

The softball devotional sessions that I have led so far, have used parables<sup>1</sup> in the Bible told by Jesus Christ:

- 1) Cornerstone vs. Paladins (May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008 @ 4 PM)
  - [The Parable of the Rich Fool \(Luke 12: 15-21\); The Parable of the Hidden Treasure \(Matthew 13:44\); The Parable of the Pearl of Great Value \(Matthew 13:45-46\)](#)
- 2) Cornerstone vs. Archangels (June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 @ 4 PM)
  - [The Parable of the Sower \(Matthew 13:1-9\); The Parable of the Sower Explained \(Matthew 13:18-23\)](#)
- 3) Cornerstone vs. Witness (June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008 @ 2 PM)
  - [The Parable of the Weeds \(Matthew 13:24-30\); The Parable of the Weeds Explained \(Matthew 13:37-43\)](#)

I hope that these parable teachings/lessons have been useful to you and that you have been able to learn through story illustrations. I understand that sometimes parables are not clear and you may wonder why bother explaining things through stories. To help understand why Jesus Christ spoke and taught through the use of parables let us turn to [Matthew 13:10-16](#) in the Bible. Here we see that the disciples also wondered why Jesus spoke in parables.

**The Purpose of the Parables** (*Matthew 13:10-16*)

<sup>10</sup>Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them<sup>2</sup> in parables?” <sup>11</sup>And he answered them, <sup>x</sup>“To you it has been given to know <sup>y</sup>the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup>For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, <sup>e</sup>even what he has will be taken away. <sup>13</sup>This is why I speak to them in parables, because <sup>b</sup>seeing they do not see, <sup>c</sup>and hearing they do not hear, <sup>c</sup>nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup>Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

<sup>d</sup> “You will indeed hear but never understand,  
and you will indeed see but never perceive.

<sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has grown dull,  
and with their ears <sup>e</sup>they can barely hear,  
and <sup>f</sup>their eyes they have closed,  
lest they should see with their eyes  
and hear with their ears  
and <sup>g</sup>understand with their heart  
and <sup>h</sup>turn, and I would heal them.’

<sup>16</sup>But <sup>i</sup>blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. <sup>17</sup><sup>i</sup>Truly, I say to you, <sup>j</sup>many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

<sup>1</sup> **Parable:** A simple story illustrating a moral or religious lesson. <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/parables>>

<sup>2</sup> Them: the crowds (cf. Matthew 13:2)

x [1 Corinthians 2:6-10] <sup>6</sup>Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. <sup>8</sup>See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, <sup>10</sup>and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

[Matthew 11:25] <sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children;

y [Rom. 16:25-27] **Doxology** <sup>25</sup>Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

z [Matthew 25:29] <sup>29</sup>For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. (**The Parable of the Talents**)

[Luke 10:18] <sup>18</sup>Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.” (**A Lamp Under a Jar**)

[John 15:2] <sup>15</sup>“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. (**I Am the True Vine**)

a [Rev. 2:5] <sup>5</sup>Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do <sup>m</sup>the works you did at first. If not, “I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

b [Deut. 29:4] <sup>4</sup>But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.

c [Matthew 13:19] <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. (**The Parable of the Sower Explained**)

d John 12:40; Acts 28:26, 27; Cited from Isai. 6:9, 10

e [Heb. 5:11]

f [John 9:39, 41]

g [Rom. 10:10]

h See Luke 22:32

i Luke 10:23, 24; [ch. 16:17]

j [See ver. 16 above]

I am sure that we have encountered people at one point or another who fit these descriptions, whether it is at school, work, or even at home with family. These are people who say and claim that they are listening but they really aren't and often they are not even paying attention. Recall how you felt, I know that I get extremely frustrated and even angry when this happens, especially when the person insists that they understand and are listening, but have absolutely no idea or clue what you are talking about. I know that when this happens in a work setting I am amazed that the person is still employed, or when it is in a school setting I wonder how that person even got past the class requirement. Now keeping that in mind, how do you expect an all **holy** and **righteous** Lord to react to sinners who act this way?

To really put this back into context, recall what Jesus said after **The Parable of the Sower** (Matthew 13:1-9) and **The Parable of the Weeds Explained** (Matthew 13:37-43). Jesus said, **"He who has ears, let him hear."** Wow, there is so much depth in these words knowing that Jesus' explanation of why He speaks in parable, which we just read (**The Purpose of the Parables**), is sandwiched between Jesus' two identical statements of **"He who has ears, let him hear."** What a powerful warning and message to each of us really strive to ear and learn from the teachings that the Lord provides through the Bible. We should be attentive to the Word of God and **'the secrets of the kingdom of heaven'**; the **'mysteries of the kingdom of heaven'** (Matt 13:11); **'mysteries of the kingdom of God'** (Luke 8:10)

Although this is a stern warning to all of us, there is still hope...the promise from God that if we **'should see with [our] eyes, and hear with [our] ears and understand with [our] heart and turn, [then Jesus Christ] would heal [us].'** (Matthew 13:15b). **"<sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—<sup>8</sup>but **'God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** <sup>9</sup>Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup>For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup>More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."** (Romans 5:6-11).

