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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

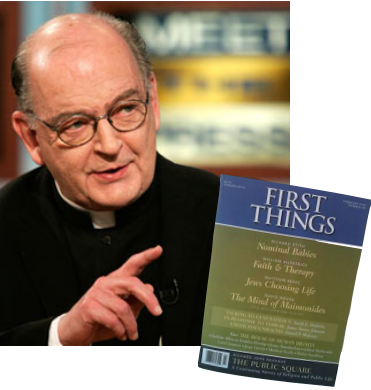
Matthew 25:28-30
Lesson #37
More or Less
06/07/2020

“Signs of the Times” (Matthew 24-25)

We are called not only to read the signs of the times **but also to be a sign in & for our times.**

“The beginning of birth pangs” 24:4-14	“The great Tribulation” 24:15-28	Second Coming of Christ 24:29-31	24:32-25:30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ False Christs will come ✓ Wars & rumors of wars ✓ Famine & earthquakes ✓ Believers hated by all ✓ Conflict within the ch. ✓ False prophets ✓ Many are mislead ✓ Increased lawlessness ✓ Love will grow cold ✓ World evangelism 	<p>Intensified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Disrespect ✓ Disturbances ✓ Deception 		<p style="text-align: center;">5 Parables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fig Tree ✓ Thief ✓ Servants ✓ Virgins ✓ Talents

1



“Idolatry is trying to bring in God’s Kingdom before its time and without its King.”

It is popular with both the political right and left.

Richard John Neuhaus

2

What is our **agenda** as broken people in a broken world waiting for the King and his Kingdom to come?

<p style="text-align: center;">5 Parables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fig Tree ✓ Thief ✓ Servants ✓ Virgins ✓ Talents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be perceptive • be protecting • be pastoral • be prepared • be productive
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3

- In previous parables misperceptions led to negligent and / or hostile behavior.
- Matthew 25:14-30 (parable of the Talents)*
- Three servants are given stewardship responsibilities.
- Two acted responsibly.
- One, out of fear through a perception of his master, disengaged irresponsibly.



How does this instruct us with respect to current events in our personal lives and culture?

4

What is behind this social withdrawal & hostility?

PROTESTERS SET POLICE PRECINCT ON FIRE

Insight from the parables of Talents

FEAR through PERCEPTION!




5

Life in a broken world invites

fear

rooted in **perceptions**
resulting in **withdrawal / anger**.

People who can't manage fears
with enlightened perceptions
will trust neither man nor God.

"Leaders" who won't or can't
help followers manage fear
**will tend to manipulate
them with fear.**



6



Why can't we
just all get
along?



1.

Our fears
which are shaped by
Our perceptions
lead to
Our responses
of social withdrawal and outbursts of anger.

7

"Courage faces fear and
thereby masters it.
Cowardice represses fear
and is thereby
mastered by it."
(withdrawal, hostility)

Martin Luther King, Jr.



8

Perceptions

Many (whites)
have a perception
of dark skinned
people & culture
that is negative.

Many (blacks)
have a perception
of the police and
the justice system
that is negative.

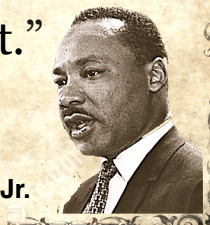


**Both tend to
disengage
from listening
and engage
with anger.**

9

"The Negro needs the white
man to free him from his
fears. The white man needs
the Negro to free
him from his guilt."

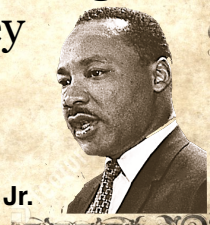
Martin Luther King Jr.



10

"Morality cannot be
legislated, but behavior
can be regulated. Judicial
decrees may not change
the heart, but they
can restrain the
heartless."

Martin Luther King Jr.



11

“Doing the right thing with wrong motives is better than doing the wrong thing, but not by much.”

Mother Teresa

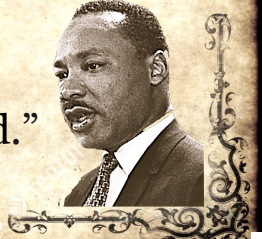


12

“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek but a means by which we arrive at that goal.”

“Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.”

Martin Luther King Jr.



13

2 Corinthians 5

“14 For **the love of Christ controls us**, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”

1 John 4

“18 There is no fear in love; **but perfect love casts out fear**, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. 19 **We love because he first loved us**. 20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. . . .”

14

Matthew 25:14-30 (parable of the Talents)

“28 Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 29 **For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away**. 30 And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

What is the “has” that is increased or taken away?

1. the **fruit** of the stewardship
2. the **joy** of the stewardship

15

“For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance”

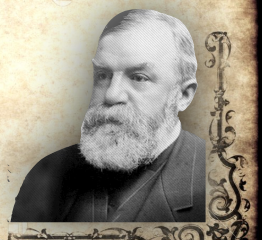
“Fruit”
“More”
“Crowns”
“Rewards”
“Possessions”



16

“A holy life will make the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns, they just shine.”

Dwight L. Moody



17

Proverbial Paraphrase

“We reap what we sow.”

• A big theme with Jesus and the Apostles.

