

The Essential 100

A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. The passages are usually one to two chapters in length and can easily be read in 10 minutes or less.

One-page plan: Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit e100challenge.com. Our Sunday school website is stuartheights.org/sundayschool.

The Schedule: The Teachings of Jesus

This series is about Jesus' teaching ministry

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
April 17	Sermon on the Mount (1/2)	Matthew 5:14-16	Matthew 5:1-6:4	Jim Fleming
April 24	No Sunday school: Easter at Coolidge			
May 1	Sermon on the Mount (2/2)	Matthew 6:33	Matthew 6:5-7:29	Jim Fleming
May 8	The Kingdom of Heaven	Matthew 13:45-46	Matthew 13	David Barber
May 15	The Good Samaritan	Luke 10:36-37	Luke 10:25-37	Barry Cole
May 22	Lost and Found	Luke 15:10	Luke 15	Jim Fleming

Sunday school class timeline

8:50: Breakfast is ready

9:07: Teaching begins

9:40: Prayer requests at each table begin

9:45: Tables removed from the green carpet and padded chairs stacked in 7s against the wall

9:50: All class members are out of the room and headed to the sanctuary to worship

The Teachings of Jesus: Sermon on the Mount (1/2)

Review: The Essential 100

This is our second five-week series in the New Testament. So far, we have looked at The Early Years of Jesus. Now, we shift to The Teachings of Jesus. In the next series, we will look at The Miracles of Jesus and finally (in September and October) we will look at The Final Days of Jesus.

Jesus came to restore a relationship between God and man that was created in [Genesis 1](#) and ruined in [Genesis 3](#). When we listen to Jesus' teachings, remember that He came to restore relationships to their proper place.

Jesus had a wide and popular teaching ministry. People flocked to hear Him speak. He, however, did what many preachers do—He recycled. If you read His sermons, you will see bits and pieces of His sermons overlapping in other sermons. Today's passage (The Sermon on the Mount) in [Matthew 5-7](#), has a similar passage in [Luke 6](#) (The Sermon on the Plain). There are many similarities, but they were different sermons. Many theologians believe that the Sermon on the Mount was Jesus' standard sermon. The sermon recorded in [Matthew 5-7](#) can easily be preached in 15 minutes.

Preview: Clarifying Happiness

For the sake of time, we are going to break up the Sermon on the Mount into two weeks (today, and the week after EAC). In reality, we could spend months looking at [Matthew 5-7](#).

There are three major parts to today's text: (1) the Beatitudes ([Matthew 5:1-12](#)—how to have a happy life), (2) Salt, Light, and Setup ([Matthew 5:13-20](#)—clarifying our purpose), and (3) Intentionalizing ([Matthew 5:21-6:4](#)—clarifying Scripture's intent). This first half of Jesus' message describes what life can be like, what we should be doing, and what God really meant.

As we read today's text, you will notice that Jesus lays out for us an impossible path for reconciling ourselves with God—because we cannot do this on our own. You will be challenged to solidify your interpretational view of Scripture. You will be forced to decide whether or not Jesus really meant what He said or if He just wants us to do better. This decision will influence the way you live. If you view Jesus' words as hyperbole/exaggeration for effect, you will conclude that He just wants us to do better. If you view Jesus' words as literal, you will conclude that the gap between what He expects and what we do is impossible to bridge on our own. I will let you guess which way I am going to go.

Key thought: Jesus challenges us to be his agents in the world. It is up to us. He does not have a plan B.

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Matthew 5:1-6:4 (Author = Matthew)

Beatitudes

The beatitudes get their name from the Latin word for blessed (the word that each of the beatitudes start with)—is *beati*.

It is critical to remember that the Jews of Jesus' day were looking for their Messiah. When Jesus showed up and preached the Sermon on the Mount, that was not the message they wanted to hear. The Jews wanted to hear about a real kingdom that would usher in political change to overthrow the Roman rule. They were not expecting a message of love and a sermon on living a life that starts with being poor.

If you walked up to the average person on the street and told them to live according to the beatitudes, they would laugh at you. A great aspiration for Christians is to both have and to be developing these attitudes and behaviors. We will never master them all—these will take the rest of our natural lives.

To start each beatitude, Jesus gives a promise—“**Blessed.**” The best translation of *blessed* is **happy**. **Matthew 5:3-12** gives us a picture of a happy life. Happiness is not the goal; it is the result. Jesus turns the popular concept of happiness on its head by showing that happiness does not consist in what we have, but in what we have done and whom we have done it for. **A. T. Robertson: It is a pity that we have not kept the word “happy” to the high and holy plane where Jesus placed it.**

Jesus does not command us to be happy, but shows us the way (through a life lived for Him).

1 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain [in **Luke 6**, Jesus is on a plain], **and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:**

3 “Blessed are the poor [those so poor they are reduced to begging; the word used of Lazarus in **Luke 16:20**] **in spirit** [*pneuma*], **For theirs is** [present tense—many of the other beatitudes promise things to come, but this promise is now] **the kingdom of heaven.**

What does it mean to be poor in spirit? **John Wesley: Being deeply sensible of their . . . helplessness.** Understanding my own helplessness helps me to understand everyone else's helplessness. We are all in the same sinking ship. **Matthew Henry: To value others and undervalue ourselves in comparison of them.** When I value others, I will let God do whatever He wants with my life to reach and invest in them.

