

PARABLES OF SALVATION AND GRACE

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INTRODUCTION:

- A. Start with an illustration about our salvation from sin → Stories are great teaching tools aren't they?
- B. Jesus taught some very important truths in some amazing ways when He spoke in parables → As people have said for many years, parables are "Earthly Stories With A Heavenly Meaning"
- C. Some of my favorite parables are the ones that deal with the salvation and grace of God.

LESSONS ABOUT SALVATION AND GRACE FROM PARABLES OF JESUS:

A. The Parables About Some Lost Things

1. Luke 15 has 3 parables that teach what it means to be lost & what it means to be saved: **(Luke 15)**
 - a. Lost Sheep **(Luke 15:3-7)** → A shepherd has 100 sheep, one of them wanders off from the rest, the shepherd leaves the 99 others to go find him. When he finds it he lifts the sheep up on his shoulder, starts we rejoicing, and brings it back home
 - b. Lost Coin **(Luke 15:8-10)** → A woman has 10 silver coins and loses one. She lights a lamp and sweeps her whole house diligently seeking it. She finds it and rejoices over it.
 - c. Lost Son **(Luke 15:11-32)** → From leaving home to going home to his father's rejoicing
2. Each of these parables emphasize just how terrible it is to be lost! **(Luke 15:24; 2 Thess 1:8-9)**
 - a. Have you ever been lost? I mean REALLY lost! You don't know where you are, how to get where you need to go, and if you'll ever be able find your way out! DESPAIRING!
 - b. Spiritually speaking, being lost means having no sense of direction, it means never being able to go home, it means being eternally separated from loved ones who are saved, and it means being eternally separated from God in darkness & torment... DESPAIR!
 - c. The son wasn't really dead while he was away was he? Being lost is so horrible it's just as if you are! Why did the father respond like he did? He knew what being lost meant!
3. When you contrast these parables, one of the notable observations is the difference in the situations of those who are lost: **(Rom 10:14; 2 Cor 7:9-11)**
 - a. Both the sheep knew he was lost but didn't know the way home → Some know that they need salvation, but they don't know where to turn. This is a sad and despairing situation to be in isn't it? It's our responsibility to point the way home!
 - b. The coin didn't know he was lost and thus he didn't know the way home → This is even worse since these people may not even realize they need to be looking for home!
 - c. The son was lost and knew his way home → We all know people in this condition... If this is you, you have to decide that you have had enough, you have to get sick and tired of being lost, and you have to decide to get up and return home.
 - d. Whichever you are tonight, you need to realize that it is time to go home – Your shepherd, owner, and father is looking for you ready to shower you with grace & salvation!
4. The whole point of these parables is to show the great rejoicing that takes place when a lost person returns back home: **(Luke 15:1-2)**
 - a. What sparked Jesus telling these parables was the grumbling of the Pharisees and Scribes over the way Jesus received sinners and ate with them. Didn't make sense to them!
 - b. Jesus told these parables to answer that attitude → Receiving sinners makes perfect sense when you see how much their salvation means to God and the joy that gives Him!

- c. Are you lost or trying to reach one who is? Anyone who is lost needs to see the great joy that erupts throughout Heaven when ONE person repents! (Luke 15:5-7, 9-10, 22-24)

B. The Parable Of Workers In The Vineyard

1. Before we dig into this parable, let's look at the setting in which Jesus gave it (Matt 19:27)
 - a. Remember the rich young ruler? He's the one who loved his possessions and wealth and wouldn't give it up to follow Jesus. He was so close to salvation, but so far away!
 - b. Well, Peter evidently saw the conversation between Jesus and this rich young ruler and Peter started feeling pretty good about how they did leave all to follow Jesus!
 - c. Peter greatly misunderstood the nature of salvation & the kingdom of Heaven
2. To correct his perception, Jesus tells the parable of some workers in the vineyard (Matt 20:1-16)
 - a. A master goes out early in the morning and hires people to work in his vineyard. They agree to do it for a pay of one denarius a day. He goes back out throughout the day, hires more workers, and agrees to pay them the same amount as he'd pay the first
 - b. When he goes to pay his workers those who were hired early in the day thought they'd get paid more since he gave those who worked 1 hour (hired at the 11th hour) a denarius
 - c. At the end Jesus shows the master rebuking those who complained and giving a kingdom principle: He would be first will be last and he who would be last will be first
3. This is emphasized from a different angle in the parable of the two sons (Matt 21:28-31)
 - a. This is a parable all parents can easily relate to! While the son who initially refused to obey you would've disappointed you at first, he would have pleased you in the end
 - b. Jesus is contrasting the Pharisees with the sinners they despised – Some of those sinners were believing in Jesus and turning back to God – They were the ones pleasing God!
 - c. Maybe you have been refusing to obey the gospel for some time. While you may look with regret at the wasted years, if you'll turn to God now you can be that second son!
4. This parable, as well as the parable of the prodigal son, calls for those who already are Christians to check their attitude & leave behind any feelings of pride or self-righteousness! (Matt 20:15)
 - a. Is salvation by grace or works? If salvation is by grace it doesn't matter how long you have been serving God & how much good you've done... You still haven't earned salvation!
 - b. The workers who had been there all day lost sight of the fact that it was the owners right to determine who'd get paid what – Plus, what did it matter what others got paid?
 - c. Some actually voice concern about those who obey the gospel "at the last minute" & how it's not fair to those who served God for many years – You don't know what grace is!

