

September 24, 2023

Over the next few weeks, I want to spend time looking at the parables that Jesus gave us. I want to do it a little differently. I want to as close as I can, to look at the parables in Chronological order. I want to see just in what order Jesus told these stories to understand how he will progress in his teachings. As we study these parables, I want everyone to remember they came from Jesus Christ. You will see Jesus had a sense of humor, he could be serious, Jesus was sharing a message that was simple, but each parable has a message that we need to take to heart.

The first two parables in chronological order are found in all three Gospels, Matthew 9:16-17, Mark 2:21-22 and Luke 5:36-38. These parables are among only a few that are found in all three gospels.

It is important to note as we go through the parables that Jesus stories relate to the culture in which he lived. At times they become a bit confusing to us today because our culture today is so very different.

I am sure that if Jesus had jumped from an airplane, he would somehow find a parable to share about that. I hope in the future to do that.

Today we live in a throw away culture. I am impressed that the city of Phoenix has a bulk trash day. I am amazed at what some people will throw away. In the time of Jesus what you had you really needed to maintain.

So his first two parables deal with that: I will be reading from Luke 5:36-38. 'He told them this parable: "No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. 'And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.

First, I want to point out that torn garments today are the rage, the new style. It is not strange today to go to a store and find on the racks jeans with the knees torn to bit.

I can remember getting spanked for falling and tearing my new jeans.

Hopefully we all know that if you put a new patch on an old garment and then wash it you will have a problem. The old garment has been washed many times and all the shrinking has taken place, but the new patch has not and wash it and you will see the new patch shrink and tear the old garment and all you work will go for nothing.

The second parable is like the first, when they would make wine of course it need to ferment in the vessel that it was placed in which in this case was wineskins or the skins of usually a goat. With the fermenting process would come expansion as gases are released from that process and then the skins would expand and harden. So, if you used the skin another time the skin would burst with the fermentation process.

The simple point of these parables was that Jesus has a new message, the good news, and if you try to fit it into the old Jewish religion, the law, the system of animal sacrifices, and so on, it isn't going to fit.

This brings up two questions: The people in Jesus' audience were some disciples of John the Baptist, most likely some of the Pharisees, and people of Jewish heritage. The Parable had a special meaning for them. What was it? And what is the message for us today?

And second, in what ways does following Christ require us to replace old habits with new ones and why do we resist making these changes?

None of us likes to give up something familiar or comfortable. I have a few items of clothing that I love, sure they may be out of style and a little beat up and Pat cringes when I wear them, but they are just comfortable. I like to wear them to relax, and Pat is always hopeful that no one drops by to see me do that.

Not many of us like to give up something familiar or comfortable. How many of you are sitting in the same place that you did last Sunday? I think that is great but

as we grow your spot may be taken by someone else. I say when that happens broaden your horizons, greet the people sitting there and enjoy the service from another seat.

Well giving up something that has been the controlling point for our view of reality, or religion is like that. We seem to tend to plug in a new good experience or teaching into our old religious context and make it fit, if we can.

Jesus points here is that what he brings cannot be made to fit in the old order and old forms of religion with which the Jews were familiar. To do that would be destructive to both the old and the new. What Jesus brings is new, fresh, and transforms who we are. It will rip apart anything that tries to force it into another way of doing, perceiving, and experiencing. So, the message of Christ should never change even after 2000 years it is still life changing.

Becoming a Christ follower, a Christian — is a whole new life, not just another religion to be thrown into the world mix of religions. This is as true today as it was 2,000 years ago.

Jesus is saying he was the start of something new separate from Judaism of the day and even different from John the Baptist. John the Baptist was baptizing to prepare the way, the baptism into Christ is an agreement that we make with God that leads us into a whole new way of being and doing things.

Jesus wasn't tossing out everything in the past he was keeping a promise. He wasn't sewing on a patch, he was giving us a new garment to wear daily in our lives, Jesus was going to be the sacrifice to make that happen, and his resurrection would prove it. Jesus is simply laying out a simple concept with this parable with Him as your savior your life will change. You may be moved out of your comfort zone but as you do you will never be happier.