4 Blessed are those who mourn [present tense, implying these people are currently undergoing this], **For they shall be** [future tense—present mourning is not always met with present comfort] **comforted** [*parakaleo*; to call to one's side for exhortation, comfort, instruction, to encourage and strengthen.

5 Blessed are the meek, [*praus*; translated 'gentle' in its three other usages in the New Testament (**Matthew 11:29**; **21:5**; **1 Peter 3:4**)] **For they shall** [future tense—future result] **inherit the earth.**

Meekness is strength controlled (focused) by the Holy Spirit. Even a gift out of control is dangerous. Remember when David Barber taught the lesson last June on meekness? He taught us that meekness was strength under control by breaking a concrete block with his bare hands. Medicine taken in the proper dosage can be helpful, but an overdose may kill; a domesticated horse is useful but an undomesticated one is destructive; and a gentle breeze cools and soothes, but a tornado kills.

6 Blessed are those who hunger [hunger, need, crave, seek with eager desire] **and thirst** [to suffer from thirst, to painfully feel their want of something, eager longing] **for righteousness** [the condition

acceptable to God—the way man is supposed to be: integrity, virtue, purity, correctly thinking and correctly acting], **For they shall be filled** [fed, filled, satisfied—the root word refers to fattening cattle].

People who hunger and thirst for food and water are people who are hurting, lacking, and empty. God's design is not for us to hurt. God's design is not for us to lack. God's design is not for us to be empty. There is no mention of hunger or thirst in the Garden of Eden before The Fall. God's design is for us to experience joy and fullness. Jesus came to reconcile us to God so we could have that fullness again.

7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain [experience] **mercy** [if you want to obtain it, show it].

8 Blessed are the pure [clean—used physically (taking a bath), ethically (doing the right thing), and Levitically (able to fulfill the Mosaic Law)] **in heart** [center of life], **For they shall see God.**

This person thinks pure thoughts. **What is pure?** Is 90% pure? Is 99% pure? Is 99.99% pure? Rat poison is 99.99 regular food and 0.001% poison.

Titus 1:15: To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. Your heart will interpret how you perceive **reality**. A corrupt heart sees corruption. A pure/clean heart sees purity. A pure heart sees God.

James 1:27: Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. Purity is active—it is not avoiding life to stay clean, it is engaging life in a clean way.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers [people who **make** peace], **For they shall be called** [called, named, branded—this is the only beatitude where the outcome is labeling or branding] **the sons of God** [part of the family of God].

Peacemaking is working for peace. Peacemaking in **Matthew 5:9** is reconciling man to man. Peacemakers act. Peacemakers get involved. Peacemakers recognize with Donald Miller in *Blue Like Jazz*, that, **“Something was broken in the world and we were supposed to hold our palms against the wound.”** Peacemaking is messy. Peacemaking can get ugly. Peacemaking is personal because it involves people. Peacemaking is caring enough about humanity to stop sowing discord and start sowing peace.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted [made to run or flee, to drive away, to pursue in a hostile manner, to harass, to trouble] **for righteousness' sake** [the condition acceptable to God—the way man is supposed to be: integrity, virtue, purity, correctly thinking and correctly acting], **For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** **11 “Blessed are you when they revile** [upbraid, the root word means to shame] **and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil** [literally, speech that causes pain] **against you falsely** [lying deliberately to deceive] **for My sake** [account, cause]. **12 Rejoice** [an imperative meaning to be glad, to be happy, to thrive] **and be exceedingly glad** [literally, **leap** much], **for great** [large] **is your reward** [wages, payment] **in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

The theme of the beatitudes (for me) is one of **active**, current engagement that results in a present happiness and future **hope**. God wants to use us to make a difference today that will last for an eternity.

Now we shift to the second portion of today's text: Salt, Light, and Setup

Believers Are Salt and Light

13 “**You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor** [literally, a flatness due to lack of flavor because of a focus on foolishness—think of a bad comedian], **how shall it be seasoned? It is then good** [strong, has power] **for nothing** [nothing, no one] **but to be thrown** [to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls] **out** [outside of the doors] **and trampled underfoot by men.**

14 “**You are** [David Guzik: Jesus never challenges us to *become* salt or light. He simply says that we *are*—and we are either fulfilling or failing that responsibility.] **the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden** [concealed]. **15 Nor do they light a lamp** [not a candle] **and put it under a basket** [literally, bushel—2.3 gallon dry-measure holding device], **but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so** [in this manner—publically] **shine before men, that they may see your good** [beautiful, handsome, excellent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable] **works** [business, employment, acts, deeds] **and glorify** [to cause the dignity and worth of some person or thing to become manifest and acknowledged] **your Father in heaven.**

What do salt and light have in common? Both have to be engaged in a larger work to be meaningful. They both make other things better. They do not exist for themselves. They do not exist to make themselves better (no one eats salt and no one stares at light). **The Fourfold Gospel: Men do not praise the street lamps which protect them from robbery and assault, but they praise the municipal administration which furnishes the lamps.**

