takes time. We should see signs of growth (a stalk, a head, etc).
  - Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

**Mustard Seed and Leaven**

Graciousness of God

- The tree will mature, and the bread will rise and be fully baked on HIS timing, not ours.
  - 2 Thess 2:3; John 17:15-19

Demands of Discipleship

- The kingdom of heaven occurs on earth, when Jesus' talmidim are faithful in everything they do, even tasks such as gardening and baking.
  - 1 Corinthians 4:2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.
  - 1 Corinthians 10:31 Therefore,...whatever you do, do all things for the glory of God.
- Our personal journey as a talmid/talmidah begins as a small mustard seed or small amount of leaven. If we are faithful as individuals, the results will be powerful
  - Colossians 1:22-23 He has now reconciled you in His body of flesh through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— [23] if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.
- Our commission to make talmidim begins one person at a time; if we are faithful as a community, the results will be powerful.
  - 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. [7] So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.
  - “Even small actions, hidden actions, have the potential to produce great things” (Levine).