



Parables of Jesus

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LESSON:

- 1) God gives different people different gifts. God gives gifts to all people. It is not a man's talent that matters. The important thing is how are you using the talent God has given to you?
- 2) God does not give men great things to do until they are faithful in small things. "Well done, good and faithful servant; You have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much." Matthew 25:21. The reward of work well done is more work. The servants who used their talents were not told to rest. There was greater work to do. Every person should make wise use of their talent.
- 3) If you do not use the talents God has given you, you will lose them. The man who is punished is the man who does not try, "But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant.' " His talent was taken from him and given to the servant with ten talents. When talents are neglected they vanish.
- 4) God never asks of us that which He has not given to us. The man with one talent was not asked for ten talents. He was asked what he had done with his one talent.
- 5) There is coming a time when all men will be required to give an account to God of how they have used their talents.

and hid your talent in the ground." Matthew 25:24-25. The first two servants received praise from their master. There was no praise for the third servant. The master's words to him were hard and harsh. "You wicked and slothful servant!". The master then took the talent away from him.

Very often you hear people say that all men are equal. In some ways this is true. Before God all men are equal. God does not value men who are rich more than those who are poor. God does not value educated people more than those who have education. Before God all men are equal. Some people have more ability than others. Some people are stronger than others. Some are better farmers than others. Some people can sing beautiful songs, others cannot sing at all. Some like to work in offices. Others like to work outside. Men are all different. Like the master in the parable, God gives men different gifts. The important lesson for Christian people is this. The number of gifts you have is not the important thing. Neither is it important what gift you have. The important lesson is what are you doing with the gifts God has given to you? Are you using them or are you burying them? All of our talents or abilities should be placed under God's command.

The man with one talent did not waste the talent he was given. He was not a drunkard. He did not gamble with the talent. His sin was not using the talent. He did not have the courage necessary to wisely use the talent. He was afraid he might lose the one talent his master had given to him. He was not willing to take the risk. Risks were involved. They are always involved. To do nothing is wrong. The servant did not use his talent and he lost it.

The only servant who thought the master was a "Hard man" was the one who did not work. The servants who worked did not think their master was a "Hard man". They received the master's blessing, not his condemnation. Faithfulness and service always receive the blessing.

CHAPTER 1

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

Matthew 13:10 - 17; 34, 35

MEMORY VERSE "To you it has been given to know the secrets of heaven."
Matthew 13:11

When Jesus lived here on earth He worked very hard to help the people understand the ways of God. He used many different ways to try to show all men the plan and love of God. Sometimes Jesus performed miracles. Other times He spoke words of wisdom. Sometimes He simply asked questions. Quite often He used parables to open the hearts of the people to God's truth.

In the days when Jesus lived here on earth teachers used parables very much in their teaching. Many of them were like folk-stories. Jesus did not use parables as stories. He used parables to help make God's truth more real. The parables of Jesus were easy to understand. They were related to situations that all people understood. They were very simple.

Here are some important things we need to keep in mind as we learn more of God's Word through parables.

- 1) Parables are pictures that help us to better understand God's truth. Let us compare Mark 12:33 to Matthew 5:23. In Mark 12:33 we read "To love one's neighbour as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." In Matthew 5:23 - 24 the same idea is expressed in this way. "If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be

Reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." The verses in Matthew help us to see, better than Mark, the truth that Jesus is telling.

- 2) Most of the parables of Jesus present one main truth for study. The parables may be long or short. In this study on the parables we shall seek to find the main truth. The main truth may be different in each parable. Some of the truths taught in parables are these:

- (a) Some show us the way people act.
- (b) Some teach about judgment.
- (c) Some about stewardship.
- (d) Some about controversial issues.
- (e) Some about the Kingdom of God.
- (f) Some about rewards and losses.
- (g) Some about sin.
- (h) Some about the Christian life.

- 3) Parables are used to teach truth in such a way that everyone will understand. Ministers of God often use illustrations or stories to help their people better understand God's Word. Parables were used in the same way. All of the parables of Jesus were used to make pictures of important Christian truths.

- 4) The parables of Jesus were all true to life and nature. They were pictures of things the people had seen. They came from the daily experiences of the people. Jesus always talked about things familiar to those who listened.

- 5) The interpretation of the parables is very important. The best way to interpret the parables is to accept the story as a real story about life.

CHAPTER 13

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Matthew 25:14 - 30

MEMORY VERSE: *"For to everyone who has more will be given, and he will have abundance; but for him who has not, even what he has will be taken away."*

Matthew 25:29

The rich man was preparing to go away for a while. Before he left he called for his servants. When they came to him he told them of the journey he had planned. Then he gave each of the servants some money. To one servant he gave 5 talents (about 1,200 pounds or 2,400 K.), to another he gave 2 talents (about 480 pounds or 960 K.), and to the third he gave 1 talent (about 240 pounds or 480 K.). As he gave the money he asked them to take care of it while he was gone. Then he went away.

The servant who received 5 talents began working and trading. The servant who received two talents also began trading with the money he had. The third servant was different. Rather than working with the one talent he received he buried it in the ground.

After many days the master returned from his journey. On his return he again called for his servants. He was anxious to see what the servants had done with the money.

The servant who had received 5 talents brought great pleasure to his master as he returned ten talents. The servant who had received two talents had also doubled his talents. Instead of returning two talents he returned four.

Then came the servant who had received one talent. "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping when you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid and I went

- 4) When Christ comes again all men will stand before him. It will be a time of judgment. Foolish men will be cast out of the presence of God and wise men will be welcomed to the feast of God.
- 5) We should be prepared every day. We are not to spend our time looking for Christ. No. We are to spend our time working for him, knowing that whenever he comes we are ready to meet Him.

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Our judgment on the parables should be based on this. Parables are presented in such a way that the hearer must make a decision about it in his own mind. After the decision has been made it should be applied to life.

