



Loosely following the Revised Common

Lectionary, I am writing and delivering a series of messages on Jesus' parables, specifically His parables of the Kingdom in Matthew 13. Jesus frequently taught in parables, those simple yet complex, obvious yet mysterious stories found sprinkled throughout the Gospels.

Our English word parable comes from the Greek word παραβολή (“parabolé”), which is simply a joining of two smaller Greek words παρα (= alongside) and βολή (= thrown). Jesus continually “threw” these teachings “alongside” of people as they went about their lives. It seemed that whenever Jesus tried to tell people something directly, they either didn’t understand or didn’t want to understand. Just look at how many times He outright told His disciples that He would have to die so that He could rise again — it took until Pentecost before they really began to figure it out! So Jesus had to resort to another teaching method, a method that would give people something to chew on for a while. And people have been chewing and wondering and thinking and reflecting ever since... — SjG

“Parables **sound** absolutely ordinary: Casual stories about soil and seeds, meals and coins and sheep, bandits and victims, farmers and merchants. And they are wholly secular: Of His 40 or so parables recorded in the Gospels, only one has its setting in church, and only a couple mention the name God. As people heard Jesus tell these stories, they [assumed] that [these stories] weren’t about God, so there was nothing in them threatening their own sovereignty. They relaxed their defences. They walked away perplexed, wondering what they meant, the stories lodged in their imagination. And then, like a **time bomb**, they would explode

in their unprotected hearts! An abyss opened up at their very feet. He was talking about God; they had been invaded!”

— Eugene H. Peterson in *The Contemplative Pastor* (p. 32)

Parables “set forth comparisons that tend to make mincemeat of people’s religious expectations.”

— Robert Farrar Capon in *Parables of the Kingdom* (p. 10)

“I like to think of a parable as a *picture* that becomes a *mirror* and then a *window*. A parable starts out as a *picture* of something in life, something recognizable that at the same time contains something different... The longer we look at the ‘parable picture,’ the more it becomes a mirror *and we start to see ourselves*... The mirror must then become a window *so that the listeners see God and His truth and receive the message by faith*... The purpose of parables is to **reveal** some truth about God and His Kingdom that will help us know Him better and do His will.”

— Warren W. Wiersbe in *Preaching & Teaching with Imagination* (p. 164-65)

“The parables of Jesus were meant to be overheard. ‘There was a certain man...’ Anonymous, past tense, somewhere else — nothing here addressed to me. Relax and enjoy the story. [But] then it happens; I am *inside* the story, and the door closes behind me.”

“Parables are meant to be **experienced**. Having to explain a parable is like having to explain a joke: Something is lost.”

— Rikk Watts, Regent College professor

— Fred Craddock in *Overhearing the Gospel* (p. 112)





Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables...



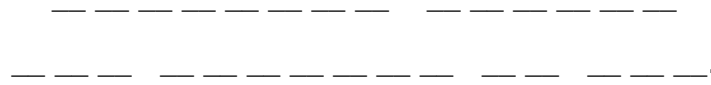
I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world. -- Mt 13:34-35

S o w a s s p o k e n t h r o u g h t h e p o o r : t e n t h e p o o r

These are the key words from almost all of Jesus' parables. Can you find them in this word search? And what do the leftover letters spell?

- Banquet
- Builders
- Cloth
- Coin
- Fig
- Fool
- Friend
- Goats
- Lamp
- Lazarus
- Lost
- Master
- Moneylender
- Mustard
- Net
- Owner
- Pearl
- Pharisee
- Samaritan
- Seed
- Servant
- Sheep
- Shrewd
- Sons
- Sower
- Talents
- Tenants
- Treasure
- Virgins
- Weeds
- Widow
- Wine
- Worker
- Yeast

S N O S U R A Z A L D N E I R F
 E A P T A R P E A R L A B L W L
 R E M N I O C H S E O S T A O G
 V R T A L E N T S D O R R M R S
 A P R N R E G O H N F E E P K N
 N H E E V I W L E E M D A D E I
 T A T T F E T C E L U L S W R G
 S R S S R E W A P Y S I U E A R
 A I A O L O D T N E T U R R H I
 E S M L D T E U Q N A B E H E V
 Y E N I W R E N W O R K I S N G
 D E W E E D S O M M D O F G O D



Trivia

The word *parable* is found in only **one** New Testament book outside of the Gospels. Which book is it? (You may have to check a few different translations...) The first person to e-mail telkwapastor@hotmail.com or phone 250.846.5777 with the correct answer will win a **cool prize!**



Surfing Around

websites with helpful articles, devotions and resources to help you grow in your faith:

www.crosswalk.com  www.gospelcom.net  www.heartlight.org

...and check out "Reflections" at www.geocities.com/smgroothof for a modern-day parable

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I will open my mouth in parables,