Jesus was presenting a new way of thinking Judaism was based on a system of rules, so much so they had to have lawyers to interpret what you could do and not do. The laws were getting so confusing that worship was lost in the quest to be correct. The Apostle Paul wrote in **Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.** He went on to say in that 5th chapter of Galatians: **4. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ: you have fallen**

away from grace. 5 For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. 6. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

That is the point of the parable we just looked at. Don't get caught forgetting what Jesus did for us in a quest to always be right. I do say stand firm but stand firm in Christ, do not lose your first love. At my age I am renewing my relationship with Christ, I hope you hear it when I preach. I am not allowing myself to be bound by limitations but looking forward to great things in Christ.

I not looking to sew a new patch on an old garment, I see everything new in Christ. I am willing to toss out those old comfortable clothes for new Hawaiian shirts.

That leads me to the next parable which becomes very personal for all of us: still following the chronological order we will read from **Matthew 5:14-15** 'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 'Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

Jesus often refers to himself as the "Light of the world." You see Jesus doing this in John 8:12 and many other scriptures. What does he mean, then, by saying to us in this verse, "you are the light of the world".

I interpret this as meaning that Jesus' disciples, including us today, shine with His light by way of his Spirit dwelling in us. We must never forget where the light comes from. It doesn't come from us it shines through us. We are not the source. We are not the generator that provides that light. We are merely a mirror, a reflector. We are like the moon; as you know the moon has no light of its own, it merely reflects the light of the sun.

In the same way, we have no light on our own. We are merely reflecting the light of Jesus. This means you and I need to stay near to Jesus to reflect his light.

We need to read the Bible and think about it and pray, live it, and sing the Lord's praises. That is the way to reflect the Light. Then others will say there is something different about that person.

Jesus used two illustrations in this short parable, the second "A town built on a hill cannot be hidden."

Many of the cities were built on the sides of mountains in the areas Jesus traveled and travelers could see them from miles away. In South Dakota our home was built on the top of our mountain, and driving up, although we were isolated you could spot our home as the porch light shone in the darkness. It often gave me peace knowing we were almost home when I spotted that light.

The light of Jesus that dwells within us must be seen by all like the town's lights on the side of the mountain in the darkness around it.

A Christian's actions cannot be hidden from the eyes of either our families or the world at large. What and who we represent shines through telling those around us what we believe. And what we believe comes from who we believe, and Christ is our guide, that you see is why we are called Christians. And it is Christ who is that light within us that must shine like the town on the mountain side.

It says in Matthew 5:16 **In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**

These parables are wonderful aren't they. As I study them, they truly make me think, and then they hold me accountable.

The last part of this parable is truly thought provoking and personal. **Matthew 5: 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.**

Now Jesus is talking about where we live and who we influence. This light in the home is not to be covered up. It is most important that those we love as well as everyone else will see that light shining from us. In doing that we glorify our Father in Heaven.

Luke 6:47-49

New International Version

⁴⁷ As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. "They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed, and its destruction was complete."

The words of Christ are what we are to put into practice. I used to have a baseball coach who would always say, if you were called out on a third strike without swinging, doesn't do much good to take that bat up there with you if you don't use it.

That is what Christ is saying to us. My advice to people who ask me what should I read first in the Bible? I always say read the 4 Gospels. Get familiar with the one who gave everything for you.

Jesus says that the one who puts into practice His words is like a man building a house. The builder is so concerned about the structure that he digs down deep to build upon a great foundation. So, dig deep to build on the rock.

I had the privilege of building two of the houses we have lived in. The first one that I built was an adobe home in Las Cruces, NM. In fact, that was the first project like that I had ever taken on. I did everything by the book. I had dug the foundation by hand with a simple shovel. I made sure every corner was perfect, the depth was just right, everything was level, I tied the rebar perfectly and when the inspector came to check it out before the concrete was poured. He walked around, looked at it, shook his head and then he walked over to me and said I

have never seen anything like this. I thought he was going to reject me. But he said, "This is perfect, I have never inspected anything like this. How much time did you spend on this foundation. I asked did I pass inspection. He said you not only passed but I want to come back in an hour and take pictures the guys down at the shop will never believe me if I don't."

But you see I took this parable seriously. I then understood that the foundation of my faith was the words of Jesus. It is on His words that I have built my life.

That is what I would recommend to anyone just starting out. Build your foundation by digging deep into the words of Christ.

When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.

With a proper foundation you can stand no matter what hits. Your foundation will not fail, maybe at times what is built on the foundation may be hammered and seem to shake and rattle, but with that foundation of rock everything will be okay.

'But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed, and its destruction was complete.'