- 6) The truths of the parables of Jesus apply to every person and nation in the world. They were not written for only a few people. They were only written for those who worked with Jesus. They were also written for you and me today. As you read the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John you may find the same parable in different books. The same parable is written with some different words. Do not let this confuse you. They do not conflict with each other. They help each other present God's truth.

In this study of the Parables of Jesus we shall seek the main truth of each parable. After finding that truth we shall seek to apply it to our daily lives.

To help you understand better the Parables of Jesus here is a list of the parables He taught:

PARABLES OF HIS EARLY MINISTRY

"GOOD NEWS"

PARABLE:

Children of the Bridechamber.

Luke 5:33-35.

New Patches on Old Clothes.

Luke 5:36.

New Wine in Old Skins.

Luke 5:37-39.

New and Old Treasures.

Matthew 13:51-52.

Growth: Mark 4:26-29.

Mustard Seed.

Mark 4:30-32.

Leaven: Matthew 13:33.

Hidden Treasure.

Matthew 13:44.

Pearl of Great Price.

Matthew 13:45-46.

Dragnet: Matthew 13:47-50.

Sower: Matthew 13: 3-23.

Children at Play.

Luke 7:31-35.

Wise and Foolish Builders.

Matthew 7:24-27.

Tares: Matthew 13:24-43.

A person who waits until the last moment to prepare for Christ's coming will be too late.

Every person must be prepared individually. You cannot borrow a relationship with Christ. The foolish virgins could not borrow oil from the wise. In the same way a person cannot borrow a relationship with Christ. Every day - every person needs to make sure he is prepared to meet Christ. Faithfulness to the Word of God helps us in our preparation.

LESSONS:

- 1) A person cannot make up for neglect. The ten virgins all knew what was needed. Five of them prepared and five failed to prepare. For those who failed to prepare there was no second chance. They neglected to do what they knew must be done.
- 2) Every person must be personally prepared if they are to join in the joy of the redeemed when Christ comes again. To be a Church member does not mean you are prepared. Only those who have repented of their sins and confessed their faith in Jesus Christ are prepared. Church membership and salvation are not the same.
- 3) Jesus Christ is coming again. No one knows when He shall come. We do know He is coming! When He comes all those who are prepared will join with him. Those who are not prepared will be separated from him. The foolish virgins should help us to see the importance of being ready to meet him when He comes.

When the bridegroom arrived they would light their lamps and walk with him to the wedding feast. Only those with lighted lamps could enter the room. Once the door was closed no one was allowed to join the wedding party.

In the parable of the ten virgins five of them were wise and five were foolish. Five of them were prepared and five were not prepared. Five had oil and five of them were without oil. While the bridegroom was preparing to come the ten young ladies went to sleep. About mid-night they heard the messenger say the bridegroom was coming. Quickly they began preparing their lamps. The foolish virgins began to beg the wise to give them some oil. The wise virgins refused their request because they had only enough oil for their own lamps. It was impossible for the foolish ones to buy oil. It was mid-night and those who sold oil were asleep. The foolish virgins tried to find oil for their lamps. While they looked for oil the bridegroom came. The door to the house was closed! They missed the wedding!

The Word of God teaches us that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming to earth again. It tells us that no man knows the day or the hour of his coming. "For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night." 1 Thesalonians 5:2. Our task is to be ready. We are not told to be always looking for the Lord. The virgins in the parable were not condemned because they slept. They were foolish because they were not prepared. This is important. Knowing that the Lord is coming again we are to be prepared for his coming. We need to live daily for Christ. To the real people of God it does not matter when Christ will come. They are prepared and ready to meet him.

There are certain things that cannot be left to the last minute. The important things in life need our attention NOW! A student who waits until the last minute to study for his examination will fail.

PARABLES OF LATER MINISTRY

"CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

PARABLE:

Empty House:	Matthew	12:43-45
Uncompleted Tower:	Luke	14:25-30
King's War Plan:	Luke	14:31-33
Chief Plans:	Luke	14: 7-11
Pharisee and Publican:	Luke	18: 9-14
Two Debtors:	Luke	7:40-49
Unmerciful Servant:	Matthew	18:21-35
Barren Fig Tree:	Luke	13: 1- 9
Bondservant:	Luke	17: 7-10
Unjust Steward:	Luke	16: 1- 9
Rich Fool:	Luke	12:13-21
Rich Man and Beggar:	Luke	16:19-31
Good Samaritan:	Luke	10:25-37
Parable of Labourers:	Matthew	20: 1-16
Friend at Midnight:	Luke	11: 5-13
The Widow:	Luke	18: 1- 8
Lost Sheep:	Luke	15: 1- 7 ✓
Lost Coin:	Luke	15: 8-10
Prodigal Son:	Luke	15:11-32

PARABLES OF JESUS' LAST WEEK
"JUDGMENT AND GOD'S KINGDOM"

CHAPTER 12

PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

Matthew 25:1 - 13

PARABLE:

MEMORY VERSE: *"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."*
Matthew 25:13

- The Two Sons: Matthew 21:28-32
- Cruel Vineworkers: Matthew 21:33-41
- Rejected cornerstone: Matthew 21:42-45
- Great Feast: Luke 14:12-24
- Wedding Robe: Matthew 22:11-14
- Ten Virgins: Matthew 25: 1-13
- Talents: Matthew 25:14-30
- Last Judgment: Matthew 25:31-46

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The disciples had been taking Jesus around to see their new temple.. It was a very beautiful place. As Jesus looked at the great temple he told his disciples that the day was coming when the temple would be destroyed. He said, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down." Matthew 24:2.

"Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of the your coming and of the close of the age?". The disciples were anxious to know the answer. To answer their question Jesus told several parables. One of them was the parable of the ten virgins. The parables was to help the disciples to see that they should be ready all the time.

In the days when Jesus lived here on earth weddings were very wonderful occasions. All of the people in the village would walk with the couple to their new home. The ten young girls in the parable would wait with the bride. While they waited for the bridegroom to come they danced and sang. No one knew just what time the bridegroom would come. Maybe he would come very soon or maybe it would be several days. When he did come a person ran in front of him telling all the people; "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him."

