

The Parables of Jesus

By Jewel Love

Mark 4:33-34 (NIV) ³³with many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. ³⁴He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

This sermon is not going to be a routine religious, review of the parables of Jesus; but I hope it will be a fresh look at the parabolic words and acts of Jesus in the context of the entire gospel and the Holy Bible.

What are parables?

Parable—*noun*

- a short allegorical story designed to illustrate or teach some truth, religious principle, or moral lesson.
- a statement or comment that conveys a meaning indirectly by the use of comparison, analogy, or the like.
- a short story that uses familiar events to illustrate a religious or ethical point
Related: parabolic , parabolical
- any of the stories of this kind told by **Jesus Christ**

In our temporal world there are two kinds of peoples: winners and losers.

Winners are the ones who have applied themselves and gotten educated, gotten good jobs, have good careers, have succeeded in business, made lots of money, have high ranks and high positions in society; they are the great, the achievers, the conquerors, the victors and they command respect and honor.

Then there are the losers, who are, the sick, the poor, the unemployed, the ones without skills, with little education, drop-out, criminals, drug addicts, homeless, prostitutes, failures, and the last, the lost, the least, the little and the dead.

In Jesus' day the winners were the Jews, the scribes, the priests, Pharisees, and the Sadducees.

The losers were the tax collectors, the prostitutes, the poor, the Samaritans and the Gentiles.

The first parable of grace is the coin in the fish's mouth which is acted out instead of being told as a story. Other acted out parables are, Jesus' temptation in the wilderness,

his walking on the water, his casting out the money-changers in the temple, his cursing the fig tree, and the greatest of all his resurrection and ascension.

The Temple Tax Matthew 17:24-27 (NIV)*The Temple Tax* ⁴ After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?” ²⁵ “Yes, he does,” he replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. “What do you think, Simon?” he asked. “From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own sons or from others?” ²⁶ “From others,” Peter answered. “Then the sons are exempt,” Jesus said to him. ²⁷ “But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.

GNT ²⁵ When Peter went into the house, Jesus spoke up first, Simon, what is your opinion? Who pays duties or taxes to the kings of this world? The **citizens** of the country or the **foreigners**? ²⁶ The foreigners, answered Peter. Well, then, replied Jesus, that means that the citizens don't have to pay.

KJV ²⁵ He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their **own children**, or of **strangers**? ²⁶ Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

The account of the Temple Tax or the coin in the fish’s mouth is only found in Matthew. Matthew, a former tax collector, and wrote the Gospel of the King, and this miracle affirms our Lord’s kingship. The kings of the earth do not take tribute from their own sons. Jesus affirmed Himself to be free from this tribute because He was the Son of the King, the Son of God. Yet, as the Son of God, He was too poor to pay even a half-shekel; and His disciples were as poor as He was. He exercised His kingship over nature to provide what was needed.

God gave Adam and Eve dominion over nature, and this included the fish in the sea (Gen. 1:26; Ps. 8:6–8). Man lost this dominion because of sin, so Peter was not able to command the fish and find the money. Jesus Christ exercised dominion over not only the fish, but also over the animals (Matt. 21:1–7) and the birds (Matt. 26:34, 74–75). What Adam lost because of his disobedience, Jesus Christ regained through His obedience (Heb. 2:6). ¹

The Parable of the Lost Sheep Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:1-7

¹Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Mt 17:22). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

Matthew 18:10-14 (NIV) *The Parable of the Lost Sheep* ¹⁰ “See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.” ^a (11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.) ¹² “What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? ¹³ And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. ¹⁴ In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.

Luke 15:1–7 *The Parable of the Lost Sheep* ¹ Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” ³ Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.” ²

People simply do not come in droves to anyone who insists that the only way to win is to lose. Jesus saves losers and only losers. He raises the dead and only the dead. and he rejoices more over the last, the least, and the little than over all the winners in the world.

But the Bible tells us that salvation does not come about through a mere *transaction* in which God gives us salvation in exchange for our repentance and faith.

Rather than a transaction, Scripture presents salvation as a free and unearned gift, a gift that involves *re-creation*. In Jesus, who is fully God and fully human, the perfect representative and substitute for humanity, all humans are a new creation. Although it is experienced only through **faith**, **all humans** are justified, reconciled and saved precisely because they are **all** included in Jesus—included in his Incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension.

^a Some manuscripts *heaven*. *The Son of Man came to save what was lost*.

However, not all people know who they are in Christ. Thus, not all have experienced repentance (a change in their thinking about who God is and who they are) and have thus not turned to their heavenly Father in faith, trusting in Jesus, and "picking up their cross" to follow Jesus as his disciple.

Col 1:21-22). ²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies **in your minds** because of^a your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant Matthew 18:21-35 (NIV)*The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant* ²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" ²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." ^{a 23} "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents^b was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ²⁶ "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. ²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii.^c He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. ²⁹ "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' ³⁰ "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹

^a Or *minds, as shown by*

^a Or *seventy times seven*

^b That is, millions of dollars

^c That is, a few dollars

When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. ³² “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ ³⁴ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. ³⁵ “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

Imagine that someone in the church has hurt your feelings, and the person says “sorry.” And he or she does it again, and says “sorry.” And it happens again, and again you hear “sorry.” And again, and again, and again. At what point are you going to say, “I don’t think you’re really sorry?” Maybe the person *isn’t* sorry, but Jesus says to forgive them anyway, even 77 times. Try saying “I forgive you” that many times! It might be good therapy.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37 (NIV) *The Parable of the Good Samaritan* ²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” ²⁷ He answered: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’^a; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’^b” ²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” ²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins^c and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and

^a Deut. 6:5

^b Lev. 19:18

^c Greek *two denarii*

when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Calling it the The Parable of the Good Samaritan causing us to think that its hero is a good example to imitate. And that is what Jesus says “you, too go and do likewise.”

The lawyer had asked what he needed to do in order to inherit eternal life. Jesus’ answer was, in effect, “You have to do the impossible.”

How could anyone be expected to live up to the standard of the Samaritan in this story? If that is what God expects, even the meticulous lawyer was doomed. But Jesus had chosen his words carefully. He was showing that humans cannot meet the perfect requirements of the law. Even those who fully dedicate themselves to it fall short. Jesus is the only one to fulfill the law in its deepest intent. Jesus alone is the Good Samaritan.

(Mt 25:31-26:1) *The Sheep and the Goats* ³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ ³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ ⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of **the least** of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ ⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ ⁴⁴ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’⁴⁵ “He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ ⁴⁶ “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Conclusion: are you a winner or are you a loser?