Setup

17 “**Do not think that I came to destroy** [dissolve, disunite, or loosen] **the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill** [Scripture is a fabric and Jesus says He did not come to loosen the threads, but to make them fit better; our understanding of the Old Testament is incomplete without Jesus; Jesus will not break the Law, but He will challenge the interpretations of that day]. **18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot** [*jota*—the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet: ך] **or one tittle** [The Fourfold Gospel: We distinguish the letter “c” from the letter “e” by the tittle inside of the latter] **will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19 Whoever therefore breaks** [loosens] **one of the least of these** [smaller] **commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least** [small] **in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them** [Robertson's New Testament Note: Jesus puts practice before teaching], **he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds** [larger in quality and in quantity] **the righteousness of the scribes** [*grammateus*—those very familiar with the Scriptures] **and Pharisees** [a group that focused on external, not internal good works], **you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.**

Jesus now transitions to specific Old Testament passages. He examines the intent behind the Law. We tend to have very static views of Scripture—in that, we think that it is not moving. However, the Scriptures are dynamic, not static. They have varying levels of meaning (the thing that is stated, the thing that is behind the thing, and the thing that only God can illuminate). **David Guzik: In this section. . . this isn't Jesus against Moses; it is Jesus against false and superficial interpretations of Moses.**

Intentionalizing

Murder

21 “You have heard [from the people who taught the Scriptures] that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder [Exodus 20:3], and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment [the commentary on Exodus 20:3].’ **22** But [can also be translated as, “Moreover” (meaning, in addition to), and “And”—the ‘but’ implies that Jesus is doing away with the Law. ‘Moreover’ implies that He is clarifying the Law and stating it with the focus on the intent of the Law and not the letter of the Law.] I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause [without purpose] shall be in danger of the judgment [this is **internal** criticism; judgment by the local city court (lowest level)]. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca [empty, senseless-headed one—a criticism of the **intellect**!]’ shall be in danger of the council [judgment by the Jewish Supreme Court—the Sanhedrin (the second level)]. But whoever says, ‘You fool [foolish, godless—a criticism of a person’s **heart** and/or character (in effect, judging)]!’ shall be in danger of hell fire [eternal damnation (worst level)]. **23** Therefore [because of what was just stated—Jesus is giving one real-life example in **Matthew 5:23-26** of being wrong and wronging and how to fix it] if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, **24** leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled [a compound Greek word meaning, ‘through changing of the mind’] to your brother, and then come and offer your gift [my horizontal relationships can impede my vertical relationship]. **25** Agree with [be of a peaceable spirit and wish well; **Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures: Compromise is better than prison where no principle is involved, but only personal interest**] your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him [on the way to the judge], lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. **26** Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny [less than half a cent; quick reconciliation lends itself toward less judgment].

Adultery

27 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery [Exodus 20:14; having sex with anyone other than your spouse].’ **28** But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust [with passion] for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart [Don’t let the clarity of this statement fool you—if you lust, it is the same as adultery]. **29** If your right eye causes you to sin [is a stumbling block, a snare, or a **trap**], pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell [The Fourfold Gospel: it is better to lose the dearest thing in life than to lose one’s self]. **30** And if your right hand causes you to sin [is a stumbling block, a snare, or a trap], cut it off and cast it from you [Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures: Modern surgery finely illustrates the teaching of Jesus . . . the appendix . . . if left diseased, will destroy the whole body. Cut . . . out in time and the life will be saved]; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. [Whether Jesus is using hyperbole or not, He is serious about removing stumbling blocks. **David Guzik: Jesus simply stresses the point that one must be willing to sacrifice to be obedient. . . . it is more profitable for . . . part our life to “die” rather than to condemn our whole life. . . . Many are unwilling to do . . . and that is why . . . they never get beyond a vague wish to be better.**]

Marriage

31 “Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces [sends away, dismisses—not the same word in **1 Corinthians 7**] his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce [i.e., make it formal—don’t let there be any doubt].’ **32** But I say to you that whoever divorces [sends away, dismisses] his wife for any reason [word] except sexual immorality [*porneia*: adultery, fornication, homosexuality] causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced [sends away, dismisses] commits adultery.

Oaths

33 “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely [the root word is perjury], but shall perform [deliver on, pay off] your oaths [the root word is fences (boundaries define promises)] to the Lord [~**Numbers 30:2**].’ **34** But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; **35** nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. **36** Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. **37** But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Haters

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth [Exodus 21:24—this was intended to be a deterrent to crime because the punishment was so great, but the scribes said it legitimized revenge, so it became associated with revenge].’ **39** But I tell you not to resist an evil [hardship, bad, evil, annoyances] person. But whoever slaps [with the palm of the hand] you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also [it was culturally insulting to slap someone then (this is not describing a beating, physical torture, or the government’s role in responding to evil—this refers to a cultural insult)]. **40** If anyone wants to sue [‘sue’ is too restrictive—this word can mean anything from, ‘want really bad,’ to, ‘take you to court’] you and take away your tunic [undergarment], let him have your cloak [outer garment] also [the next example is legal injustice]. **41** And whoever compels you [presses you into public service—directed squarely at the Roman military] to go one mile, go with him two [the last example is of governmental oppression]. **42** Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. [Jesus is building in us a pattern of not being offended]