Another custom of the day required all people who were on the streets at night to have a lighted lamp. The lamps were made by dipping old rags in oil and tying them to a stick.

3) Men offer many excuses, but there is only one reason why they do not follow the Lord Jesus. They do not follow because they really do not want him.

4) The love of God includes all people. No one is turned away.

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CHAPTER 2

GUESTS OF THE BRIDEGROOM

Luke 5:33 - 39; Matthew 9:14 - 17; Mark 2:18 - 22

MEMORY VERSE" *"No one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does the wine will burst the skin and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins."* Mark 2:22

Jesus had been to a feast . It was in the home of Matthew. It was a wonderful occasion. Matthew had just given his heart to Christ. So great was the joy he found in Christ that he wanted his friends to know about it. To help them know of the cleansing and forgiveness he had found in Christ he invited them to a feast in his home. The Bible leads us to think that many of Matthew's good friends were "publicans and sinners." This did not keep Jesus from attending. It was a time to which He looked forward. It was another opportunity to share the wonders of God's love.

When the scribes and Pharisees heard about this they asked many questions. They could not understand how a religious person could associate with sinners.

"Why do you eat and drink with sinners and tax-collectors?" they asked. (Luke 5:30).

They said, "The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink." (Luke 5:33).

Jesus answered them by asking a question. "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? Jesus was saying to the scribes and Pharisees that for his disciples this was not a time to fast - but a time to feast. It was a time of joy!

The scribes and Pharisees lived under the Mosaic law. There were three great activities of the religious life of the Jews. They were almsgiving, prayer and fasting. According to the Mosaic law, the only fast during the year was on the Day of Atonement. However, many of the zealous Jews had added other days for fasting. Their complete idea of religion was tied up with the keeping of the laws.

The Gospel Jesus preached did not obey their laws. Judaism was all form. Christianity depended not on laws but on a man's spirit. The religion of the scribes and Pharisees was nothing but rules. There was no joy in their religion. It was a task. The message Jesus preached was just the opposite. His was a religion of joy. It filled a person's heart with great happiness. It was like the happiness known at a wedding. Read John 3:29.

The Scribes and Pharisees fasted because it was required by their laws. The disciples of John the Baptist might fast also. For even to them religion was a terrible warning of doom. They had an opportunity to "Flee from the wrath to come." (Matthew 3:7). But for the disciples of Jesus, with the bridegroom, this was not a time to fast - but to feast and rejoice.

The real question the scribes and Pharisees were asking Jesus was "What right have you to break tradition?" They completely misunderstood his coming.

He had not come to destroy their religion and laws. He came into the world to do what the old laws could not do. He came "Not to destroy, but to forgive" the law. (Matthew 5:17). To graft Christianity into Judaism was impossible.

"No-one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment," Jesus said (Luke 5:36). If he does this he will tear the new cloth and the colours will be different. You cannot add the new religion of Christ to the old religion of your fathers. The new life needs new expression. Old forms should be used to guide us.

They considered these earthly things more important than the things of God.

They were like a man buying a new car. Before he bought the car he was very faithful to his church. But after he had his car he no longer came to church. He said, "Before we bought our car we came to church every Sunday, but now we ride to see our friends." It is not a sin to have a car. But when the car keeps us from following the way of God - it is a sin! We need to keep first things first.

The real reason the men in the parable did not attend the feast is simple. They did not want to attend! The real reason people refuse God's invitation is that they do not want God. What we really want we work to gain. When people really desire God, they forget their excuses.

Because his invited guests had refused, the master sent his servants to bring in the unwanted. The Jews looked down on the people who were not Jews. (They were called Gentiles). They believed that the promises of God were for the Jews only. They were the favoured people of God.

In the parable Jesus was showing the Jews that the Gentiles were going to take their places at God's feast. Everyone was to be invited to accept God's great invitation.

God does not love just the Jews. The love of God is for all people. All are invited to his table.

LESSONS:

- 1) We should be careful to keep God first. Good things can become bad things if they crowd God out of our lives.
- 2) The blessings of God are offered to all men, but only those who accept his invitation receive them.

Yet this is exactly what happened in this parable. "They all began to make excuses."

The parable was told to show the Jew's attitude toward Jesus. It was told to show them how foolish they were in refusing God's invitation. We still have foolish people like this. We see many who are more interested in material things than eternal things. The higher things of life they do not want. Men may have great possessions but their possessions will never bring them peace. Peace can only be found by accepting the invitation of Christ. Men may work to make much money, but money does not bring happiness. Happiness only comes to those who respond to God's invitation

God invited all men to "come" to his feast. He offers the best things to those who accept His invitation. He invites us to take - his help - his guidance for our lives - peace of mind - a happy heart - control over our passions - victory over death - entrance to heaven - eternal life!

It is a tragedy for a person to want only material possessions. Many, many people refuse God's invitation. They miss the feast of God because they refuse to accept God's invitation. These people do not have the eternal things in life.

In the parable the three men gave very weak excuses. The man with the farm said he was more interested in his farm. The man with the oxen was more interested in his possessions. The man with the wife was more interested in his new love. Their excuses were very foolish. These men were like blind men. They had eyes to see - but they did not see.

We need to see that none of these men stayed away from the feast because of sinful things. It is not a sin for a man to buy a farm, or some oxen. Neither is it a sin for a man to get married. These men were placing their possession and their affection before God. They were mixed up.

They should not be used to hold us back.

"No-one puts new wine into old wine-skins." (Luke 5:37). Why try to save the old wine-skins? They are not precious. Only the wine is precious. The skins exist only for the sake of the wine. In this brief parable Jesus is saying the important thing is truth. Truth must not be changed for the sake of a new idea. The important thing was the wine - the truth - the skins or the traditions were not important. The new life Christ offered must have new expression.

Jesus came to tell men that there is more to religion than keeping the law. Our actions must be in harmony with our spirit. Keeping the laws will not make a person Godly. If there is no love in our hearts for Christ, there can be no real worship of God. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." (Psalm 19:14).

