

## **The Parables of Jesus: “Mysteries Hidden to be Revealed”**

**Day and Time:** Tuesdays 8:00-9:00 PM ET

**Teacher(s):** Mark Miller

**Class Size:** Limit of 30

The telling of parables was a major element of Jesus’ earthly ministry, making up 35% of His teaching in the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus was, quite simply, a masterful storyteller, using elements of the lives of the people around Him to meet them at their level and to express to them the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Sometimes, His parables seemed meant to clarify or explain (such as His story of the unforgiving servant to Simon the Pharisee); at other times, His parables seemed to shroud the kingdom in further mystery (as with the parable of the sower in Mark 4). And sometimes, according to Mark 4:34, Jesus could not stop talking in parables!

In this class, we want to cut through the murkiness many feel when reading Jesus’ parables. Rather than ask what every element of a parable corresponds to, or what the story “means to me,” we will seek to find the central point Jesus was driving at. Though sometimes enigmatic, Jesus’ parables were meant to stimulate our thinking, they always sought a response in their hearers, and all are revelatory to some degree of God, His kingdom, or His expectation of people. We hope that this class will help students develop a “sense” for studying these parables—that is, a sense of when details matter (and the tools for defining them), a sense for when details don’t matter, and a desire to seek out the revelation and response that Jesus was always pointing His hearers towards.

### **9-Week Syllabus**

1. Parables & the Intention to Provoke | The Unforgiving Servant
2. Parables of Lostness | Luke 15
3. The Parable of the Sower and the Purpose of Parables | Mark 4:3–20
4. Parables of the Present Kingdom | Matthew 13, Mark 4, & Luke 13
5. The Parable of the Wedding Feast | Matthew 22:1–14
6. Parables on Money | Luke 16
7. Parables on Prayer | Luke 18
8. Parables concerning the Lord’s Return (1) | The Ten Virgins
9. Parables concerning the Lord’s Return (2) | The Talents and Minas

## **Form of Class**

Each class will contain a lecture from the instructor on that week's topic or parable. After this lecture, students will be given some time to personally reflect on Jesus' intent and the parable's potential effect on their lives, followed by a chance to share such reflection with other students.

## **Homework**

Students can expect to spend up to one hour a week studying and reflecting on a biblical parable that is similar to what was covered in the previous week's class. The instructor will provide any feedback to assignments turned in.