Love

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love [*agape*] your neighbor [Leviticus 19:18] and hate [hate, pursue with hatred, detest] your enemy [the hateful, hostile, hating, and opposing person].’ **44** But I say to you, love [*agape*] your enemies, bless [praise, celebrate, bless with prayers] those who curse you, do good [beautifully, finely, excellently, so that there is no room for blame] to those who hate [hate, pursue with hatred, detest] you, and pray for those who spitefully use [to insult, to treat abusively, use spitefully, to revile, to accuse falsely in court, to threaten] you and persecute [chase you down in a hostile manner, drive you away] you, **45** that you may be [begin to be, appear to be] sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just [righteous] and on the unjust [unrighteous]. **46** For if you love [*agape*] those who love [*agape*] you, what reward [wages] have you? [Christianity is more than morality] Do not even the tax collectors [despised in this culture for their corruption] do the same? **47** And if you greet [salute, welcome warmly] your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? **48** Therefore you shall be perfect [complete, grown up], just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Feeling up to the challenge? I did not think so. **David Guzik: We see that in this section Jesus was not primarily seeking to show what God requires of the Christian in his daily life. True, Jesus has revealed God's ultimate standard, and we must take it to heart. But His primary intent was to say, "If you want to be righteous by the law, you must keep the whole law, internal and external—that is, you must be perfect!"**

Matthew 6

Deeds

1 "Take heed [be attentive, pay attention] **that you do not do your charitable deeds** [literally, give your money to the poor] **before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have** [*apoche*—the idea is that they just got a receipt (like a read receipt from an email—instantaneous)] **their reward** [the offering scene from Flywheel]. **3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.**

So, not only is it important to be righteous internally and externally, we have to keep from presenting a false image of righteousness for ourselves. I hope you see that we are not up to this challenge—but Jesus is.

Apply (What is the point?)

1. Internal righteousness is required
2. External righteousness is required
3. No self-exalting images of righteousness are allowed

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Recognize that I cannot live this perfectly
2. Recognize that Jesus can
3. Let **Jesus**

The Teachings of Jesus: Sermon on the Mount (2/2)

Review

Jesus came to restore a relationship between God and man that was created in [Genesis 1](#) and ruined in [Genesis 3](#). When we listen to Jesus' teachings, remember that He came to restore relationships to their proper place.

Many theologians believe that the Sermon on the Mount was Jesus' standard sermon. The sermon recorded in [Matthew 5-7](#) can easily be preached in 15 minutes (implying that what we have is probably not the entire text). For the sake of time, we split the Sermon on the Mount into two weeks (two weeks ago and today). In reality, we could spend months looking at [Matthew 5-7](#). In last week's text, Jesus' message described what life can be like, what we should be doing, and what God really meant.

Preview: To Do or Not to Do, That is the Question

In this week's text, Jesus lays out the consequences of getting our lives out of order. We tend to focus on our needs and ourselves and whether Jesus is talking about prayer, fasting, giving, or any other subject, Jesus says we are to do all things with our Heavenly Father in mind.

This week's text can be divided up into four parts: doing good ([Matthew 6:5-18](#)), material things ([Matthew 6:19-34](#)), judgment ([Matthew 7:1-6](#)), and choices ([Matthew 7:7-29](#)). A good way to further study this text is to note the questions (19) and the imperatives in this sermon.

Key thought: Jesus lays out how life should be lived and gives us a **choice**.

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Matthew 6:5-7:29 (Author = Matthew)

The Model Prayer

5 “**And when** [not if, but when] **you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites** [actors, pretenders]. **For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men** [David Guzik: There were two main places where a Jew in Jesus' day might pray. . . . at the synagogue at the time of public prayer, or on the street at the appointed times of prayer (9 am, noon, and 3 pm)]. **Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward** [they got their read receipt]. **6 But you, when** [not if, but when] **you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.** **7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions** [to stammer and repeat things over and over—not meaning what you say] **as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words** [we have all heard people on autopilot when they pray; Geneva Study Bible: Long prayers are not condemned, but vain, needless, and superstitious ones].

8 “**Therefore do not be like them** [David Guzik: When we mouth words towards God . . . we use God merely as a tool to impress others.]. **For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him** [Adam Clarke: Prayer is not designed to **inform** God. Coffman: A God who needs to be told

what men need could certainly not help if told!]. 9 In this manner, therefore, pray [notice the **plural** pronouns—this is not a prayer that can be prayed individually]:

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed [separated, distinct—the verb form of the word **holy**] **be** [imperative] **Your name.**

10 Your kingdom come [imperative].

Your will be done [imperative]

On earth as *it is* in heaven.

11 Give us [imperative] **this day our daily bread.**

12 And forgive us [imperative] **our debts** [legal debts, not sins],

As we forgive our debtors.