C. The Parable Of The Banquet

1. To help appreciate this parable, we need to see the setting in which Jesus gave it: (Luke 14:1-7)
 - a. Notice this was a RULER of the Pharisees who has thrown this feast → As caught up as they were in appearances you can rest assured no expense was spared for this meal!
 - b. Also, based on the way they treated others & Jesus' words for them later on, we can safely assume that this Pharisee had invited only the best to his house for this great feast
 - c. This feast wasn't friendly meal – This chief Pharisee, along with his friends, were watching Jesus very carefully... They had invited Jesus to put him under a close eye of scrutiny
 - d. As they're about to eat, a man with dropsy, an incurable disease, comes up and Jesus heals him. It was the Sabbath day. You can see the Pharisees ready to accuse Jesus of sin, when Jesus shows the absurdity of such an accusation by making it personal to them

- e. As they sit down they choose their seats very carefully! Each one was selecting the most honorable seat he could. Can you hear them discussing who was most honorable?
- f. Jesus addresses their attitudes of pride and self-righteousness **(Luke 14:10-11, 12-14)**
- 2. With this background, Jesus tells the parable of the great banquet **(Luke 14:16-24)**
 - a. Here's a man who has prepared a GREAT banquet – Jesus is probably wanting His hearers to think this banquet was bigger than the one this ruler of the Pharisees had thrown
 - b. He's invited a great number of people. It appears, for whatever reason, he was in full expectation that they'd all come, but when the time came, they all made excuses!
 - c. The master, who prepared this great feast, becomes angry and sends his servant out to quickly invite anyone and everyone who'd come – The poor, crippled, blind, & lame
 - d. Since there was still room, the master had the servant go to the highways and the hedges and compel people to come in → This probably represents strangers & foreigners
- 3. Certainly this parable is about more than a common banquet! It's about the banquet of salvation that God has prepared for us and our response to this great feast! **(Isaiah 25:6-9)**
 - a. In that day you'd kill a fatted calf or a lamb and have it prepared for the feast → God did kill a Lamb to make this feast possible, but this Lamb was God's own Son! **(Isa 53:10)**
 - b. Notice again in our parable **Verses 16-17** → This banquet wasn't just thrown together... Can you see the man planning it with excitement, spending lots of time & energy, & paying a great price for the meal? This was something he'd been looking forward to!
 - c. It's no wonder when the servant reported the excuses of those invited that he becomes angry! Their lame excuses show a blatant disregard for him & the work he'd done!
 - d. When men disregard the feast of salvation, they're disregarding so much more! It shows contempt for Jesus' death, the spirit of grace, and the work of God! **(Heb 10:29-30)**
- 4. Another wonderful lesson we learn here is God's feast is prepared for everyone! **(Rom 10:11-13)**
 - a. Who is it that comes to the feast of God? It's not those like the Pharisees who see themselves as great & righteous people, but those who recognize the fact that they are spiritually poor, crippled, lame, and blind – These appreciate what God has done!
 - b. The gospel of Christ is open to everyone! It's open to the educated and the uneducated, the rich and the poor, the black and the white, those who are relatively moral and those who are leading an immoral life... As the song says, "Whoever will may come"
 - d. **Acts 2:21** → Who was this "whoever" spoken to? The very people who were guilty of the blood of Jesus Christ! They crucified God's Son & God still wanted to save them!
- 5. This parable reminds us of a sad reality – Some will just make excuses & not come to God's feast:
 - a. In this parable we were introduced to three people who made some pretty lame excuses:
 - 1) The Real Estate Expert – Says I bought a piece of land without even looking at it
 - 2) The Farming Wizard – Says I bought five yoke of oxen without testing them first
 - 3) The Passionate Newlywed – Says I got married (Did he not look at her first either) Doesn't say it's his wedding day it's just that he's married. I'm married too, but I won't turn down going to a small banquet, much less a big banquet!
 - b. People today make all kinds of excuses for rejecting the invitation of God through the gospel... Too young, too old, too busy, too lost, actions of others, & countless more
 - c. For those who would reject God's invitation to the great banquet, a sober warning is issued. The alternative to going to the feast is unthinkable! **(Luke 14:24)**