

Jesus' Parables

KEY VERSE

Matthew 13:23

Lesson Overview (TEACHER)

TRANSITION

Lesson 8 followed Jesus' indictment of the religious leaders, His Sermon on the Mount, and His prophetic teachings about the future. Lesson 9 narrates Jesus' parables, which are stories drawn from everyday life that reveal profound truths about salvation, Christian living, and coming judgment.

CENTRAL TRUTH

Citizenship in God's kingdom requires a heartfelt response.

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 13:1–52; 18:21–35; 20:1–16; 21:28–44; 22:1–14; 25:1–46; Luke 1:1–32; 6:46–49; 7:36–50; 10:25–37; 11:5–13; 13:13–30; 16:1–9, 19–31; 18:1–14

SPOTLIGHT ON THE GOSPEL

Jesus told parables so that many would hear the gospel, yet only those with genuine faith would bear lasting fruit. The lost sheep, coin, and prodigal son all picture sinners far from God that the Lord seeks. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came to seek and save you. Repent, believe in Him, and come home today to eternal joy.

Family Devotional (PARENT)

This section explains what the Family Devotional covers for parents to use with their children each day of the week. Each devotional reinforces the lesson taught in Sunday School.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Day 1 **Jesus' Parables** (Sunday School review)
Matthew 13:1–52; 18:21–35; 20:1–16; 21:28–44; 22:1–14; 25:1–46; *Luke 1:1–32; 6:46–49; 7:36–50; 10:25–37; 11:5–13; 13:13–30; 16:1–9, 19–31; 18:1–14*

Day 2 **Parables of the Kingdom**
Matthew 13:1–52

Day 3 **Parables of Salvation**
Matthew 20:1–16; 22:1–14; *Luke 1:1–32; 13:22–30; 18:9–14*

Day 4 **Parables of Wisdom and Folly**
Luke 6:46–49; *13:13–21; 16:1–9*

Day 5 **Parables of the Christian Life**
Matthew 21:28–32; *Luke 7:36–50; 10:25–37; 11:5–13, 18:1–8*

Day 6 **Parables of the End of Life**
Matthew 25:1–30; *Luke 16:19–31*

Day 7 **Parables of Judgment**
Matthew 18:31–35; 21:33–44; 25:31–46



LAST WEEK



NEXT WEEK

Review 10
Lessons 1–9

Jesus' Parables

NOTE: Do not read this commentary aloud to the children. The commentary is designed to help educate and prepare the teacher for the lesson. The teacher's goal in studying the commentary is to better understand the lesson.

JESUS' PARABLES ABOUT SALVATION

Jesus spoke many parables. (A parable is an extended metaphor or analogy—some longer, in story form, and some shorter, merely a saying.) ***Jesus used parables to teach spiritual truths, to impart moral lessons, and at times to expose unbelief.*** While the objects, persons, settings, and actions in Jesus' parables were often taken from everyday life and would have been easily recognized by all, the deeper significance would have been missed (at times Jesus meant for it to be missed; see Matt 13:10–15,34–35; see Isa 6:9–10; Mark 4:10–12; Luke 8:9–10) by those who opposed Jesus, did not acknowledge Him as Messiah or who were simply unbelievers. Some parables needed to be explained, such as the parable of the sower (Matt 13:3–9, 18–23; see Mark 4:2–9,13–20; Luke 8:4–8,11–15). In this parable, Jesus pictured a man sowing seed—a very common sight in that day. As the sower scattered his seed, it fell on four different types of soil; three types of soil were bad, and the seed was unproductive (Matt 13:4–7), but one type of soil was good and produced a crop of fantastic proportions (v8). Jesus explained (vv18–23) that the soils represented different people with different hearts and minds, and the seed represented the "word of the kingdom" (v19a; this is the word about how to get into and live in God's kingdom—the gospel). Many who heard that word did not understand it because Satan snatched it away (v19b; he caused them to ignore or reject it). Others heard the gospel and received it superficially, but when living for Jesus and obeying the word of God became difficult (vv20–21) or other matters of life became more important to them (v22), they revealed that they had never truly believed. The good soil represented those who heard the word (gospel) and truly believed and were saved—they lived lives of spiritual abundance (v23).