This harmony came only through repentance of sin, and faith in Christ. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed, behold, the new has come." (2 Corinthians 5:17). To know Christ is to know more than the law. It is to know joy.

The reason that a person does not have joy is that he does not have Christ - to have the bridegroom taken away. Those who have the bridegroom look forward to an eternity filled with feasting. The life Christ offers in the world to come is filled with feasting because the bridegroom (Christ) is always there.

LESSONS:

- 1) To live with Christ in your heart is to have constant joy.
- 2) A sad Christianity is impossible when we are in Christ's presence.

3) Worship is not worship in God's sight if the attitude of our heart is not in harmony with our words and actions.

4) Christianity is not a set of laws that we must keep. It is a fellowship of our spirit with Christ.

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CHAPTER 11

PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER

Luke 14:15 - 24

MEMORY VERSE: *"And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled'"*
Luke 14:23

A rich man planned a great feast and invited his friends. As was the custom, at dinner-time he sent his servant out to tell the invited guests that everything was ready. But to the surprise of the servant and the rich man those who were invited all began to make excuses.

The first one was not able to come because he had just purchased some land. He said, "I have bought a field and I must go out and see it." It is very strange that he did not go to see the field before he purchased it. He was a very foolish man if he gave his money before he looked at the land. His business was more important than the invitation.

Another man had bought five yoke of oxen. He said he was going to try out the oxen. He was so interested in his new possession that he did not have time to attend the feast.

The third man said, "I have married a wife, and I cannot come." He did not realize the importance of the invitation. The first two men tried to be nice in refusing the invitation. The third man did not try to be nice. He just said: "I cannot come".

It seems strange that these people refused their invitation to the feast. Many times people are invited to take food with their friends. Sometimes they are not able to accept the invitation. But is it difficult to imagine that every person would refuse the invitation.

We also have people in our churches who have come to work in the vineyard of the Lord after many wasted years. When they first heard the call of the Lord they refused. Later they saw the foolishness of sin and turned to work in God's vineyard.

There is a better way. It is the way of commitment. It is the way that says, "Yes, I'll go" - and then goes.

LESSONS:

- 1) Promises can never take the place of doing. Good works can not take the place of good deeds. What we do should not be different from what we say. God is not interested in words. He is interested in committed lives.
- 2) Even a good thing can be spoiled by the way a person does it. Christian acts without Christian love do not bring joy.
- 3) Worship that does not encourage us to live daily for Christ is empty. If our lives are not drawn closer to Christ through the church then something is wrong.
- 4) An insincere faith leads to disobedience. Insincerity destroys our desires to live for Christ.
- 5) Today is the time for each of us to enter into the work of the Lord. Now is the time - today is the day!

CHAPTER 3

THE SOWER AND THE SOILS

Matthew 13:3 - 23; Mark 4:1 - 20; Luke 8:5 - 18

MEMORY VERSE: "So each of us shall give account of himself to God."
Romans 14:12

A great crowd of people had gathered to listen to the words of Jesus. They were sitting near a lake. So great was the crowd that Jesus stood in a little boat and taught the people as they stood on the shore.

"A sower went out to sow," Jesus said. These words the people understood very well. It may have been that even as Jesus taught them they could see a sower sowing his seed by the lake. The sower Jesus told them about had different kinds of soil on his farm. He had good soil and bad rocky soil. During the time of sowing, however, he would plant seed on all the soil.

The time of sowing is very different from the time of reaping. When the time of reaping comes many people work in the field. At the time of sowing only one person works in the field. The one who went to sow the seeds had a lonely task. It was not a time of joy. It was a time of hope. It was a time of faith.

The sower gathers his seeds and prepares to go to his field. The way to the field is to follow the path. It is not a new path. It is a path that has been used many years. The soil in the path is hard like stone. As the sower walks to the field some of his seed falls by the side of the path. But the seed will not lay there long. Some birds will see the seeds and eat them.

Some of the sower's seeds fell on ground filled with stones. The soil was good but there were too many stones. The seed would grow for a while, but it would die. There was not enough good soil for the seed to really develop. There were too many stones.

Some of the sower's seeds fell on good soil - but the ground had never been cleaned. And when the rains came the seeds grew, but so did the weeds and the thorns.

Some of the seed fell on good, clean ground. The seeds grew. It was from these seeds at harvest time, that the people received their food.

After telling the people about the soils and the seeds, Jesus explained the parable to his disciples.

"When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in his heart; this is what was sown along the path." (Matthew 13:19).

The seed fell on the ground - but it did not enter the ground. This seed Jesus says is like some people. They have heard the Gospel of God's love, but they have never allowed the seed of God's word to enter into their hearts. They have ears to hear - but they do not hear. They have been trained against God. Their hearts are hard and their minds are closed. (Read Luke 16:31).

"As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; but he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and then tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away." (Matthew 13:20-21).

The seed in the rocky soil looks good for a time but it quickly dies. This seed is like the people who hear the word of God and they are happy. They are not happy because they have heard the Word of God, but because they have heard something new. There is no commitment to Christ. There is no repentance. There is no new birth. They are not changed in their heart. When troubles and problems come they have no spiritual foundation. They fall away. They quit.

Jesus told the parable of the Two Sons to some of the leaders of the Pharisees. Jesus had just entered the temple and they began asking questions. They did not ask questions because they were interested. They asked questions to confuse the people.

A man had two sons. He went to the first son and asked him to go and work in the vineyard. The son told his father he would not go. But after a short time the son changed his mind and went to the vineyard. The father went to the second son and asked him to go and work. The second son said he would go. But he changed his mind and did not go. The question is this, which one of the sons obeyed? The leader of the Pharisees said, "The first son was the obedient one." Jesus answered, "Truly I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Matthew 21:31.

Jesus told the parable to show the different ways the people were going. God called men to go and do his work (to work in his vineyard). The Pharisees said they would go and work but they did not go. The publicans and sinners refused to go but then changed their minds and went.

