

Week 3: The Act of Forgetting or Negating: The Truth Plainly Hidden

As we strive to understand Jesus' intent with the parables, knowing full well every retelling of the story, even by the same person is a new communication. Matthew's telling of the Parable of the Sower is not identical to Jesus', or Mark's, or Luke's telling, but takes place in the field of relations of Jesus and his mission, not in the field of patristic theology [study of early church theologians], modern psychology, or any other field of our choosing. Parables are a means of communication intended to persuade. (Snodgrass, 2018)

"Ah, LORD God! They are saying of me, 'Is he not a maker of _____'"
Ezekiel 20:49

Jesus used parables to reveal the mystery of the kingdom, to stimulate reflection on sin, to call people to repentance, and to produce the opposite among those hardened against him.

Who are the little ones? Jesus calls a child to him and in the midst of him and his disciples he continues to talk about temptations and leading the 'little ones' astray. Who is he talking about? _____

He [Jesus] knows it will happen, but doesn't let you off the hook for _____ in it.

1. The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Matthew 18:15-20; 21-35

Category: _____ / _____; Class _____

Setting: Jesus finishes teaching about forgiving the brother (or sister) who offends you;

A. Peter's Question

- a. Peter responds with a question, how many times should I forgive my brother who sins against me?
 - i. Is seven the proper amount?

B. Jesus' Response

- a. Jesus is not saying seven times eleven times you should forgive,
 - i. Instead the word used in Greek is
 - 1. *heb/dome/konta/kis*, meaning _____.
 - ii. Not a mathematical formula!
 - iii. Forgive an infinite amount of times.
 - iv. Unforgiving Servant parable follows.

C. Matthew 18:21-35

- a. Jesus wants Peter to understand that one day his Father will settle accounts with everyone.
 - i. All people will stand before the throne and give an account of their lives.
- b. God will demand full 'payment'.
 - i. the _____ and _____ in Matthew 25:31-46
 - ii. the parable of the _____ and _____ in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
 - iii. the parable of the _____ in Matthew 13:47-50.
- c. Unable to pay such a large debt you must either face eternal separation from God in Hell or be pardoned of your debt.
 - i. 1 Thessalonians 1:5-9
- d. The only pardon in scripture sufficient enough to satisfy God's wrath against our sin is Jesus' death on the cross.
- e. Jesus wanted Peter to see that you have been _____ of much, now _____ and _____ others, like you have been forgiven.

D. Ten Thousand Talents.

- a. A talent is a measurement of _____.
- b. In first century Palestine, as a unit of weight, a gold talent was worth about six thousand _____.
 - i. A _____ was the usual payment for a day's labour.

- ii. So, one talent of gold was equal to approximately _____ days, or _____ years worth of labor.
- iii. By comparison, this servant owed ten thousand talents, that would have been equal to _____ years of labor, or over two _____ to pay it back.
- c. A man that owed ten thousand talents must have been in charge of a great territory for this king. (Kistamaker, 1980)

E. Begging for Forgiveness

- a. The king just ordered him and his family to be sold [into slavery] to pay for the debt.
- b. He forgives the entire debt.
- c. Ten thousand talents of gold in today's American economy would be worth _____ **dollars!**
- d. Parable of the Lost Coin in Luke 15:8-10. The woman searches for a lost coin
 - i. A Greek drachma was equal to a denarii- one days wage.

F. Unmet Expectations

- a. We would expect to hear of him running home and throwing a party, like the woman did after finding her lost coin.
- b. Found a man that owed him _____.
- c. Denarii was a day's labor.
 - i. This servant owes the newly forgiven man one hundred days worth of labor.
 - ii. Ironically, it is the second servant that could actually come through with his plea.
- d. Jesus again wants Peter to understand that when you have been forgiven much, you should be eager to forgive others, especially when what _____ is so much less than what _____ the Father.

G. The Penalty of Unforgiveness

- a. Must carry out his original sentence of payment.
- b. This man just received a life sentence two thousand times over.

- i. Jesus summarizes the parable by saying, "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."
- ii. He tells Peter, forgive completely as you have been forgiven.

H. The Tension

- a. There is tension between two or more truths that are always present in Christian theology.
- b. The community cannot _____ sin without confrontation and reproof.
- c. Must always _____ and _____ without limits. Deciding what should be done is always a matter of wisdom.

[BREAKOUT 5MIN.]

Outside of this parable, can you think of any other examples of someone being forgiven a great debt then refusing to forgive others?

What kind underlying heart attitude does this response suggest?

The Parable of the Tenants

Matthew 21:33-40; Mark 12:1-9; Luke 20:9-16

Category: True; Class A

Setting: This parable is spoken chronologically after Jesus cleanses the temple. Days before he is to be executed.

A. Passover Just Days Away

- a. Context of the parable the season would be harvest time for grapes. September or October, whenever the grapes were at the perfect time for harvest.

B. What's it About

- a. Jesus is speaking to the leadership of Israel.
- b. Even they felt that he was talking about them (Matt. 21:45, Mark 12:12).
 - i. God then is the _____ of the vineyard, the _____ is Jesus, the servants are the _____, the tenants are the _____, and the vineyard is the land of _____.
 - ii. They were going to kill the Son just like Jesus predicted they would in the story.