- **Others** (not ourselves) Lk.6:31-38
- **Ministry** (not our pleasures) Gal.6:6-10
- **Truth** (not our traditions) Matt.15:1-20
- **Fruit** (not just leaves) Jn.15:1-11
- **Doing** (not just hearing) Lk. 8:16-21, Jas.2:14-26
- **Implementation** (not just plans) Matt.21:28-32
- **Wisdom** (not just passion) Rom.10:1-3
- **Substance** (not just optics) 1 Cor.3:10-17
- **Heart** (not just activity) Rom.6:17-18
- **Giving** (not just receiving) 2 Cor.9:6-11

18



Why can't we
just all get
along?

2.

Our sowing
of empathetic listening, respectful speaking,
and wise responding will lead to

Our reaping
of personal and social peace.

19

Proverbs 11

²⁴ **There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more**, and there is one who withholds what is justly due, *and yet it results* only in want.

²⁵ **The generous man will be prosperous**, and he who waters will himself be watered.

²⁶ **He who withholds grain, the people will curse him**, but blessing will be on the head of him who sells *it*.

²⁷ **He who diligently seeks good seeks favor**, but he who seeks evil, evil will come to him.

²⁸ **He who trusts in his riches will fall**, but the righteous will flourish like the *green* leaf.

²⁹ **He who troubles his own house will inherit wind**, and the foolish will be servant to the wise hearted.

³⁰ **The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life**, and he who is wise wins (attracts) souls.

³¹ **If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth**, how much more the wicked and the sinner (get theirs)!” ²⁰

John 15


“¹ I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and **every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.** . . . ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing ⁶ **If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.** ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. . . . ¹¹ **These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.** ¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.” ²¹

21

1. **Sow synergistically** not independently.

- **Baptism** - take it seriously.
- **Holy Spirit** - integrate Christ's Spirit in every area of our lives.
- **Kingdom** - invest our tangible assets in Kingdom ventures.
- **Body of Christ** - fellowship with others who make up the (faith community).
- **Word of God** - let it dwell in our hearts.

22



“In the end, dear friend, it is always between us and God, not between us and them.”

Mother Teresa

23

What is abiding faith?

- It's not like buying a **ticket for a bus that you ride**.
- It's not like riding a **bicycle that you peddle**.
- It's more like **a garden you tend**.
 - ★ It starts with **planting a seed**.
 - ★ It requires **weeding and watering**.
 - ★ It bears fruit on its own **if it is maintained**.

24

Luke 6

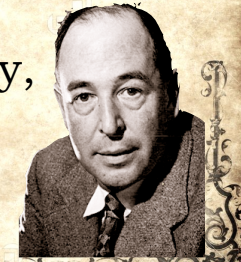
³¹ And just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way. ³² And if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. . . . ³⁵ But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. ³⁷ And do not judge and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. ³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

2. **Sow empathetically** not selfishly.

24

"You don't need religion to have morals. If you can't determine right from wrong then you lack empathy, not religion."

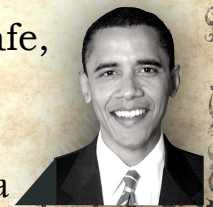
C.S. Lewis



26

"We live in a culture that discourages empathy. A culture that too often tells us our principal goal in life is to be rich, thin, young, famous, safe, and entertained."

Barack Obama



27

Empathy is an important attribute of God.

Psalm 56:8

"You have taken account of my wanderings; put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?"



28

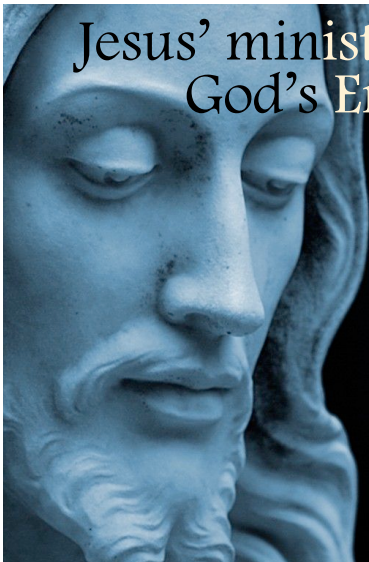
It is the essence of the Incarnation.

Matthew 1:23

"And they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, 'God with us'."



29



Jesus' ministry shows us God's Empathy.

Hebrews 4:15

"For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

30

The Spirit's ministry is Empathetic.


Romans 8:26-27

"And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."



31

How can we
build bridges
not bunkers?



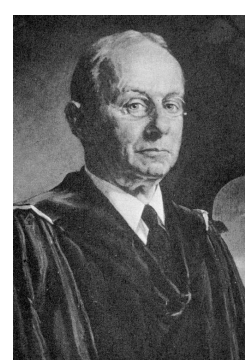
James 1

"¹⁹ This you know, my beloved brethren. But **everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger**; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

Listen to each other empathetically
Speak to each other respectfully
Respond to each other wisely

32

Dr. James Rowland Angell



"His key to success as president of Yale University was to grow antennae, not horns."

33

Philippians 2

"⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,"

1. Empathy is from the inside out.

⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

2. Empathy does not consider "ONE'S OWN RIGHTS."

34

⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

3. Empathy takes the initiative to lay "self" aside.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

4. Empathy is willing to suffer loss for what is loved.

35

***“If you find yourself saying
‘But I’m just being honest’,
chances are you’ve just
been unkind.***



Dan Waldschmidt
(Business Strategist)

***Honesty
doesn’t heal.
Empathy does.”***

36



Why can’t we
just all get
along?



1.
Our fears
which are shaped by
Our perceptions
lead to
Our responses
of social withdrawal
and outbursts of anger.

2.
Our sowing
of empathetic listening,
respectful speaking,
and wise responding will lead to
Our reaping
of personal and social peace.

37