In this parable neither group is praised. For both groups really failed to do what God wanted them to do. The Pharisees failed to be obedient because of their false religion. The publicans and sinners failed because of the pleasure of sin. It was after they saw the heartaches of sin that they went to work in the vineyard.

The parable helps us to see two groups of people in the world. One group talks much but they work very little. The other group talks little and works more. These two groups are with us still. In our churches we have members who are like the Pharisee. They want to be a leader. They are anxious to have the places of responsibility. They desire to be seen of men. It is hard to get them to actually work in the vineyard of the Lord.

CHAPTER 10

PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

Matthew 21:28 - 32

MEMORY VERSE:

*"For God so loved the world
that he gave his only son,
that whosoever believes in
him should not perish but
have eternal life."*

John 3:16

Many of the parables of Jesus were directed to the Pharisees. Their false religion caused much confusion among the people. They were so busy practising their religion that they did not have time to be godly. One day Jesus said about them, "They preach, but they do not practice." (Matthew 23:3). All of their deeds were done so others could see them. They always wanted the best places in the church. They talked much but did little.

The wrath of Jesus was also shown against the Pharisees because of their attitude toward Him. They refused to believe his words and worked hard to try to keep others from believing. These religious hypocrites observed the smallest part of the law but they made no effort to show love and justice and faith.

Jesus said: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. You blind Pharisees! First cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside may also be clean."

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like white-washed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men's bones all uncleanliness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity," Matthew 23:25-28.

"As for what was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the delight in riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful." (Matthew 13:22).

This is what happens when a person tries to serve God while holding on to sin. A person cannot grow in Christ with an impure heart. It is the picture of a person who has many interests. Many things want his time, and very often the most important things are crowded out. The only way God's word can grow is for the heart to be cleaned.

"As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it, he indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty." (Matthew 13:23).

The good soil is the soil of growth. It is from the good soil that the sower will gather his food. The same seed fell on the good soil and the bad soils alike. The difference is not in the seed. The difference is in the soil.

The seed is not a dead thing. It has life. But before that life can reveal itself it must find good, clean soil. Seeds that are left in a grainery do not reveal life. They need good ground.

It is the same with the word of God in our hearts. The word of God in not dead. It is alive. But the life found in the word of God can only reveal itself when planted in a repentant, cleansed heart.

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12).

LESSONS:

- 1) Two things cannot exist in a person's heart at the same time. The growth of one means the death of another.
Read Mark 12:30.
- 2) Time reveals every person's relationship to Christ. When the time of harvest is come the reapers will see the fruits of the good soil. We may fool people - we can never fool God. He knows what is in our hearts.
- 3) There are many different kinds of soil - but there are really only two kinds of people. There are those who belong to Christ and those who do not.
- 4) There is coming a time when God will harvest His fields. The seed that has grown in good soil will be harvested at that time.

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- 4) God does not refuse to forgive any man. There is not any person in all the world that God will not forgive. Any man who turns from his sin and calls upon the Lord can have forgiveness. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
I John 1:9.

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He turned to his servants, "Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Luke 15:22-24.

What a reunion they had! The son had returned to the father. "Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." Luke 15:7.

Who is the prodigal in this parable? He is the person seeking life away from God.

Who is the father? He is the picture of God, ready, willing, and able to forgive.

LESSONS:

- 1) God has given every person the power to choose. Like the father in the story, God does not force us to do what he wants. He allows us to choose the way we shall walk.
- 2) God's love never changes. The father's love for his son did not change because the son went away. His heart was sad, but his love was the same. When the son returned he was not rebuked. He was given a loving welcome. It is the same with our Heavenly Father. Men may choose to leave the Father's house, but this does not change the father's love. God's love for men is always the same.
- 3) The happiness that sin brings only lasts for a short time. The prodigal son thought he would find happiness. He enjoyed himself until his money was gone. All of his joy was false. The only joy that lasts is the joy found in the love of God.

CHAPTER 4

PARABLE OF THE TARES

Matthew 13:24 - 30, 36 - 43

MEMORY VERSE:

"The field is the world, and the good seed means the sons of the kingdom, the weeds are the sons of the evil one."
Matthew 13:38

The parable of the tares is a parable about good and evil. As Jesus told this parable he used words that every person could understand.

The farmer had worked hard all day. He wanted to finish planting. As he returned to his house, he was pleased because all of his field had been sown. Now, he could look forward to a good harvest.

But while he was sleeping that night his enemy came and planted bad seeds. The seeds planted by the enemy were called "False wheat." When these seeds began to grow they looked the same as the good wheat. Very few people could tell the difference between the good wheat and the false wheat when it began to grow. After the seeds had grown for a while a person could see the "False wheat."

The farmer's servants were the first to notice the "False wheat" in the field. After telling the sad news to their master they wanted to go and pull out the tares. The farmer explained to them that this could not be done. If the tares were pulled out the good wheat would also be destroyed. It was too late to separate them. Their roots had grown together. If they tried to pull out the bad wheat, they would destroy the good.

The time was coming when they must separate them. The seeds of the false wheat could not be left with the good wheat. The false wheat was poisonous.

If it were eaten it would make people very dizzy. It had a very bitter taste. If the false wheat was not separated the good wheat would be destroyed. The harvest would be the time for separation.

When the disciples asked Jesus the meaning of the parable he explained it to them. He answered:

"He who sows the good seed is the son of man; The field is the world, and the good seed means the sons of the kingdom, the weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels." Matthew 13:37-39.

This is not a parable on church discipline. It is a parable that teaches us of the presence of sin and evil in life. It is a parable about life. It teaches us the truth that we cannot escape the work of Satan in this life. He works continuously. His desire is to destroy. His work is to create destruction.

Weeds are always weeds. They cannot change. They are at war with the good grains. They grow in such a way that the farmer cannot destroy them without destroying the good grain.

One of the questions many people ask is "Why does God allow evil." If God would defeat Satan and evil the world would be happy. If God decided to destroy all evil what would happen to you? If all of the people in the world who are unrighteous were to be destroyed - would you escape? Jesus said, a time is coming when evil will be destroyed, but this is not the time!

