

# Talk Notes

Title: The Kingdom of God 6 – Parables of the Kingdom

Meeting: Freshwaters

Date: 25/6/17

## Introduction

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I am now on talk 6 about the Kingdom and will begin to explore some of Jesus parables about the Kingdom of God.

## What is a parable?

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Can anyone tell me what a parable is? Yes a parable is a word picture, often framed as a story, which is put alongside a subject area for purposes of comparison and to gain new understanding.

A parable is different from an allegory in that it usually conveys just one main point – whereas an allegory contains lots of comparisons through a kind of coded message – if you have the code then you are able to unlock a whole host of points and comparisons that are being conveyed.

Although there may have been a few allegorical elements within Jesus parables – primarily Jesus used parables as opposed to allegories. Indeed it would be right to say that Jesus was the master of communication through parables, which allowed the message He had to be conveyed to all who were ready to listen, whatever their social status or level of literacy.

Many of the parables also invited a response, with this new level of understanding will the hearers do anything about it?

## Jesus explanation about why He used parables.

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In **Matt 13:11-16, 34-35** (also **Mark 4:11**) Jesus explains that by speaking in parables those who truly want to listen will hear and understand, but those who are not truly listening will have even the little understanding they have gained removed from them.

The thing is with a parable is that you need to listen carefully to what is being said, you then need to think about it to get the point being made – then the penny drops and understanding is added. If you take it purely at face value then you miss the point, or of course, if you don't spot the comparison made, then you may completely misunderstand what Jesus was saying.

## The Parables of the Kingdom of God

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We are going to look at some of the parables of Jesus this morning that specifically relate to the Kingdom of God – we are going to ask for each what the main message is and what our response should be.

### The Parable of the Farmer Scattering Seed

**Matt 13:1-9; 18-23** - Here is one of the parables of Jesus that has some element of allegory as He makes clear in his explanation – however there is still one major point to the story – what is it? – That when God’s word is sown (by us!) much of it will not grow because of the poor soil in the hearts of those who receive it – but those who are ready will produce much fruit.

What should our response be to this parable – yes, let’s sow God’s word freely and trust that some will find good soil.

### The Parable of the Wheat and Weeds

**Matt 13:24-30; 36-43** – What is the main point being made? That for the time being the Citizens of the Kingdom(i.e. those who have responded to Jesus)\* live alongside those who belong to the evil one, but ‘at the end of the world’ only the Kingdom of God and those who belong to it will remain.\*

What should our response be? – To make sure we are citizens of the Kingdom and that others become so.

\*For further explanation see The Kingdom of God talk 3.

### The Parable of the Mustard Seed

**Matt 13:31-32** – What is the main point? – That the Kingdom of God begins small like a tiny seed – but becomes great. This can be applied in historic terms – sown at creation ‘it is good’, brought within the grasp of fallen man through Jesus and expanding ever since until one day only the Kingdom will remain. You can also apply it to an individual or community – a seed of the Kingdom sown can grow to become the most dominant influence for that person or community.

What should our response be? – Be encouraged, don’t despise small beginnings, and be willing to sow the seeds of the Kingdom.

### The Parable of the Yeast

**Matt 13:33** – What is the main point? – That the Kingdom of god introduced into a person’s life or community will grow and spread to transform that person or community.

What should our response be – similar to the response to the mustard seed, be encouraged, keep sowing.

## The Parable of the Hidden Treasure and Pearl.

**Matt 13:44-46** – What is the main point? – That the Kingdom of God is more valuable than anything else in our lives.

What should our response be? – To prioritise the Kingdom of God above everything else and be willing to give up other things in our life to fully embrace the Kingdom.

## The Parable of the Fishing Net

**Matt 13:47-51** – What is the main point? – Similar to the Wheat and Weeds, that ‘Citizens of the Kingdom’ will swim alongside those who are not – but there will be a final day when they will be separated and only those of the Kingdom will remain.

What should our response be? – Similar to the Wheat and Weeds, to make sure we are citizens of the Kingdom and that others become so.

## Gems from the Storehouse

**Matt 13:52** – What is the main point? – That every Teacher of the Law who becomes a follower of Jesus has new treasures of truth and wisdom from the new covenant as well as retaining much from the old.

What should our response be? – To receive and teach the new treasures from the New Testament, but to also take advantage of the truths of the Old Testament - the two are complimentary not exclusive!

## The Parable of the King and the debtors

**Matt 18:21-35** – What is the main point of the story? – That God is generous in forgiving us and that we should be as generous in forgiving others.

What should our response be? – To forgive others ‘from our heart’.

## The Parable of the Vineyard Workers

**Matt 20:1-16** – What is the main point? – That our reward as citizens of the Kingdom is not dependent upon on how long and how hard we have worked, but upon the generosity and grace of God – the reward is the same for all.

What should our response be – There is no need to compete with others and no reason to grumble at the generosity of God who gives the same reward to those who have long been citizens, and those who enter only at the last moment of their lives. (There is a parallel with the response of the elder brother in the prodigal son)

## The Parable of the King and the Wedding Feast

**Matt 22:1-14** (and **Luke 14:15-24**) – What is the main point? – That all are invited to become Citizens of the Kingdom (through our response to Christ) but only a few respond. There is also a reference to Israel’s rejection of Christ and the invitation to the gentiles.

What should our response be? – Make sure we accept the invitation to respond to Jesus and encourage others to.

## The Parable of the 10 bridesmaids

**Matt 25:1-13** – What is the main point? – That Jesus can return at any time, will we be ready?

What should our response be? – To live with the sense of urgency and alertness that Jesus could return today – so let's not delay making ourselves ready – let's not put off repentance until we are old and less interested in the life of sin – it may be too late!

## The Parable of the 3 Servants

**Matt 25:14** (& Luke **19:11-27**) – What is the main point? – That we should make good use of the gifts and abilities God has given us.

What should our response be – To prayerfully consider how to take every opportunity to use the gifts and abilities God has given us to extend His Kingdom.

## The Parable of the Servant and the Plough

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**Luke 9:62** – What is the main point – That our focus should be on the work of the Kingdom and not our old life.

What should our response be – To make sure that the King and His Kingdom are more important to us than the priorities of our former life.