The Kingdom in Parables (2)

How to Interpret Parables

* **Parables generally stress ONE main point.**
* **Parables are not *allegories*, which are more complex stories containing numerous details that need to be “decoded.”**
* **A parable often draws a comparison of the action in the story and Jesus’ understanding of the Kingdom.**

**Tools in Interpreting the Parables**

**1. Historical Context**

**2. Within the Context of Jesus’s Greater Message**

**3. Clue’s from the Gospel Writer**

**Applying the Tools to Hear the Parables as Jesus’ Original Audience**

**The Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37**

1. **Historical Context**

* **Who is the Audience that Jesus is delivering this parable too?**

**A “Lawyer” who was one of the Jewish religious leaders seen as “experts” both in the knowledge and practice of righteousness of God’s Law.**

* **What do the terms “Priest”, “Levite”, and “Samaritan” mean in First Century Palestine?**

**The Temple in Jerusalem was served by 3 classes of people: The Priests, The Levites, and Jewish Laymen**.

**Priest: Seen as the Mediator Between God & Man. Wealthy/elite, upper-class, most likely lived in Jericho, known for its climate and lush date plantations. Usually the Priest would serve a 2-week assignment at the Temple and then travel back to Jericho, a 17-mile trip. He probably rode or was transported.**

**Levite: An assistant to the Priests with similar schedules.**

**Special Note: The hearers of the story would have expected the next person who came along to be a Jewish Layman who might have served in the temple – but Jesus surprises them….**

**Samaritan: Considered by Jews to be half-breeds, a hated outsider, defiled by foreign blood and foreign gods, an inferior enemy.**

* **What characterized the relations of Jews and Samaritans?**
* **Does the Old Testament background and/or other New Testament references to Samaritans give us deeper insight into the meaning of this parable? If so, How?**

**(2 Kings 17:24-41)**

* **Samaritans had their own temple in Samaria**
* **Jews attacked/destroyed that temple in 128 B.C.**

**(John 4; Luke 9:51-56)**

1. **Within the Context of Jesus’ Greater Message**

* **How does this story relate to Jesus’ overall message of the Kingdom of God?**
  + **The Kingdom would bring RECONCILIATION and RENEWAL (Matt. 5:43-45)**
  + **Not Defensive Holiness & Withdrawal**
  + **Old Barriers Brought Down (Eph. 2: 13-17)**
* **How does this parable highlight the message of the Cross?**
* **How does it exemplify the overall ministry of Jesus?** 
  + **The great cost of sacrifice to the Samaritan, for even his enemy, exemplifies the ministry and message of the Cross.**

1. **Clues From the Gospel’s Writer**

* **How does Luke’s narrative in vv. 25-29 and the exchange there between Jesus and the Expert Religious Leader shed light on the parable’s meaning?**
* **What does the man’s question reveal, and how does Jesus’ answer cut to the real issues – and finally, how does the parable relate to these deeper, underlying issues?**
  + **The Lawyer has come to Test Jesus, not learn from Him and asks the same question in a different way – trying to Justify Himself.**
  + **Flawed Question: We cannot DO anything to INHERIT**
    - **An INHERITANCE is a Gift**
  + **Jesus Does Not Answer His Questions Directly – Instead He Uses the Man’s Own Responses to Direct Him to the Truth.**
  + **The Man would have expected his neighbor to be his friends, family, and people (Leviticus 19:18).**
  + **But Jesus Points Him to the real underlying meaning of the Kingdom of God (Leviticus 19:34).**
* **How does the surrounding context of this story in Luke play in to the parable’s overall meaning?**

**Application**

**1. Now that we have a better grasp of the historical, cultural, and social aspects of the parable and how they generally would have been received by their original audience – How would you apply this parable to our modern context?**

**2. To your life?**

**Homework: Matthew 13:31-32**