Why do we have sin and evil in the world? Why is the world so different from the way Jesus wanted it to be? Why are the tares of hate with the good wheat of love? Why are the tares of bitterness found among friends? Why are the tares of drunkenness so many? Why are the tares of murder found with the good seeds of brotherly love?

And like his money his friends were gone. They did not want to be with him if he had no money.

There was only one thing to do. This young man would have to find a job. This was very hard to do. There was a famine in the land and there were not many jobs. After days of searching the young man found a place working on a farm. His work was feeding the pigs. This was the lowest job a Jew could have. He had fallen to the very bottom. For his food he tried to eat what was given to the pigs. How different the pig-pen was from his father's house.

As he worked in the dirt and mud of the pig-pen he began to think about his home. He remembered well how he lived when he was with his father. He remembered how good the food was there. He remembered how warm and kind was his father's house. And "He came to himself".

This is the important thing. He realized how foolish he had been. He could see the things he wanted in life were to be found at home. He left home to find what he wanted, only to learn that what he wanted was back at home.

"I'm going home". Dirty, hungry, and ashamed, he started his journey back. As he walked the road back home he thought of the words he would speak to his father. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants." (Luke 15:18-19). The father's authority did not bother him now. He was willing to do anything just to be home.

The father had different plans. Ever since the son had gone the father had wanted him to come back. Every day he looked to see if his son would be walking up the path. His heart was broken. His love for his son had not changed. He wanted his son to come home.

It is difficult for us to imagine how happy the father was when he did see his son coming home. The father ran to meet him. He kissed him and welcomed him home.

CHAPTER 9

PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Luke 15:11 - 32

MEMORY VERSE: *"I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father I have sinned against heaven and before you'."*
Luke 15:18

The Parable of the Prodigal Son has been called the most wonderful parable in the Bible. It is a beautiful picture of God's love. It is a story about man's rebellion against God.

A father had two sons. One day the younger son decided he wanted to leave home. We wanted to be free. He wanted to make his own decisions. He did not want his father to tell him what to do. He told his father to give him the money that would be his inheritance. He wanted to go.

The father of this young man did not try to make him stay at home. He gave his son the money he requested. Then after a few days the young man started his journey. He was going to live the good life! His pockets were full of money. He could buy everything he might need.

The Bible tells us that he went to "A far country". It does not tell where the far country was. It was somewhere away from the father's house and free from the father's will. Now he was free. He could do just as he pleased. No one could stop him. This is the life he had always wanted.

He did not wait long until he had many new friends. At least, he thought they were friends. With all his money people liked to be with him. He spent his money as he pleased. He bought all of the things that satisfied his body. But the money could not last forever. After weeks of spending money as he pleased, he realized one day that all of his money was gone.

Why do we find tares in our own lives? In our homes? In our church? WHY? The good seed has been sown, and Satan has quickly covered the field with his seeds of temptation and sin.

But the time of harvest is coming. The false wheat will be separated from the good wheat at the time of God's judgment. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body." (2 Corinthians 5:10). God will be the judge. His judgment will be fair and honest. It will reveal the true heart of every person. We do not know the date of God's judgment. The important thing is for us to seek, each day, the way of our Lord.

LESSONS:

- 1) This parable teaches us that Satan is always at work in the world. No person can escape his temptations and the evil he brings. He sows his false seed in darkness.
- 2) This parable teaches us how hard it is to judge a person by his appearance only. Judgment based on outward appearance is not always right.
- 3) This parable teaches us that we should not be too quick in our judgments. If the farmer had been too quick in judging the tares he would have destroyed his wheat.
- 4) This parable teaches us the certainty of judgment. All men shall be judged. Read Matthew 13:40.
- 5) This parable teaches that the only one qualified to judge is God. Read Matthew 13:41-43.

PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANTMatthew 18:21-35

MEMORY VERSE: "And *forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*" *Matthew 6:12*

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." *Matthew 6:14-15.*

"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." *Colossians 3:12-13.*

"Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him; and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, 'I repent' you must forgive him." *Luke 17:3.*

"And be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." *Ephesians 4:32.*

Forgiveness is at the very centre of Christianity. The Lord emphasized the importance of forgiveness as he answered a question asked by Simon Peter. "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Simon Peter thought that seven times would be more than was expected. For according to the Jewish law you should forgive only three times. The Jewish law said, forgive the first time - forgive the second time - forgive the third time - but - punish the one who wrongs you the fourth time. By forgiving seven times a person would be doing much more than the law required.

LESSONS:

- 1) The priest and the Levite show us that we may be busy in the church and yet fail to show the true spirit of Christ. They did not have time to help.
- 2) It is not the words of a person that show the real Spirit of Christ. The person who is willing to deny himself to help us in times of need is the true Christian.
- 3) True Christian discipleship expresses itself to all men. Only the love of Christ in our hearts can help us to overcome prejudice and selfishness. If we love only those in our church, in our tribe, in our nation, we do not have true Christian love.
- 4) The priest, the Levite and the Samaritan were all religious people. The difference was that the Samaritan put his love into action.
- 5) The world would be a better place if every Christian tried to help those around him. We should never divorce our religion from our daily lives.
- 6) Whose neighbour are you?

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He cleansed his wounds. He bound up the injuries, then he lay the man on his donkey and took him to an inn. There he asked the inn-keeper to care for the man. He gave the inn-keeper some money and told him if more money was needed he would bring it.

This Samaritan man was going the second mile. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews. The Jews were very prejudiced against the Samaritans. But this good Samaritan did not think about that. He did not desire to return evil for evil. He returned love for hate. He saw a man in need and he wanted to help.

"Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?" Jesus asked.

The answer was easy. The Samaritan was the good neighbour. "This is what I want to be," Jesus added. It is the way Jesus wants all of his disciples to be.

We cannot fool people. They know if we sincerely love them. Our actions show whether or not our love is really Christ-like. We are not to love people just because we know them. We are not to love people just because they live near us. We are not to love others because they are of the same tribe. We are to love all men. Those we do not know, those from other countries, those of other races, our enemies.