13 And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us [imperative] **from the evil one** [Some of your translations say, ‘evil,’ some say, ‘evil one,’ making it very difficult to determine whether this is the Devil or a man or evil in general. The truth is that we do not know. Perhaps Jesus was being purposefully vague to cover all three scenarios.].

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen [It is short (70 words long), to-the-point (takes 20 seconds to pray), and passionate (six imperatives for God to do something)].

Stop and pray for our community and those affected by the storms.

Trevin Wax’s Providence Prayer (adapted from the Heidelberg Catechism)

Faithful Father, we praise you for your almighty and ever-present power. We trust in the power of your hand, which upholds heaven and earth and all creatures. We trust in the goodness of your rule over leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty—knowing that all things come to us not by chance but from your fatherly hand. Help us to be patient when things go against us, thankful when things go well, and confident for the future, knowing that nothing will separate us from your love.

14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses [literally, ‘falling to the side,’ indicating a lapse in judgment or a **slip**-up], **your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses** [same word as above], **neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.** [Scary and direct]

Fasting to Be Seen Only by God

16 “Moreover, when [not if, but when] **you fast** [fasting is a conscious abstaining from food for the purpose of prayer], **do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad** [sad and gloomy (read: Eeyore)] **countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward** [they got their read receipt]. **17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly** [this is the third time this phrase, ‘**reward you openly**,’ has been used in the Sermon on the Mount].

David Guzik: You can do a wonderful thing for the wrong motive and have it count for nothing before God; Christianity is a matter of the heart, not just outward works.

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth [literally, do not treasure treasures on earth], **where moth and rust** [literally, eating (because rust appears to ‘eat away’ at things)] **destroy and where thieves break in** [literally, dig through] **and steal** [David Guzik: **The issue isn't that earthly treasures are intrinsically bad; but they are no ultimate value either**]; **20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** [What you **invest** in is what you care about]

The Lamp of the Body

22 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good [single, simple (healthy) in a physical sense], **your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad** [sick], **your whole body will be full of darkness** [i.e., healthy eyes will see straight, but unhealthy/diseased eyes will not see straight]. **If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!**

You Cannot Serve God and Riches

24 “No one can serve two masters [the best verse in the Bible against polygamy]; **for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal** [line up face to face] **to the one and despise** [when comparing the emotion to] **the other. You cannot serve God and mammon** [an Aramaic word used to personify **money** (i.e., make it something that can be served)].

Do Not Worry

25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry [be anxious, care] **about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying** [being anxious, caring] **can add one cubit to his stature?**

28 “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil [get tired from work] **nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?**

31 “Therefore do not worry [a different tense for the verb, this one means growing or becoming anxious or caring too much], **saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek** [Gentiles were not viewed highly by Jesus’ listeners]. **For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things** [David Ivarson: **God already has a list**]. **33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.** [How many lives would be happier if we would just obey **Matthew 6:34?**]

Adam Clarke: Many suppose that the law of Moses is abolished, merely because it is too strict, and impossible to be observed; and that the Gospel was brought in to liberate us from its obligations; but . . . nothing can be found so exceedingly strict and holy as this sermon.

Matthew 7

Do Not Judge

1 “**Judge not** [a **habit** of pre-separating, pre-distinguishing, pre-discriminating], **that you be not judged** [David Guzik: Jesus is speaking against being *judgmental*, that is, judging motives and the inner man, which only God can know]. **2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you** [How much sugar do you like in your sweet tea?]. **3 And** [to Jesus gives an example of improper judging] **why do you look at** [gaze at] **the speck** [twig, straw] **in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank** [beam, joist, rafter] **in your own eye?** **4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck [twig, straw] from your eye’; and look, a plank [beam, joist, rafter] is in your own eye?** **5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank [beam, joist, rafter] from your own eye, and then you will see clearly** [look through] **to remove the speck [twig, straw] from your brother’s eye.** [Jesus’ way of saying, “People in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones”]

6 “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls [literal pearls or figurative proverbs (words of great value)] **before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.** [Do not spend time focused on things with no possible return]

Keep Asking, Seeking, Knocking

7 “Ask [ask, beg, call for, crave, desire, require], **and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.** **8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.** **9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil [I love how Jesus slips in little truths about the reality of our awfulness], know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! 12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets** [The Old Testament is summed up by this simple statement: if you want something, **do** it.].

The Narrow Way

13 “Enter by the narrow [strait, not straight] **gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.** [Francis Chan: The New **Middle** Road]

You Will Know Them by Their Fruits

15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous [ravenous, rapacious (excessively grasping for prey—people who are passionate about killing things)] **wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits.**

David Guzik: We guard ourselves against false prophets by taking heed to their fruits.

- 1. We should pay attention to the *manner* of living a teacher shows.**
- 2. We should pay attention to the *content* of their teaching.**
- 3. We should pay attention to the *effect* of their teaching.**

Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot [does not have the power, resources, or ability to] **bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit** [Jesus says that we can see the results of the type of trees that we are. **What type of tree is Jim?**]. **19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know** [know, recognize] **them.**

I Never Knew You

21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ [If you look at a life and do not see a relationship with God, the life is empty] **23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you** [not, “I knew you and forgot you”—these deceivers were never believers]; **depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!** [A scary thought: to have worked for a Jesus you did not know. Also, do not miss the bold claim that Jesus makes that He will be doing the judging in heaven.]