So the real question you need to consider is, "Are you willing to believe in God and His promise of salvation from the punishment that we deserve as sinners before a perfect holy and righteous God?" I hope we have not allowed our heart to grow dull to the Word of God. I hope that we have not allowed our hearts to become indifferent to God in our lives.

I challenge you again with the question that only you can truly answer, "What is your heart centered on? Is it on the things that please God or on the things of this world?"

#### LESSONS/APPLICATIONS:

- How receptive is your heart to the God and the Gospel?
  - Do not delay or allow our hearts to grow dull and hard towards the truth.
- What do you treasure? Where do you stand before the perfect God?
  - Just as the Lord, Jesus Christ instructed, **"He who has ears, let him hear."** let us not be indifferent to the Word of God, but instead seek after the priceless secret/mysteries of the kingdom of heaven/God.
  - I challenge those of you who are still seeking answers (**non-Christians**) – not knowing God and the true joy of being a Christian, a part of God's family – I urge you to seek out the answers to the questions you have about Christianity. What an amazing investment if it leads to obtaining the most precious, and valuable treasure in life!
  - Let me encourage you with Jim Elliot's wise words, **"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."**<sup>10</sup>
  - This next warning goes out to both Christians and non-Christians, but especially to Christians who have not given God the priority He deserves in their lives, **"<sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. <sup>8</sup>For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."** (Galatians 6:7-8)
  - <sup>19</sup>**"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup>but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."** (Matthew 6:19-21)

j Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; [John 8:56]

l [John 3:16-18] <sup>16</sup> *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup>Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*

<sup>10</sup> Jim Elliot's journal (1927 - 1956, 29-yr), a modern martyr, gained international recognition when he died with four others at the hands of Auca Indians. His story and memoirs have become a source of missionary inspiration through the writing and speaking of his wife, Elisabeth.

**ADDITIONAL NOTES & BIBLE VERSES**

**Prophecy and Parables**

<sup>34 e</sup>All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. <sup>35</sup>This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>f</sup>“I will open my mouth in parables;

<sup>8</sup>I will utter what has been hidden <sup>h</sup>since the foundation of the world.”

**Paul’s Ministry to the Church (Colossians 1:24-29)**

<sup>24</sup> Now <sup>j</sup>I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh <sup>k</sup>I am filling up <sup>l</sup>what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions <sup>m</sup>for the sake of his body, that is, the church, <sup>25 n</sup>of which I became a minister according to <sup>o</sup>the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, <sup>26 p</sup>the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. <sup>27 q</sup>To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are <sup>r</sup>the riches of the glory of <sup>p</sup>this mystery, which is Christ in you, <sup>s</sup>the hope of glory. <sup>28</sup> Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that <sup>t</sup>we may present everyone <sup>u</sup>mature in Christ. <sup>29</sup> For this <sup>v</sup>I toil, <sup>w</sup>struggling <sup>x</sup>with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

**Come to Me, and I Will Give You Rest (Matthew 11:25-30)**

<sup>25 h</sup>At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, <sup>i</sup>Lord of heaven and earth, that <sup>j</sup>you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and <sup>k</sup>revealed them to little children; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your <sup>l</sup>gracious will. <sup>7 27 m</sup>All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son <sup>n</sup>except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone <sup>o</sup>to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. <sup>28 p</sup>Come to <sup>q</sup>me, all who labor and are <sup>r</sup>heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and <sup>s</sup>learn from me, for I am <sup>t</sup>gentle and lowly in heart, and “you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For <sup>v</sup>my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

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e ver. 3; Mark 4:33, 34; [John 16:25, 29]

4 Some manuscripts *Isaiah the prophet*

f Cited from Ps. 78:2

g [ver. 11; Rom. 16:25, 26; 1 Cor. 2:7]

h ch. 25:34; Luke 11:50; [John 17:24; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:20]

j See 2 Cor. 7:4

k [2 Tim. 1:8; 2:10]

l See 2 Cor. 1:5

m [Eph. 4:12]

n ver. 23

o See Eph. 3:2

p Eph. 3:9; See Rom. 16:25, 26

q [ch. 2:2]

r Eph. 1:18; 3:16

p [See ver. 26 above]

s 1 Tim 1:1

t See ver. 22-23

u See Matt. 5:48

v 1 Tim. 4:10; 1 Cor. 15:10

w ch. 4:12; [ch. 2:1]

x See Eph. 1:19

h For ver. 25-27, see Luke 10:21, 22

i See Acts 17:24

j Job 37:24; 1 Cor. 1:19-27; 2 Cor. 3:14

k ch. 21:16; Ps. 8:2; [ch. 13:11; 16:17]

l Luke 12:32; Gal. 1:15

7 Or *for so it pleased you well*

m See ch. 28:18

n [John 1:18; 6:46; 7:29; 8:19; 10:15; 17:25]

o [John 17:26]

p John 7:37; [John 6:37]

q [ver. 3]

r [ch. 23:4; Luke 11:46]

s John 13:15; Eph. 4:20; Phil. 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:21; 1 John 2:6

t Zech. 9:9; 2 Cor. 10:1; Phil. 2:7, 8; [ch. 5:5]

u Jer. 6:16

v 1 John 5:3