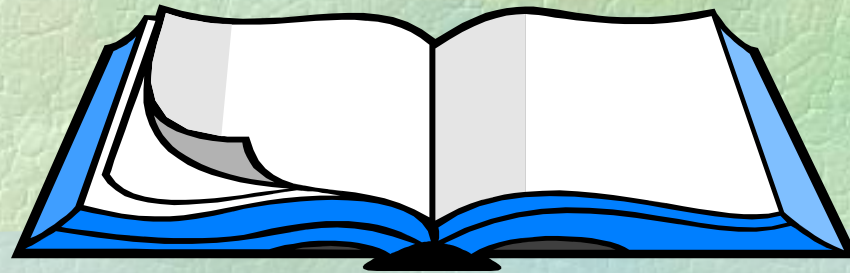


How To Read The Bible



For All Its Worth!

Goals For This Class

- To give a basic approach to understanding the biblical text
- To examine historical methods of interpretation
- To consider other methods of interpretation
- To promote unity of shared understanding
- To relate elders' views on interpretation

Not Goals For This Class

- To ensure everybody believes what I do
- To ensure everybody believes the same thing
- To debate controversial passages of scripture
- To negate or endorse any particular interpretative approach
- To confuse, frustrate, or agitate truthseekers

The Parables:



Do You Get The Point?

The Parables in History

- Allegorical mysteries? - Mark 4:10-12
- Jesus told parables to people - Luke 15:3
- The lawyer understood the “Good Samaritan parable - Luke 10:25-37
- The Pharisees understood the parable of the tenants - Matt 21:45

The Nature of Parables

- Differences in parables
- True parables
- Similitudes
- Metaphors and Similes
- Allegorical, but not Allegories

How The Parables Function

- Not teaching with picture words
- Not vehicles for revealing truth
- Parables function by calling forth a response
- Somewhat similar to jokes
- Meant to be heard, not read

The Exegesis of Parables

- Finding the points of reference
- Identifying the audience
- Dealing with “contextless” parables
- The parables of the kingdom

Finding The Points of Reference

⁴⁰Then Jesus spoke up and answered his thoughts.

“Simon,” he said to the Pharisee, “I have something to say to you.”

“All right, Teacher,” Simon replied, “go ahead.”

⁴¹Then Jesus told him this story: “A man loaned money to two people - five hundred pieces of silver to one and fifty pieces to the other. ⁴²But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?”

Luke 7:40-42 (NLT)

Finding The Points of Reference

- The Moneylender = God
 - Debtor 1 = the prostitute
 - Debtor 2 = Simon
-
- The point is not in the points of reference
 - The point is in the response

Identifying The Audience

- Sit and listen to the parable again and again
- Identify the points of reference intended by Jesus that would have been picked out
- Try to determine how the original hearers would have identified with the story and what they would have heard

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

²⁵Then a certain teacher of the law came up and tried to trap Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to receive eternal life?” ²⁶Jesus answered him, “What do the Scriptures say? How do you interpret them?” ²⁷The man answered: “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and, You must love your neighbor as yourself.” “²⁸Your answer is correct,” replied Jesus, “do this and you will live.”

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

²⁹But the teacher of the law wanted to put himself in the right, so he asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” ³⁰Jesus answered, “A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when robbers attacked him, stripped him and beat him up, leaving him half dead. ³¹It so happened that a priest was going down that road; when he saw the man he walked on by, on the other side. ³²In the same way a Levite also came there, went over and looked at the man, and then walked on by, on the other side.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

³³But a certain Samaritan who was traveling that way came upon him, and when he saw the man his heart was filled with pity. ³⁴He went over to him, poured oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them; then he put the man on his own animal and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. “Take care of him,” he told the innkeeper, “and when I come back this way I will pay you back whatever you spend on him.” ³⁶And Jesus concluded, “Which of these three seems to you to have been a neighbor to the man attacked by the robbers?” ³⁷The teacher of the Law answered, “The one who was kind to him.” Jesus replied, “You go, then, and do the same.”

Luke 10:25-37 (TEV)

The “Contextless” Parables

“¹²What 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? ¹³And 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. ¹⁴In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.”

Matt 18:12-14 (NIV)

The “Contextless” Parables

- In Luke the function is a word to Pharisees
- Justifies Jesus’ acceptance of outcasts
- In Matthew part of sayings about relationships in kingdom of heaven
- Relates to “little ones” who go astray
- Same parable, same point, different audience and application

The Parables of the Kingdom

- The kingdom of God is like...
- Also messages calling for a response
- Example: Parable of the Sower
- The “point” is the urgency of the hour
- “Take heed how you hear”
- Proclaim the kingdom as “already/not yet”
- These parables emphasize the urgency of the hour

The Parable of the Rich Fool

¹⁶And he told them a parable saying, “The land of a certain rich man was very productive.” ¹⁷And he began reasoning to himself saying, “What shall I do since I have no place to store my crops?” ¹⁸And he said, “This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.” ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” ²⁰But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?”

Luke 12:16-20 (NASV)

Applying Hermeneutics to Parables

- Originally spoken and needed no interpretation
- Now in written form without context
- Two suggestions for interpreting parables
 - Try to discover the “point” and translate that “point” into our own context as Matthew did
 - Apply them in the context of the kingdom as present and soon to be consummated

Questions or Comments?



Next Week:

The Law of Moses: A Tale of Two Covenants