C. Stewardship

- a. Planting a vineyard isn't cheap.
- b. Planting a vineyard takes time. Up to seven years for quality grapes that could be sold in the market.
- c. Vineyards are surrounded by a security system.
 - i. "Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it." Psalm 80:12-13
- d. Isaiah 5:1-2 *"Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes."*
 - i. He describes the land owner building a vineyard, winepress, ditch, wall, and tower.

- e. The vineyard owner lends the land and business to _____. They were responsible to _____ the land, protect the _____, and _____ the vines as they grow.
- f. When harvest time came, they would have been responsible to pick the quality grapes and take them to market.

D. When Will the Master Return

- a. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell us the same information. They all agree that a "vineyard was planted".
 - i. If it was planted from seed, then we know it could take up to _____ years to bear fruit.
 - ii. If planted from a shoot it could still take up to _____ years to fully mature and bear fruit.
- b. Often a stone wall and pit would be erected around the vineyard to keep animals and thieves out of the crop.
- c. We are not told much in Scripture about the tenants.
 - i. Duncan Derrett says in his book *'Law and the New Testament'*, "The tenants could've even claimed Deut. 20:6 supported them." *"And is there any man who has planted a vineyard and has not enjoyed its fruit? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man enjoy its fruit."*
 - 1. The greater story is Jesus comparing the tenants to the religious leaders of Israel.
- d. The religious leaders in Israel's history turned from being God fearing individuals to self-promoting and ego driven people.
 - i. Pharisees appear as part of the _____ of the people during the revolt, some individuals playing a leading role in it."
 - ii. "Some modern scholars have objected to the assumption that intertestamental Judaism, including Pharisaism, believed in a "wage price theory of righteousness.
 - 1. Judaism, including Pharisaism, is merely a blatant form of legalism.

E. Deceivers From the Beginning

- a. The 'tenants' are deceivers from the beginning.
- b. The owner sends his servants.
 - i. The response of the tenants was to _____ the first servant and sent him away empty handed.
- c. The owner sends in a second and third wave of his servants.

- i. The tenants would _____ and treat shamefully one, and _____ the other.
 - d. The last chance the owner has for a peaceful reconciliation with the tenants is to send his own son to work out the deal.
 - i. The intent of the tenants hearts; they were jealous and murderous all along.
 - 1. He [Jesus] asks, *“When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”* The rulers knew the answer. Surely the master would slay the evil tenants and give the land to others who will bear fruit for him. *They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”*
- F. If you were listening to Jesus and had ears to hear, you would hear him tell the elite rulers of Israel about God’s dealings with His people for the last 1500 years.
- a. The past is tied together with the present
 - b. Jesus is telling the chief priests and rulers that they were about to do to him what the tenants in the story did to the owner’s son.
 - i. Isaiah 5:7 *“For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!”*
 - ii. Isaiah 5:4-5 *“And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard, I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.”*

G. Not Over Yet

- a. In Luke’s telling of the events, Jesus “looks directly at them” and quotes Psalm 118:22 “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”
- b. “Historians and scholars say they probably sang from Psalm 118, the last of the Passover Psalms. The refrain of this Psalms is, “His steadfast love endures forever.” (Ramsey, 2015)
- c. Jesus underlines _____ as the fundamental offense.
 - i. C.S. Lewis argues that “no one can take Jesus as just another good moral teacher. He must be either the Messiah or a megalomaniac.

[BREAKOUT 5MIN.]

What is the simple truth Jesus is trying to get his listeners to understand?

How can you apply this to your own life?

The Parable of the Marriage Feasts

Matthew 22:2-14; Luke 14:16-23

Category: True; Class B

Greek _____ means royal power, kingship, dominion, rule. This is the power and authority Jesus has as the triumphant Messiah.

Notice that it isn't that the invited guests _____ no come, but rather they _____ not come.

Who was disrespected more? The king throwing the _____
_____ or his son for whom the wedding feast was for?

- A. Those the original message goes to, the Jews, largely reject the call and try to set up their own kingdoms where they can have their own festivities.
- B. They do not respond to the messengers God sends to invite them to come.
- C. They actually shame and kill the prophets, and would in just a short time, kill his very son, for whom the feast is for.
 - a. The king then issues another decree. “Then he said to his servants, ‘*The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.*’ And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both _____”
 - i. Isn’t that the good news...that the good and the bad are both called? We are all summoned as it were to the King’s party. This is what Jesus says the Kingdom is like.

_____. When asked, “how did you get in here?” He did not reply. The text says, “he was speechless”. He doesn’t offer up any excuse.

- i. He stands in the banquet hall a self-righteous sinner, not clothed in the garments of the bridegroom but clothed in his own merit.
 - 1. The wedding feast is an open invitation, but there is a dress code. Everyone is welcome at the table, but the table changes us. Or, to keep with the imagery of the parable, it changes our clothes.

Breakout

Discuss the invitation or ‘call’ that goes out to the “main roads”. Is this an internal call or an external call? Or both? What is the difference?