Build on the Rock

24 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man [Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures: Hearing sermons is a dangerous business if one does not put them into practice] **who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”**

Everything in these two scenarios is the same except for the **obedience**. **David Guzik: In Jesus’ illustration of the two houses, each house looked the same from the outside. The real foundation of our life is usually hidden, and is only proven in the storm.** Both my obedience and my lack of obedience have repercussions. **Geneva Study Bible: True godliness rests only upon Christ, and therefore always remains invincible.**

28 And so it was, when Jesus [the Word] **had ended these sayings** [logos], **that the people were astonished** [struck with amazement, astonished, amazed; because He turned everything on its head] **at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes** [the scribes taught by only quoting the rabbis and never injecting authority—because they had none to inject].

Apply (What is the point?)

1. God likes actively working Christians
2. Jesus did not ignore the material (or our interactions with it)
3. Choices must be made

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Do good
2. Interact appropriately with the material
3. Choose **Jesus**

The Teachings of Jesus: The Kingdom of Heaven

Preview: D-Day for Sin

By comparing the Kingdom of Heaven to yeast, hidden treasure, a mustard seed, or a net, Jesus painted a picture of a seemingly insignificant thing that would have an overwhelming impact. That is how it is when we decide to follow Jesus—a seemingly small step changes everything about our lives, both now and for eternity. Jesus challenged his hearers to, “**understand with their hearts**” (**Matthew 13:15**), to allow his word to affect their attitudes, motivations and actions.

Key thought: Following Jesus changes everything about our lives—forever (Truth divides)

Why did Jesus teach in parables?

1. Jesus was a master teacher
 - Parables were memorable and stayed with people
 - A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning
2. To allow for hidden meaning
 - Parables were only for those with spiritual understanding
 - Parables extended Jesus’ ministry. The enemies of Jesus were always waiting for Him to say something so they might accuse and persecute Him (**Luke 11:53-54**). By speaking in parables, Jesus was making it very hard for them to use His words against Him. He could hardly be arrested for telling homely stories!
3. Jesus tells us why He used parables
 - **Matthew 13:10-13: 10 And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” 11 He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.**
 - To fulfill prophesy. **Matthew 13:34-35: All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”** (Referring to **Psalm 78:1-4**)
 - Why Jesus was sent. **Luke 4:43: But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.”**

The Stuff in Between the Parables

1. Why, "Kingdom of Heaven," and not, "Kingdom of God? The only place, "Kingdom of Heaven," is used is in the [Gospel of Matthew](#).
 - **Matthew, writing to specifically Jewish readers, inserted "heaven" for "God" so as not to offend the Jewish sensibilities regarding uttering the name of God or the term that describes Him. This is probably correct, but it leaves us with no explanation for the 5 times Matthew failed to make the switch, or for why he uses "God" in over 50 other instances. bibletopics.com/biblestudy/157.htm.**
 - Therefore, **"Kingdom of Heaven" = "Kingdom of God"**
2. Two key points for me:
 - Truth divides (those that have salvation and those that do not have salvation). The Kingdom of Heaven is the result of the Gospel (Truth). There will be a separation of those that believe and those that do not believe. See gci.org/bible/matthew13
 - The Kingdom of Heaven is now. Jesus is describing things the way things are for the believer prior to the return of Christ.

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Matthew 13 (Author = Matthew)

The Parable of the Sower

1 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6 But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. 8 But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The Purpose of Parables

10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

*'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;
15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.'*

16 But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; **17** for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

18 "Therefore hear the parable of the sower: **19** When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. **20** But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; **21** yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. **22** Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. **23** But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; **25** but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. **26** But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. **27** So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' **28** He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' **29** But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'""

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, **32** which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

The Parable of the Leaven

33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

Prophecy and the Parables

34 All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, **35** that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

"I will open My mouth in parables;

I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."

The Parable of the Tares Explained

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. **38** The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*. **39** The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. **40** Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. **41** The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, **42** and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, **46** who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Dragnet

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, **48** which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. **49** So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, **50** and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

51 Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?"

They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

52 Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old."

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

53 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. **54** When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were

astonished and said, “Where did this *Man* get this wisdom and *these* mighty works? 55 Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?” 57 So they were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.” 58 Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Parable Content (Messages)