Sorrow is not limited to one tribe or nation. Troubles do not come to just a few. All over the world people have troubles and problems. They need someone to help them. The children of God should rush to give them help. It we help only because we think it is our duty, we fail. Christians should help because of love in their hearts for all men. True Christian love is generous. It is quick to action and it is not prejudiced.

The question is not, "Who is my neighbour?" The real question is, "Whose neighbour am I?"

Jesus listened to Simon Peter and then he said, seven times is not enough, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven." Jesus was saying to Peter that there is no limit to Christian forgiveness.

One day a king called in all of his servants. He wanted to talk with them about their debts to him. When the king began to check he found one servant owed him very much money. His debt was more than ten thousand talents (about 2-1/2 million pounds or five million Kwachas). The servant could never repay this large debt. So the king decided to sell the servant, his family and all his possessions. By doing this the king could get some of the money back.

When the servant heard the king's decision he fell down and begged the king not to sell him. "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." The king was moved in his heart and granted the servant's request. He let him go.

Soon after the servant left the king, he saw a man who had borrowed money from him. This man owed the servant about five pounds (10 Kwachas). When the servant saw him he grabbed the man by the throat. "Pay what you owe," he said. The man begged the servant to give him more time. But the servant would not listen. He had the man put in prison.

When the other servants saw what happened they hurried to tell the king. In a short time this forgiving servant was again standing before the king. "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" The king decided to treat the servant as he treated others.

God is much like the king, Jesus said, If people are not willing to forgive those who wrong them they will not know the forgiveness of God.

God's forgiveness is greater than man's forgiveness. God forgives all our sins. He gives us a new chance. God forgives even his enemies when they turn to him in repentance and faith. There is no limit to the forgiveness God offers. All of our forgiving is very small compared to the forgiveness of God. If we are not willing to forgive others of their wrong to us, how can we expect God to forgive us our wrong to him?

LESSONS:

- 1) A person must forgive in order to be forgiven. We must forgive others in the spirit of Christ. If we fail to be forgiving toward others we can expect no mercy from God. If we know the forgiveness of God in our hearts we will be willing to forgive our fellow man.
- 2) A person who is not willing to forgive destroys himself. Hate lives in his heart and love is pushed away. An unforgiving spirit makes an unhappy life. If the wonderful love of God does not humble us, it hardens our hearts.
- 3) Nothing that men can do to us can compare with what we have done to God. Wrongs against us are small when compared to our sins against God.
- 4) With Christ, there is no limit to forgiveness. The only requirements for Christ's forgiveness are repentance and faith. His forgiveness is to all men who believe.
- 5) A person who is not willing to forgive others destroys himself.

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CHAPTER 8

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:25 - 37

MEMORY VERSE: *"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*
John 13:35

The city of Jericho was fifteen miles from Jerusalem and the Jordan river. The road between the two towns passed through the mountains. It was a lonely road. Most of the people had walked this way and were familiar with the rocky path. As they listened to Jesus they understood very well what he was saying.

A young lawyer had just asked Jesus a question. The question he asked was, "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan to answer his question.

A man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho. As he passed one of the lonely places along the road robbers beat him up and took his money. They left him by the side of the road almost dead. It was not long until a priest passed. He saw the bleeding body of the man but did not stop. The Bible says, "He passed by on the other side." Perhaps he was very busy. Perhaps he was on his way to church. Perhaps he was late. Whatever the reason he did not stop to help the beaten man. He passed by to carry out his duties.

After a time another man came down the path. He was a Levite. Levites were dedicated laymen in the Church. They were set aside to help the priests. They had committed their lives to religious duties. As he came near the place where the broken body of the beaten man lay, he passed on by. Like the priest he did not try to help.

A Samaritan was also passing down the road that day. When he saw the injured man he stopped. He went over to the man and began to help him.

- 4) Every Christian should make sure that their motives for serving Christ are right. Pride has no place in Christian service.

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CHAPTER 6

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

Luke 18:9 - 14

MEMORY VERSE: ...*"Every one who exalts himself will be humble, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."* Luke 18:14

When Jesus began his earthly ministry the Pharisees were the most religious people in the world. Their religion was a religion of laws. If a man kept the laws he was a good man. They tried to follow all the laws of Moses. There was no joy in their religion. There faith was based on the law. The Pharisees were the strongest members of their churches. They were respected by the people as religious leaders. They usually held the highest places in their communities. Their religion had two main points:

- 1) They were to do no bodily harm to other people.
- 2) They were to be faithful in their duty of keeping all their laws.

The other man Jesus talked about in this parable was a Publican. He was just the opposite of the Pharisee. He was not a leader in his community. He was an outcast. He was not respected. He was looked upon by the Pharisees as an untouchable. The publican was an outlaw to his own race. He was a Jew, but the orthodox Jew did not like him.

Jesus told his disciples this parable to show them the true attitude of belief in him. He was trying to teach the disciples the difference between keeping the law and having faith.

There is nothing in this parable that shows insincerity. Both the Pharisee and the Publican were sincere. But sincerity is not enough!

A person can be sincere and still miss the Kingdom of God. He can be sincerely wrong.

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.'" Luke 18:11-12.

The Pharisee prayed, "I thank thee," But there was no genuine spirit of thanksgiving. His heart was too filled with pride to be thankful. He was not thankful because of God's blessing. He was thankful because he not like "Other men." He was pleased with himself because of the things he did. He refused to measure himself by God's standard. He measured himself against the standard of "other men." His heart was so filled with love for himself that there was no room for love to God. His own selfish pride had robbed him of God's love and life.

The Publican was a tax-collector. He was a Jew. He was not liked by the other Jews because of his work. They did not think it was right for a member of the Jewish nation to collect taxes for another government. They were under the rule of the Roman Government. The Publican was working for the Romans as a tax-collector. Because of this, he was not liked by his countrymen.

