



par·a·ble(s) of Jesus

Leaven and the Loaf

Daily Devotional Guide/Notes: Jun 23-29, 2024

Parable - "to cast, throw, place beside"; a story that puts or places something near or beside something else; seeking a deeper meaning/truth than what you "initially see on the surface"

Mt 13:10-16, "12 For those who have will receive more..."

A. **Is 55:8-9**, "God's ways are not your ways; and My thoughts are not your thoughts; My ways are higher than your ways; and, God's thoughts are higher than your thoughts" - **God is always "more" than any of us can fully understand**

B. **God's truth will require us to WORK for it.**

C. **"faith, seeking understanding" assumes** you know you don't know; and you want to know more

GOAL: MARK 9:22-24, "I have faith; help my lack of faith!"

Parables = the perfect avenue for "faith, seeking understanding"

The Leaven and the Loaf: Mt 13:33, "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast, which a woman took and hid in a bushel of wheat flour until the yeast had worked its way through all the dough... *I'll speak in parables; I'll declare what has been hidden*

KINGDOM OF GOD =

*Where Jesus Reigns; Where God lives; Where God's Rules apply

YEAST =

*a living organism (fungus) that is introduced into a dead substance that brings growth, transformation, and new life to the substance - flour, hops, grapes: How does yeast transform these substances?

The Kingdom of God is LIKE yeast:

IE, kingdom of God = the living thing introduced into the dead thing, that transforms the entire batch into something wonderful

DOUGH =

The entire Creation; All humanity; Individual humans

How does yeast/kingdom of God work?

Gen 2:7, "then God formed human beings from the ground, and then God breathed life into the human"

- distinction between the formation of the human and giving *life*
- God "added" something to the human that transformed him/her

... from a lump of clay that looked like a human, to a true human

= ruach (OT), pneuma (NT): "breath, wind, Spirit..."

I. We're created to be spiritual beings in a physical body, not physical beings w/spiritual residue **Biblically: apart from the Spirit, the body is "dead"**

1. Mt 10:28, " Don't be afraid of those who kill the body but can't kill the soul." - Jesus gives a clear indication that spirit and body are not the same

2. Lk 23:44-46 - Jesus' body died when He gave His Spirit to God

"Father, Into your hands, I commit My Spirit"... then he breathed His last.

3. 1 Cor 15:53-55, "It's necessary for this rotting body to be clothed with what can't decay, and for the body that is dying to be clothed in what can't die. 54 And when the rotting body has been clothed in what can't decay, and the dying body has been clothed in what can't die, then this statement in scripture will happen: *Death has been swallowed up by a victory.*"

II. People can CHOOSE to be physical beings w/a dead spirit.

John 3:3-6, "you must be born again"

1) Jesus answered, "I assure you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, it's not possible to enter God's kingdom. 6 Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit."

- we are NOT born with "alive spirits"

- all people must choose to "become spiritually alive"

*this is part of human free will to love God (or not)

*Without spirit, without activating the leaven of God within you, you will never know what true life is to begin with. For it is ONLY when you care for, nurture and nourish the leaven, that life begins to "rise above" and be transformed into something new and better and more abundant

III. The relationship of spirit to body is intentionally "cryptic" to humanity, because people can not accomplish this on their own strength or in their own power. It requires faith in God to accomplish, as only God provides breath/ruach/pneuma.

John 3:9-19, Nicodemus said, "How are these things possible?"

*in other words, "Jesus, this makes no sense!"

... to Mt 13:33, the woman **HID (krypto/cryptic)** the yeast in the flour

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|-----------|------------|--------------|---------|------------|------|----------|
| zymē | hēn | labousa | γυνή | enekrypsen | eis | aleourou |
| ζύμη | , ἥν | λαβοῦσα | , γυνή | ἐνέκρυπεν | εἰς | ἀλεύρου |
| to leaven | which | having taken | a woman | hid | in | of flour |
| N-DFS | RelPro-AFS | V-APA-NFS | N-NFS | V-AIA-3S | Prep | N-GNS |

IE, Nicodemus asks, "Jesus WHY are you being so "cryptic?"

..... **back to Mt 13:13**, ¹³ "This is why I speak to the crowds in parables: although they see, they don't really see; and although they hear, they don't really hear or understand. ¹⁴ What Isaiah prophesied has become completely true for them: *You will hear, to be sure, but never understand; and you will certainly see but never recognize what you are seeing.* ¹⁵ *For this people's senses have become calloused, and they've become hard of hearing, and they've shut their eyes so that they won't see with their eyes or hear with their ears or understand with their minds, and change their hearts and lives that I may heal them.*"

*what have their "Senses" become calloused to? A: God!

To the matter of Faith: What is faith?

Heb 11:1, "Faith is the reality of what we hope for, the proof of what we don't see."

John 20:29, Jesus replied, "Do you believe because you see me? Blessed are those who don't see and yet believe."

*Why? Because ***no faith is required if you see it.***

And why does faith matter in the 1st place?

Why doesn't Jesus just make it so we don't have to have any faith?

A: Because at the heart of faith is LOVE

Because LOVE is a heart choice that no actions can "prove"

- you cannot prove you love someone, UNLESS THEY HAVE FAITH THAT YOUR ACTIONS WERE MADE FROM A MOTIVE OF LOVE to begin with!

*This is VERY important! You can give someone a million dollars, but it won't "make them love you."

*However, if a person already BELIEVES that you love them, and *then* you give them a million dollars, then and only then, will the sacrifice and gift you are giving them make a meaningful impact on them and on your relationship with them. But it is always, always about the relationship 1st and "works" second.