Parable	Basic Meaning
The Parable of the Sower 3-9, 18-23	<p>Rocky Soil. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away (20-21). Some people like the Gospel as a novelty. Then they get bored with it, and when it does not solve their problems, they quit. They may have been looking for a quick fix. Therefore, when we share the Gospel, some of the people who respond will eventually fall away. Do not be surprised; that is just the way some people are.</p> <p>Thorns. All sorts of people can be distracted by the worries of this world, and some drop out for that reason. They are more worried about this world than they are about their position in eternity.</p> <p>Good Soil. Jesus wants us to be this kind of person. Seeds do not have a choice as to what kind of soil they fall on, but we have a choice as to what kind of soil we will be for the seed. We can choose to respond to the Gospel. When trials come, we can choose to stick with the Gospel, or to fall away.</p>
The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares 24-30, 36-43	<p>Jesus explains the parable for us in 37-43. The good seeds are the disciples, spread by Jesus throughout the world. The weeds are bad people, spread by the Devil. The bad people are mixed in with the good, and this is what the kingdom of God is like. God allows this; it is part of His plan. Jesus is describing a world in which Satan is active—the age we live in today. The kingdom of God is growing now, and God is waiting to see which plants will bear fruit. Do not be too hasty, He tells his servants. Wait and see.</p>
The Parable of the Mustard Seed 31-32	<p>Jesus is not describing a kingdom that arrives in a blaze of glory—He is describing a kingdom that begins very small. This is not what the Jews expected, but this is the kingdom that Jesus said was near. A small thing can make a massive difference.</p>
The Parable of the Leaven 33	<p>Very similar to the Parable of the Mustard Seed, leaven shows how the impact of the smallest thing, belief in the redemptive act of Christ, changes EVERYTHING.</p>

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure 44	Jesus is the main character. He is the one who sees hidden treasure in his people (the field), and gives everything He has to purchase the prize. The value may not be evident right now, but it is there.
Parable of Pearl of Great Price 45-46	Same message as The Parable of the Hidden Treasure. The message is not, we should do everything we can to find the lost. The message is that Jesus has already done everything He could to find us.
Parable of the Dragnet 47-50	The Kingdom of God is presented to both good and bad people. The message is given to both. They live together and are given a chance to change and grow. Eventually the time comes when judgment is made and God brings the good (the saved) to Himself.

Apply (What is the point?)

Jesus taught in parables for many reasons:

1. Communicates masterfully
2. Kept Jesus from being the target of Jewish leadership until it was time
3. Fulfilled prophecy

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Understand that the message of the parables is that the Gospel divides—by definition, that is what Truth does since if something is true, something else must be false
2. Know that ultimately, we are responsible for communicating the message, not the results

Parables are stories about people. Our lives are a living parable and they are a masterful way to communicate the good news of the Gospel.

The Teachings of Jesus: The Good Samaritan

Preview: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

This event occurred right after Jesus picked the 70. [Luke 10:25-29, 36-37](#) is the historical account and [Luke 10:30-35](#) is the make-believe story Jesus creates to make His point.

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Luke 10:25-37 (Author = Luke)

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” **26** He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” [Jesus turns the tables on the lawyer]

27 So he answered and said, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’”

28 And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.”

29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

30 Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain *man* went down [Jerusalem was 3,300 feet above sea level and Jericho was at sea level] from Jerusalem to Jericho [referred to as the, “way of blood,” because of the dangers], and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. **31** Now by chance a certain priest [similar to a preacher for us] came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. **32** Likewise a Levite [similar to a church leader—think deacon, Sunday school teacher, etc.], when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. **33** But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. **34** So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. **35** On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ **36** So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?”

37 And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Main Characters: **Jesus** and the **lawyer**

Do this and you will live

The Lawyer, the **expert**, “**tested him**.” The Greek word is, *ekpeirazo*, “to put to the test, try, tempt.” He was testing Jesus, the **novice**, to see how well He answered a theological question.

The first question is, “**What shall I** [a Jew] **do to inherit eternal life**,” or, “What is important for a Jew to be saved?” The answer is found in [Luke 10:27](#). The Lawyer answered with the Law: [Deuteronomy 6:5](#): **You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength** and

Leviticus 19:18: You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Jesus says, “You have answered rightly.” The roles are reversed, Jesus becomes the expert, and the lawyer becomes the novice. Then the second question, “And who is my neighbor?”

Who Is My Neighbor? Typical lawyer, he needs a definition of “neighbor.” The Jewish interpreted, “neighbor,” as, “someone who was near and of the same religious community” (fellow Jews). They often excluded everyone else.

The Message in the Bottle: Jesus, the expert **storyteller**, uses the lawyer’s experience and awareness to make a hypothetical situation a teaching moment.

Who was Jesus’ audience? **other Jews**

The Robbers: who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

Priests and Levites: Both parties had a **religious** problem. According to the Law, they could not help. **Leviticus 21:11:** Nor shall he go near any dead body, nor defile himself for his father or his mother. On the other hand, the Law states: **Exodus 23:4:** If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. **Proverbs 25:21:** If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

The priest just kept walking and, “**passed on by**.” The Levite actually stopped, “**came and looked**.”

The Samaritan

Luke 10:33: Had **compassion**;

Luke 10:34: took **care** of him

Luke 10:35: I will **repay** you

What do we get out of this story? Love, **love**, and **love**. It may not be convenient and it may be expensive, but it is all about love.

Apply (What is the point?)

1. Anything that isn’t true is untrue
2. Anything that isn’t love is hate

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

Micah 6:8: No, the Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God. (GNB)

... walking without pride before your God. (BBE)

Nothing else I can say or do could add anything to **Micah 6:8**.