In a number of His parables, Jesus illustrated the kingdom of heaven (or God, "the kingdom of heaven is like"; Matt 13:31,44,45,47). The kingdom of God is both a present spiritual reality and a future physical reality; this kingdom is a reality wherever God's rule is acknowledged (believed and obeyed) in the hearts, minds, and lives of saved people, namely Christians in the church today and all who enter the Millennial kingdom (see Rom 11:26–27; Rev 20:4; see Isa 2:2–3; 11:6–9; Zech 13:1; Dan 12:2–3). In one parable, Jesus compared the actions of two men sowing in a field, which represented the world (Matt 13:38a); one sowed good seed, one sowed weeds (vv24–30). Jesus explained: the good seed—sown by "the Son of Man" (v37; the Messiah, Jesus Christ)—were "the sons of the kingdom" (v38a)—saved people; the weeds—sown by Satan (the enemy, vv28,39a)—were "sons of the evil one" (v38b). When the two types of seed were grown, their natures were revealed (v26), but both were allowed to grow until the harvest (vv29–30). In that harvest—in the end times (v39b)—the reapers (angels, v39c) will come and separate the good plants (saved people) from the weeds (unsaved people) (vv40–43; see the parable of the net, vv47–50). Jesus taught that the kingdom of heaven may appear small but its impact on the world is great (vv31–32; parable of the mustard seed) and pervasive (v33; parable of leaven); He also taught that the kingdom of heaven was something of great value—like a treasure hidden in a field or a valuable pearl that a person should cherish above all other things (vv44–46).

Jesus taught three parables in which He compared things that had been lost but then found to sinners who were lost but were saved (Luke 15:3–32). The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son were intended to rebuke the Pharisees and scribes who objected to the fact that Jesus received sinners and even ate with them (vv1–2). Jesus told a parable comparing the kingdom to a banquet

that was held by a king (Matt 22:1–4; see Luke 14:15–24). When the king's servants called those who had been invited, they refused to come; they abused some of the servants and killed others (Matt 22:5–6), and in response, the king punished them (v7). The king then sent out more servants to gather anyone they could find to be his guests (vv8–10); however, only those guests who were properly attired were allowed to remain at the feast (vv11–13). This parable was meant to illustrate the fact that the kingdom of heaven and God—salvation—had been offered to the Jews, but they refused so it was offered to others (even Gentiles); however, it was only for those who were clothed in the proper attire—that is had salvation by faith in Jesus Christ "For many are called, but few are chosen" (v14). In other parables, Jesus explained that the way of salvation is narrow (see Luke 13:22–30) and that sincere and self-renouncing faith is what is necessary for salvation (see Luke 18:9–14).

JESUS' PARABLES ABOUT LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Some of Jesus' parables taught lessons about living as His disciples. He once told a parable that instructed His followers to rejoice in God's grace and generosity to others, and be content with the blessings (especially salvation) which have been freely given to us (Matt 20:1–16). Through His parables, Jesus instructed His disciples to be ready and diligent to do His will (Matt 21:28–32), care for others (Luke 10:25–37), and be persistent in prayer (Luke 11:5–13; 18:1–8). In one parable, Jesus taught that it was foolish to gather an abundance of possessions because this life could end at any time; His followers should lay up treasure in heaven (12:13–21).

JESUS' PARABLES ABOUT THE END OF LIFE AND FUTURE JUDGMENT

Jesus told parables about the judgments to come. In one parable, Jesus taught about a rich man and a poor man: the poor man—named Lazarus—lived a life of misery (16:20–21); the unnamed rich man lived a life of luxury (v19). Both men died: Lazarus went to a place of rest and comfort beside Abraham (v22a); the rich man went to a place of torment (vv22b–23a). The rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to relieve his suffering with a little water (vv23b–24); Abraham responded that the rich man had his good things in life, and Lazarus—who had suffered—was now comforted (v25); also, there was no way to overcome the chasm between them (v26). Then the rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to his family to warn them so that they might escape the place of torment (vv27–28). Abraham told him that the living have "Moses and the Prophets" (v29; the Word of God); if the living were not convinced by "Moses and the Prophets," they would not be convinced by one risen from the dead (vv30–31). Jesus told other parables that warned His hearers about the need to be alert and ready for His return (see Matt 25:1–30) and to expect a final judgment (vv31–46). In one parable, Jesus warned about the judgment that would fall on those who were not forgiving of others (18:21–35). Another parable of Jesus was about a vineyard owner and his tenants (21:33). When the vineyard owner sent his servants to collect his portion of the harvest, the tenants mistreated the servants (vv34–36), and when the vineyard owner sent his son, the wicked tenants killed him (vv37–39). This parable was directed against Jesus' opponents: the vineyard owner represented the Father who sent His Son—Jesus—and the wicked tenants represented "the chief priests and Pharisees" (v45); this parable warned them that their rejection of Jesus would result in their judgment (v44).