John 3:16-17, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that **everyone who believes in him** won't perish but will have eternal life.¹⁷ God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, **but that the world might be saved through him.**"

*note: *the world is NOT being saved by Him, because they don't believe in Him*

Would the world "Believe in Him" if they saw him perform miracles?

Many Pharisees saw Jesus perform miracles back then and in person. **Why did they not believe in Him then?**

John 7: The Pharisees REFUSE to believe what they SEE

- the blind, the lepers, the sick, the paralytic all are healed

- the dead are raised to life

- most certainly, many of the Pharisees saw this... and yet:

John 7:49, The Pharisees *about Jesus*, "You are under God's Curse"

Point: **Pharisees** who claimed to **KNOW God**, were fighting with

Jesus who claimed to **BE God**

John 8:41, Pharisees to Jesus, "The only Father we have is God!"

John 8:44, Jesus responds, "Your father is Satan"

--- Pharisees respond by trying to kill Jesus (vs. 59)

Argument Concludes in **John 9:39** when Jesus says, ³⁹ "I have come into the world to exercise judgment **so that those who don't see can see and those who see will become blind.**" ⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were there asked Him, "**Surely we aren't blind, are we?**" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "Because you say, 'We see,' your blindness/sin remains.

At our best, we are like sheep. We see, but not clearly.

1 Cor 13:12, "Now we see dimly; Now we know partially"

At our worst, we think we see, but are fully blind.

2 Cor 4:4, "the god of this age has blinded the *minds* of people...."

The question for the day: WHAT ARE WE BLIND TO?

WHAT IS SO CRYPTIC, we don't see it?

WHAT ARE WE NOT SEEING?

Mt 13 answer: THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

Application: Kingdom of God is *already here!*

- **Mark 1:15**, " Jesus came into Galilee announcing God's good news, ¹⁵ saying, "Now is the time! God's kingdom is here! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!"

Can you see it? Are you blind to it? Is it obvious or hidden to you?

How to make it obvious? How to "see"?

- you must be born again, which means you surrender to Christ because you love Him and want Him to be your Lord/Savior

- God brings your spirit/soul to life within you

- then, you ALSO must DO what Jesus requires, because you love Him and want to share life with Him daily

- you are nourishing the soul/spirit God has given you

Note: The opposite is true: the less you walk with Him, the more hidden He will become, because the more DEAD your spirit will be.

All other ground is sinking sand:

Mt 7:24-27, " Everybody who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise builder who built a house on bedrock. ²⁵ The rain fell, the

floods came, and the wind blew and beat against that house. It didn't fall because it was firmly set on bedrock. ²⁶ But everybody who hears these words of mine and doesn't put them into practice will be like a fool who built a house on sand. ²⁷ The rain fell, the floods came, and the wind blew and beat against that house. It fell and was completely destroyed."

John 15:1-10, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard keeper. ² He removes any of my branches that don't produce fruit, and he trims any branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. ³ You are already trimmed because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. A branch can't produce fruit by itself, but must remain in the vine. Likewise, you can't produce fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can't do anything. ⁶ If you don't remain in me, you will be like a branch that is thrown out and dries up. Those branches are gathered up, thrown into a fire, and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified when you produce much fruit and in this way prove that you are my disciples. ⁹ "As the Father loved me, I too have loved you. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love,"

Items of Note:

Men's Hangout for June - Guys! Come out to Fuzzy's Taco Shop - Alliance Town Center - Tuesday, June 25th at 6:30pm for some good eats and fellowship. RSVP using link on website.

LP Quilting Group - Did you know Lifepoint has a quilting group? If you're a quilter looking for more community, join us each month, on the second and fourth Saturday at 10am at the church. We'd love to have you join.

Can we join in prayer with or for you? Please put your prayer requests in the offering box outside the sanctuary doors or email to Info@LifePointFellowship.com.

Counseling scholarships are always available! Just email, pastor@lifepointfellowship.com.

Personal Discipleship Questions? Joining LP questions? Contact Pastor Thomas to set up a coffee appointment.

Want more? Visit our Facebook or Instagram page.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

HABIT 1 of Faithful Discipleship: Have a daily devotional. How? 3 Steps:

I. Work through the 5 Prayer Forms

1 - Begin w/Centering Prayer

- Mt 11:28-30, Name and Release your burdens/distractions to Christ

- Psalm 46:10, Consciously seek to clear your mind and "Be Still"

2 - Intentionally Glorify (worship) the Lord

- involves your participation by glorifying God, adoration, praise, worship

- Name the "Good" within you (the specific "fruit" you are experiencing today, like peace, or love, or joy, or hope, faithfulness, goodness, etc.)

- Name the "Good" around you (Gen 1:31, "And it was good.")

a. What do you see that God has made that is good today?

- Participate: Lift Up the "Good in You" with the "Good In Creation"

3 - Confess Your Sins

a. What have you done that is wrong? (From works to 7 Deadly sins)

b. What have you left undone that would have been right?

4 - Give Thanks to God for your Blessings (name them)

5 - Make Your Requests to God

a. for other people who are on your heart

- include your church leadership and family

- include people you know who need to accept Christ

b. Make requests to God for yourself

2. Time of Listening to God through His Words

Read through the daily scripture passages, with the goal to "hear from God" on any point you feel relates to you. Stop and reflect on those truths.

June 24 - Mon - Mt 13

June 25 Tues - Gen 2

June 26 Wed - Mt 10

June 27 Thur - 1 Pet 1

June 28 Fri - Luke 23

June 29 Sat - John 3

3. Closing Prayer + The Lord's Prayer