The Teachings of Jesus: Lost and Found

Preview: Sinners Welcome

Today is week five of a five-week series on the teachings of Jesus. It is fitting that we finish teachings of Jesus with parables because He used them so much. In the parables we read about in **Luke 15** (the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost/prodigal son), Jesus is illustrating the fact that God takes the initiative in His relationships with us and God models true and better relationships for us by doing so. The proper place for us is with Him and He will pursue us to that end.

David Guzik: Each scene illustrates a different aspect of God's work. The Son seeks the lost as the Good Shepherd, the Holy Spirit seeks the lost with searching illumination, and the Father in seeks the lost with open arms upon return.

Key thought: God cares about **restoring** relationships

There is a pattern to these three stories in **Luke 15**: there is a loss (of the smaller part), a search (that is constant), a find (that takes great effort), a homecoming, and a celebration (that is community-wide).

Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Luke 15 (Author = Luke)

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

1 Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." 3 So He spoke this parable to them, saying:

So right away, we find out why Jesus tells these make-believe stories (parables): to respond to the argument of the Pharisees and scribes (the religious elite). The religious elite felt that a person who had favor of God should not hang out with sinners—and certainly not eat with them.

4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness [Did the 99 do anything wrong? No, they were where they were supposed to be. What if Jesus had said that the 99 got angry? That would be silly, right? Of course—but this is only the first of the parables that Jesus is going to tell and He's setting up His audience. By the way, what percentage is lost? **1%**], **and go after** [pursue] **the one which is lost** [a compound word that means, 'separating to **death**' (the gap between where it was supposed to be and where it is was going to kill it if not bridged)] **until he finds it?** **5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders** [What can you do with your shoulders? You can shrug them, drop them, proverbially we can give someone a cold one, push something with them, or you can carry something with them. We use our shoulders to illustrate emotional and physical engagement with the activity in front of us. In **Deuteronomy 33:12**, Moses gives his final blessings on the tribes of Israel and says this of the tribe of Benjamin: **Of Benjamin he said: "The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him, Who shelters him all the day long; And he shall dwell between His shoulders."**], **rejoicing** [the shepherd is happy to find the lost sheep; **David Guzik: When Jesus carries us, He does it with rejoicing, not with a grudge, but gladly**]. **6 And when he comes**

home, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ [the community party] **7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.**

The Parable of the Lost Coin

8 “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin [One coin? We are wasting a whole parable on one coin? How could one coin be valuable? One possibility is that it was part of a larger piece of jewelry. What percentage is lost? **10%**. The significance of the lost things is getting bigger. Is there ever a time when a wedding ring is equally as valuable as a penny?], **does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?** [David Guzik: There is an instinct in us that prizes something all the more simply because it is lost. Your keys are never so precious to you as when you can’t find them!] **9 And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’** [What if Jesus said that the other nine coins got angry and did not want to have anything to do with the tenth piece? Ludicrous!] **10 Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”** [Here is this curious statement again—Jesus is driving home to the religious elite that everyone **matters**. Jesus is for everybody. Moreover, we have no right to think otherwise.]

The Parable of the Lost Son

11 Then He said: “A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them [a better translation is probably ‘him’] **his livelihood. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living** [What percentage is lost? **50%** (or 33% if you are looking at the inheritance piece—but either way, the value of that which is lost is getting higher). **14 But when he had spent** [squandered] **all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he** [the citizen] **sent him into his fields to feed swine.** [Have any of you ever worked near pigs? I used to live a few miles from a pig farm and when the wind blew a certain way, it was almost unbearable. I cannot imagine working in a pig farm.] **16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.** [Irby Sullivan: Want follows waste. Sin is the most expensive thing in the world.]

17 “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.””

20 “And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion [moved], **and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’**

22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

I used to wonder why the story did not end there. Everyone could just live happily ever after. Is that not how God wants it to end? Then I realized that the point that Jesus is making is not that everyone lives happily ever after, it is that sinners and tax collectors are **welcome** in the family of God. The story has to continue to show the religious elite their sin. The story has to continue to show me my **sin**.

25 “Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’

28 “But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with [entreated—brought him close to his side] him. 29 So he answered and said to *his* father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time [I am confident that all of us have exaggerated this way when we were angry]; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours [not, ‘my brother’] came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots [How did the older son know this fact about the harlots? The younger son’s reputation preceded him. Sometimes our reputations for sin precede us], you killed the fatted calf for him.’

31 “And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’”

Irby Sullivan: 12-13: The break up; 15: The hook up; 17: The wake up; 20: The rise up; 21: The fess up; 22: The dress up; 24: The cheer up

Challenge: Recognize, pursue, and celebrate reconciliation

Quick question: Where is Jesus in the parable? He is the Way home to the lost sheep; He is the Way back to the purse for the lost coin; He is the Way back to the Father for the lost son. Jesus is the Way!

Apply (What is the point?)

1. The sheep was lost because it wandered off (sometimes we just wander away from God)
2. The coin was lost because someone dropped it (sometimes we are failed by others)
3. The son was lost because he was prideful (sometimes we deliberately choose to rebel)

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Stay **focused** on Jesus (the Way)
2. Stay **engaged** with the church
3. Stay **humbled** before God