



“How shall we picture the kingdom of God,
or by what parable shall we present it?”

Mark 4:30



A picture is worth a thousand words.

A parable is a word picture.

A parable is a teaching style
that reveals a truth
through a story.

Basic observations

- Jesus' favored teaching style seemed to be the parable.
- Jesus' parables appear only in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, & Luke).

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Parable

	Matt.	Mark	Luke
The Lamp	5:14-16	4:21-25	8:16-18
The Speck and The Log	7:1-5		6:37-42
New Cloth on Old Garment	9:16-17	2:21-22	5:36-39
The Divided Kingdom	12:24-30	3:23-27	11:14-23
The Sower	13:1-23	4:1-20	8:4-15
The Growing Seed		4:26-29	
The Good Samaritan			10:29-37
The Friend at Midnight			11:5-13
The Rich Fool			12:13-21
The Barren Fig Tree			13:6-9
The Weeds Among the Wheat	13:24-30		
The Mustard Seed	13:31-32	4:30-34	13:18-19
The Leaven	13:33-34		13:20-21
Hidden Treasure	13:44		
Pearl of Great Price	13:45-46		
The Net	13:47-50		

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The Invited Guests			14:7-14
The Heart of Man	15:10-20	7:14-23	
The Lost Sheep	18:10-14		15:1-7
The Lost Coin			15:8-10
The Prodigal Son			15:11-32
The Rich Man & Lazarus			16:19-31
The Persistent Widow			18:1-8
The Pharisee & Tax Collector			18:9-14
The Unforgiving Servant	18:23-35		
Laborers in the Vineyard	20:1-16		
The Two Sons	21:28-32		
The Tenant Farmers	21:33-45	12:1-12	20:9-19
Marriage Feast or Great	22:1-14		14:15-24
The Budding Fig Tree	24:32-35	13:28-33	21:29-33
The Faithful & Wicked Servant	24:45-51	13:34-37	12:35-48
The Ten Virgins	25:1-13		
Ten Talents or Gold Coins	25:14-30		19:11-27

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Basic observations

- Jesus' favored teaching style seemed to be the parable.
- Jesus' parables appear only in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, & Luke).
- Jesus was speaking to:
 1. those under the Law,
 2. Jews only, and
 3. a spiritual mixed audience.
- Parables were used to reveal:
 1. aspects of the Kingdom, indirectly
 2. to ears that were open or closed.
- Parables were most often a response to a specific issue.

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If the parable of the soils is the answer, what is the question?



A trump will sound, every knee will bow and every tongue confess Jesus as Lord, the Kingdom will be revealed, and our hope will be fully realized.



6

If the parable of the soils is the answer, what is the question?



"the Jewish people love [Trump] ... like he's the King of Israel. They love him like he is the second coming of God."

Radio host Wayne Allyn Root



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If Jesus was Israel's "Messiah":

- why had nothing changed for Israel?
- why did Israel's leaders reject him?
- why did he not conform to the Law?

This was an issue in the first century.

Romans 9-11

This is a big issue in Judaism today.

Why do Christians reject Judaism?

This is a big issue in Christianity today.

Why is Christian growth not more dramatic?

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Luke 8

"4 And when a great multitude were coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable: 5 The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road; and it was trampled under foot, and the birds of the air ate it up. 6 And other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. 7 And other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it, and choked it out. 8 And other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great." As He said these things, He would call out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

9

Luke 8

"9 And His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable might be. 10 And He said, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, in order that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand'."

We will look at these verses next week.

10

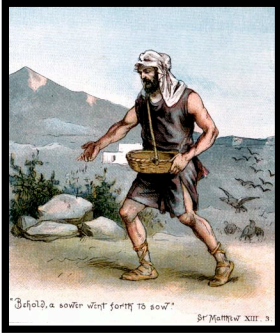
"11 Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. 12 And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance."

11

Spiritual agronomy

Luke 8:4-15

The Parable of the **soils**

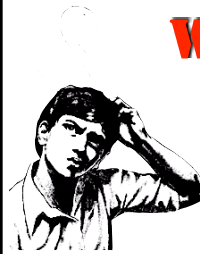


- ✓ **Alongside the road**
(it is timed out)
- ✓ **On the rocky places**
(it is starved out)
- ✓ **Among the thorns**
(it is crowded out)
- ✓ **On the good soil**
(it is patient, persevering, a priority, & fruitful)

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How does this parable relate to us?

IF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS "GOOD NEWS" WHY THE MIXED RESPONSE?

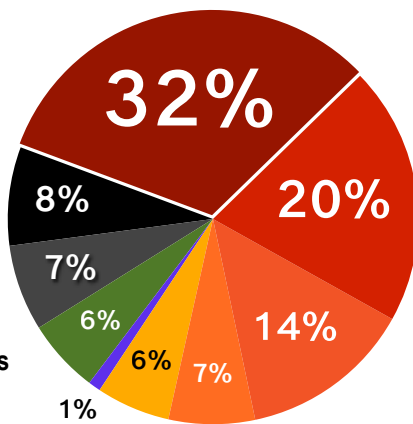


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The human desire to know God is universal but the reception of the Biblical message is not.