When the Pharisee prayed in the street he wanted all the people to see him. He wanted all to know that he was faithful in keeping the religious laws. He prayed with a loud voice so all could hear him.

The Publican only wanted God to hear his prayers. When he prayed he moved away from the crowd. He did not want others to see him. He did not try to get attention. He did not pray because of the law. He prayed because he wanted God's cleansing and forgiveness. As he called upon the Lord he bowed his head and prayed a very simple prayer.

The Lord Jesus does not look at people as others do. A person may be disliked by their neighbours - but that does not affect the love of Christ. There is no prejudice in him. His love included all. The woman had turned from her sin and found life in the love and forgiveness of Jesus. Simon had not looked to Christ for forgiveness. He failed to see the change in the woman. He had known her as an evil woman and his opinion did not change. How different it is with Christ. There is no sin that he will not forgive. There is no person that is beyond his love. "Come unto me," is his call to everyone.

In this parable Jesus was trying to show Simon how complete the forgiveness of God really is. Her love for Christ was great because her sin had been great. She remembered the cleansing that she found in the love of Christ. But, Jesus said, those who believe that they are not great sinners do not show great love. A person only sees the blackness of sin when they recognise the holiness of God.

LESSONS:

- 1) This parable teaches us that there is no difference in the love of Christ. He does not love only a few. His love is the same for all people. The woman with the bad reputation was no different, in the eyes of Christ, from the respected person.
- 2) The completeness of our forgiveness depends upon the consciousness of sin and need of forgiveness. If a person does not have a genuine sense of guilt for his sins, he will not feel a need for forgiveness.
- 3) The foundation of obedience is love. If a person does not love Christ there will be no desire to obey him. If a person does love Christ he will seek to obey him.

The man who loaned them the money did not worry. He told them to forget the debt. They did not have to repay him. "Now," said Jesus, "Which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "The one, I suppose to whom he forgave more."

It is the same with this woman Jesus told him. "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." Luke 7:44-47.

The parable helps us to see the attitudes of three different kinds of people. It helps us to see the spiritual blindness of Simon. As a Pharisee he was very self-righteous. He was proud. Even though he invited Jesus into his home he failed to see the love of Christ for all people. He was satisfied with himself. He had no sense of sin. He had eyes to see - but he did not see.

The woman is just the opposite of Simon. She may have been hated by the people, but Jesus loved her. Because she knew Christ would not turn her away, she came to demonstrate her love for him. All true love to God is the result of two things:

- 1) A deep sense of sin in a person's heart.
- 2) And an assurance of pardon and forgiveness.

The woman had both. This demonstration of her love was not the cause of her forgiveness - it was the proof of her forgiveness. It was the result of her forgiveness. True love for Christ must reveal itself. It cannot be hid.

The third person we see in this parable is Christ. Christ came into the world to show all men the wonderful love of God.

"God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (Luke 18:13). With a humble heart he looked to God for deliverance from his sin.

The Pharisee was separated from others because of his own self-righteousness. The Publican was separated from others by his own sin.

The Pharisee was proud not only of the things he did not do. He was also proud of the things he did. He fasted twice a week. He gave a tithe of everything he had.

The heart of the Publican was not filled with pride. His heart was filled with a deep sense of guilt. He was conscious of his sin against God. His heart was full of sorrow and grief because of his sin. As he prayed he did not brag about the things he had done. He was repentant.

Pride kept the Pharisee away from God. Humility drew the Publican to God. There is no hope for people who live like the Pharisee. Their own self-righteousness destroys all hope. His own proud spirit gave him nothing but false goodness. If only the Pharisee had opened his eyes and looked at the humble spirit of the Publican. What the Pharisee needed was what the Publican had, he had a "Broken and contrite heart."

LESSONS:

- 1) This parable teaches us that there is more to Godliness than just obeying the law. There are many who believe that God loves them, because they do not murder, they do not commit adultery, they do not drink beer. God does not love us because of the things we do not do. We are aware of his love when we DO what He has commanded us to do.

2)

This parable teaches us that there is more to Godliness than just knowing church doctrine. A person can know all of the teachings of their church and still not be Christ-like. Many times hypocrites are very active in the church. Fellowship with Christ is not based on church doctrine. It is the result of repentance of our sin and faith in Christ.

3)

This parable teaches us that actions do not always show what is in our hearts. Actions made the Pharisee look like a Godly man, but his heart was far from God. Attending Church, giving a tithe to the Church, being baptized, these things do not make one good. Only Christ living in us can make us Godly. What do we love most? Do you love Christ more than anything else?

4)

This parable teaches us of the power of pride. It keeps more men away from Christ than any other sin. It teaches us of the blessings God gives to a humble heart.

5)

This parable teaches us that effective prayer depends on the life of the person praying. Read James 5:16.

CHAPTER 7

PARABLE OF THE TWO DEBTORS

Luke 7:36 - 50

MEMORY VERSE: "And he said to the women 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace'." Luke 7:50

Simon was a Pharisee. He had watched Jesus as he taught and walked with the people. Even though the Pharisees did not like Jesus, Simon asked Jesus to come to his house. Jesus accepted the invitation. It was while Jesus was eating with Simon that he told this parable.

When Jesus entered the house of Simon, he sat down at the table to eat. As they were eating a woman entered the room. It seems that most of the people knew this woman. If they did not know her, they knew about her reputation. For she was known as a very immoral woman. She came to Simon's house because she wanted to see Jesus. As she entered the room she was carrying a small box carved out of stone. It was filled with perfume.

When she stood near the Lord she began to cry. Her tears fell on the feet of Jesus. It was a very beautiful scene as she knelt down and wiped his feet with her long hair. She kissed them and poured the perfume on them.

All of those in the room saw the woman as she anointed Jesus. Simon said, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." Luke 7:39.

In reply to Simon Jesus told the parable of the two debtors. There were two men. Both of these men had borrowed money from the same person. One had borrowed fifty pounds (100 K), and one had borrowed five pounds (10 K). When the time came for the men to repay the money they had borrowed, the men had no money.