

Jesus' Kingdom Parables, Part 4

The Kingdom and the Covenant, Session 7

Parable of the ten virgins

- Mt 24:3, “What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”
 - Mt 24:36, “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”
 - v 46, “It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.”
- Mt 25:1-2, “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise.”
 - “virgin” could include any young, unmarried woman
 - number “ten”: complete, full
 - “lamp” (Gk, n, *lampas*): an oil-fed fire light usually carried in the hand
 - “foolish” (Gk, adj, *moros*): devoid of wisdom, good sense or sound judgment
 - “wise” (Gk, adj, *phronimos*): exercising good judgment or common sense in practical matters
 - What was the difference between the foolish & wise women?
 - Bible typically uses oil to represent Holy Spirit
- v 5: “The bridegroom was a long time in coming.”
- Mt 25:12, “I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.”
- v 13, “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”
 - “keep watch” (Gk, v, *gregoreo*): be alert & aware; figuratively: stay awake
 - Doorkeeper in the parable said, “I don’t know you.”
 - Mt 7:21-23,²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.²² Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”
 - Those who are rejected did works in Jesus’ name, but apparently didn’t have a genuine relationship with God
 - Are these similar, or do they reveal different reasons for being thrown out or rejected from God’s kingdom?
- Kingdom insights
 - Jesus will return to set up his kingdom on earth, but we don’t know when, so we must be ready at all times
 - Those who aren’t ready when he returns will be excluded from the kingdom

Parable of the talents

- Mt 25:14-15, ¹⁴ “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.”
 - What “it” does he mean?
 - How did the master decide how much to entrust to each servant?
- Mt 25:19, “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.”
 - What did the servant who received five talents do and how much did he return to his master?
 - What did the servant with two talents do and what did he return to his master?
 - v 21, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”
 - “I will put you in charge”: appoint, assign a duty or responsibility
 - “many things” = “a lot”; a great, unspecified amount or extent
 - “Come and share your master’s happiness!”
 - What did the servant with the one talent do and what was his master’s response?
 - v 26, “wicked, lazy servant!”
 - v 30, “... throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
- Kingdom insights
 - God expects increase, doesn’t simply maintain his kingdom status or condition
 - Those who serve faithfully (increase what’s entrusted to them) will be rewarded
 - Those who don’t increase what’s entrusted to them will be ejected from the kingdom

Parable of the minas

- Lk 19:11-27
- v 11, “While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.”
- vv 12-13, ¹² “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. ¹³ So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’”
- 1st servant: “Sir, your mina has earned ten more.”
- v 17, “Well done, my good servant! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.”
- 2nd servant: “Sir, your mina has earned five more.”
- v 19, “You take charge of five cities.”

- vv 24-26
 - ²⁴ “Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’
 - ²⁵ “ ‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’
 - ²⁶ “He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.
 - v 24, “the one who has ten minas”
 - v 26, to everyone who has, more will be given
- Interpretation
 - Who does the man of noble birth represent in this parable?
 - In what way did he become king in a foreign country?
 - Who do the servants represent?
 - What do the minas represent?
 - v 17, “take charge” literally means “have authority”
 - How is the servants receiving authority over cities relevant to us?
 - How is their receiving authority in proportion to their faithfulness relevant to us?
- Kingdom insights
 - If we’re faithful to him in life, we’ll reign with Jesus in proportion to our faithfulness
 - If we’re not faithful to him in life, we won’t reign with Jesus but be stripped of whatever he entrusted to us

Parable of the workers in the vineyard

- Mt 20:1-16
- v 1-2, ¹ “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. ² He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.”
- v 3-5(a), ³ “About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴ He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ ⁵ So they went.”
- At the end of the day, in what order did he pay the workers & how much?
- Who was upset about this & why?
- v 13-15
 - ¹³ “But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius?’ ¹⁴ Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. ¹⁵ Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’”
- v 16, “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”
 - “last” (Gk, adj, *eschatos*): last or lowest in an ordering or series; last, final, least important
 - “first” (Gk, adj, *protos*): first or highest in an ordering or series; first, prominent, best

- God often does things differently than we'd expect
- Will God treat every one of his children the same?
- Will every genuine believer get to heaven & reign with Jesus?
- Will some believers be given greater responsibility in heaven due to their faithfulness in life?
- Will every believer receive the same reward?
 - Mt 5:12(a), "Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven."
 - Mt 6:3-4, ³ "But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."
 - Lk 6:35(a), "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great..."
 - If certain attitudes or actions result in great rewards, won't the absence of such attitudes or actions result in lesser or no rewards?
- How does this apply to us?
- Kingdom insights
 - Our salvation and entrance into God's kingdom are not based on our qualifications or length of service; but on God's grace, Jesus' death for our sin, our acceptance of his invitation
 - Expect to be surprised, because only God can properly assess & reward faithfulness

Conclusion

- Jesus will return to set up his kingdom on earth, but we don't know when, so we must be ready at all times
- Those who aren't ready when he returns will be excluded from the kingdom
- God expects increase, doesn't simply maintain his kingdom status or condition
- Those who serve faithfully (increase what's entrusted to them) will be rewarded
- Those who don't increase what's entrusted to them will be ejected from the kingdom
- If we're faithful to him in life, we'll reign with Jesus in proportion to our faithfulness
- If we're not faithful to him in life, we won't reign with Jesus but be stripped of whatever he entrusted to us
- Our salvation and entrance into God's kingdom are not based on our qualifications or length of service; but on God's grace, Jesus' death for our sin, our acceptance of his invitation
- Expect to be surprised, because only God can properly assess & reward faithfulness