LESSON SUMMARY

Jesus' parables illustrate kingdom truths: the sower reveals four responses to the gospel, with only good soil producing fruit. The wheat and weeds, mustard seed, leaven, hidden treasure, and pearl show the kingdom's growth until the final harvest. The lost sheep, coin, and prodigal son demonstrate how Jesus seeks and welcomes sinners and celebrates heaven's joy over repentance. Other parables teach grace, readiness, diligence, forgiveness, and warn of final judgment.



Personal Preparation

The following section is provided for you to use as a devotional. This will help you prepare for your upcoming Generations of Grace lesson time. *Check off your progress as you go.*

- ☐ **PRAY** for wisdom to understand what you are about to read and to effectively teach the lesson.
- ☐ **REVIEW** last week's lesson and the central truth.
- ☐ **IDENTIFY** this week's central truth along with the transition, key texts, and key verse(s) from this lesson's title page.
- ☐ **READ** this week's key texts from Scripture and choose which passages you want to read aloud to the children during your lesson time. Record on the right hand page under **READ**.
- ☐ **STUDY** the commentary and identify the italicized sentences to summarize the lesson and central truth below.

- ☐ **SUMMARIZE** your notes from above into the **LESSON OUTLINE** on the right hand page. Add any additional questions that you want to reference while teaching your lesson (one question provided per point).
- ☐ **PREPARE** your activity, craft, or coloring page for this week's lesson by visiting our website's additional resources page. Select the introduction, illustration, or application that you would like to use in your classroom along with any visual aid you may decide to use while teaching.
- ☐ **PLAN** your music time by choosing songs that pertain to this week's narrative theme. Check the additional resources on our website for recommendations.
- ☐ **RE-WRITE** this week's spotlight on the gospel in your own words on the teaching outline under **CONCLUDE** on the right hand page.
- ☐ **PRAY** about how you can apply this lesson to your life and that you would communicate the central truth and spotlight on the gospel clearly in your lesson.

Additional Resources
gracecurriculum.org

Teaching Outline

This section is designed to be used as a clean copy of your notes for teaching the lesson. Follow the teaching outline below as a step-by-step guide during your Sunday School lesson.

☐ **PRAY** with your class that the children would understand the central truth and gospel message, and that you would teach the children effectively.

☐ **REVIEW** last week's lesson and the central truth to begin your lesson.

☐ **INTRODUCE** this week's lesson and the central truth using the selected introduction, illustration, or application from our additional resources page.

☐ **READ** the key texts from Scripture you selected that connect to the central truth.

☐ **TEACH** your class using your summarized notes and questions from the **LESSON OUTLINE**. The points provided are the main headers from the commentary. Use the visual aid you selected and always connect your lesson back to the central truth.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **JESUS' PARABLES ABOUT SALVATION (MATTHEW 13:1–52; 20:1–16; 22:1–14; LUKE 1:1–32; 13:22–30; 18:9–14)**
   - In the parable of the sower, what does each soil represent?

2. **JESUS' PARABLES ABOUT LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (MATTHEW 21:28–32; LUKE 7:36–50; 10:25–37; 11:5–13; 18:1–8)**
   - What did Jesus teach about helping others and storing treasure in heaven?

3. **JESUS' PARABLES ABOUT THE END OF LIFE AND FUTURE JUDGMENT (MATTHEW 18:31–35; 21:33–44; 25:1–46; LUKE 16:19–31)**
   - What does the story of the rich man and Lazarus teach us about how we should live?



☐ **CONCLUDE** this week's lesson with the spotlight on the gospel and tie it into the central truth and the lesson you just taught.

☐ **PRAY** for the children hearing this lesson that they would be saved and follow the LORD.