World religions

- Christianity
- Islam
- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Chinese religions
- Judaism
- Others
- Nonreligious theists
- Agnostic-atheist



Pew Research 2014

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Some possible reasons the message is not well received:

It could be the **seed (message)**.

(The Biblical story too often is distorted, or treated as a myth.)

"People have not rejected Christ so much as a distorted image of Him."

Bill Bright



15

How does this parable relate to us?



16



"The idea of god was nothing more than a symbolic representation of the collective values of the society that worships (itself through) him, she, or it."



Emile Durkheim 1858-1917

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**Some possible reasons
the message is not well received:**

It could be the sower (messenger).
(The Christian community
some times has bad breath.)



"The church has too
often reflected the
culture (present or
past) rather than
the Kingdom."

Bill Bright



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**Some "sacred cows"
that reflect our world
& not God's kingdom.**

1. **Church as a means to a bigger end** -
over emphasis on individualism.
2. **Leadership as human pyramid** -
rethink church structure and
expectations.
3. **Mission as world evangelism** -
seek Biblical priorities.
4. **Growth as nickels & noses** -
as opposed to unity, maturity,
and service.



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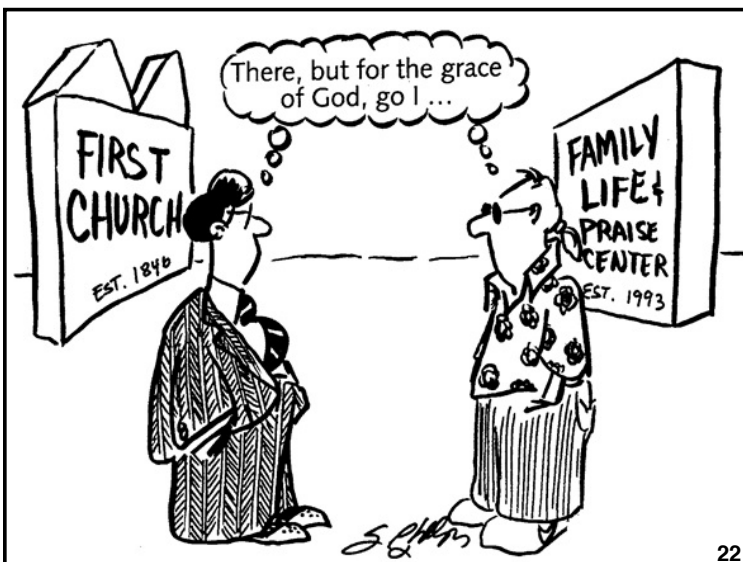
Spiritual Warfare in Corinth

Not engaged in Too engaged in

**CULTURE
WARS**
(Fighting
the world's
values)

**CIVIL
WARS**
(Fighting
other
Christians)

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If the message is true, why the confusion?

Nearly 300 Christian Denominations

body, Spirit, hope, Lord,
faith, baptism, God

Lutheran

**Nearly 200 distinct
Lutheran groups**



Methodist, Baptist,
Presbyterian, Catholic,
Episcopalian,
Muslim, Buddhist,



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Many of our differences should not be “tolerated”, **they should be “celebrated”**.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

“Now there are varieties of **gifts**, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of **ministries**, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of **effects**, but the same God who works all things in all persons.”

Motivations “gifts”	Ministries “ministries”	Manifestation “effects”
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Passions Respect different capabilities.	Positions Respect different responsibilities.	Products Respect different results.
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We must resist the natural **tendency to judge others and ourselves** by the differences that are **God given gifts**.

Romans 12

“³ For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you **not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment**, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. ⁴ For just as we have many members in one body and **all the members do not have the same function**, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ And since **we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us**, let each exercise them accordingly.”

25

Why does the Gospel get mixed reviews ?

Some times its the **seed**?

Some times its the **sower**?

It is always the soil.

(This parable focuses attention on the hearer.)



26

What makes the “bad soils” bad?

“Poor farming methods”

- Poor soil **preparation**.
- Lack of nourishment and **support**.
- Keeping **the weeds out**.
- **Attention to faith over time** is needed for fruit bearing.



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What should we learn from this?

- Cultivate expectations that are sound - based on **insight into the Kingdom**.
- The Christian life is a **group process** in a healthy spiritual community.
- Take responsibility for things you can and should control - **don't cause others to stumble**.
- Don't take responsibility for things you cannot control - **the response of others**.

1 Corinthians 3:6

“I planted, Apollos watered,
but God was causing the growth.”

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