

The Well

an ordinary place
where extraordinary
things happen

STSA.CHURCH/THEWELL

“
stories Jesus told

THE KINGDOM PARABLES

The Good Samaritan

STORIES JESUS TOLD - PART 1

It's a lot harder to find something when you don't know what you're looking for.

"Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you [in your midst]." Luke 17:20-21

A parable is an EARTHLY STORY with a HEAVENLY MEANING.

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Luke 10:25

LUKE 10:30-36

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'

So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"

"How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." John 4:9

Where is the Kingdom? WHERE YOU LEAST EXPECT IT

"Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." Acts 9:15-16

Lord, open my eyes that I may see.

"And Elisha prayed, and said, "Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." 2 Kings 6:17

"The kingdom of God is active in failure, ordinariness, everydayness. If we wait for a miraculous rescue, a vindictive triumph or some idealized lifestyle to appear, we are looking for the wrong kingdom, certainly not the one that Jesus is revealing. There is no place to go to find the kingdom because it is always close at hand. We do not need to look for success because the kingdom is equally present in failure... The Kingdom of God may be most active in what is most unacceptable to us." Fr. Thomas Keating

The Prodigal Son

STORIES JESUS TOLD - PART 2

"All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world." Matthew 13:34-35

"Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:20-21

THE PRODIGAL SON

evangelium in evangelio

"Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." So He spoke this parable to them, saying..." Luke 15:1-3

see Luke 15:11-32

"A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living." Luke 15:11-13

"But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him." Luke 15:28

**You won't find the kingdom in the LAW,
but rather in LOVE.**

"For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." Hosea 6:6

The kingdom is found in LOVE.
Love is practiced in INTIMACY.

"As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem." Isaiah 66:13

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3:20

God is the perfect parent, who loves the older just as much as the younger, and desires intimacy with each.

"Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours."

Luke 15:31

The Mustard Seed

STORIES JESUS TOLD - PART 3

"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 4:17

The Myth: CEDARS OF LEBANON

The Truth: A MUSTARD SEED

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." Matthew 13:31-32

THE KINGDOM OF GOD...

• STARTS SMALL

"The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened." Matthew 13:33

"For who has despised the day of small things?" Zechariah 4:10

• GROWS GRADUALLY

"as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby"
1 Peter 2:2

• TRIUMPHS & TRANSFORMS

"...when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a TREE..." Matthew 13:32

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18

"St. Paul writes: As we behold the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, that glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit, transforms us all into his own likeness, from one degree of glory to another. Does this not show that the Spirit changes those in whom he comes to dwell and alters the whole pattern of their lives? With the Spirit within them it is quite natural for people who had been absorbed by the things of this world to become entirely other-worldly in outlook, and for cowards to become men of great courage." - St. Cyril of Alexandria

"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ." Galatians 3:16

"To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade."

Mark 4:30-32

The Barren Fig Tree

STORIES JESUS TOLD - PART 4

He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'" Luke 13:6-9

**THE KINGDOM ISN'T FOUND IN OUR
BEST EFFORTS.**

OUR BEST EFFORTS ARE MANURE.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful." John 15:1-2

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men." Matthew 5:13

"You perhaps, as a good and pitiful husbandman, will entreat the Master still to spare the fig tree, and not yet cut it down, though accused of unfruitfulness: but to allow you to put dung about it in the shape of tears, sighs, invocations, sleepings on the ground, vigils, mortifications of soul and body, and correction by confession and a life of humiliation." Gregory of Nazianzus

"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." Luke 13:5

**The Kingdom is found in
REPENTING and ABIDING.**

When was the last time you repented...really?

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." John 15:4-7

I will rely on God and do it HIS WAY.

"God, bless MY way."

vs

"God, what way do YOU want to bless?"

*"I am the vine, you are the branches.
He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit;
for without Me you can do nothing."
John 15:5*

The Workers in the Vineyard

STORIES JESUS TOLD - PART 5

MATTHEW 20:1-16:

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went.

Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'

So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.' And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. 11 And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.'

But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?' So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."

MYTH: I AM MORE FAIR THAN GOD.

1. THE KINGDOM HAS NO ROOM FOR COMPARISON (JUDGING)

"By the vineyard, Jesus means in the injunction of God and His commandments. By the time of laboring, the present life. By laborers, them that are called in different ways to the fulfillment of the injunctions. By early morning, the third, sixth, ninth and eleventh hours, them who at different ages have drawn near to God and proved themselves." St. John Chrysostom

Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following... Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me." John 21:20-22

2. HUMAN STANDARDS OF JUDGMENT (MERIT-BASED) DON'T APPLY IN THE KINGDOM

"You are my Lord, my goodness is nothing apart from You." Psalm 16:2

"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Romans 3:21-24

Grace is God's response to our NEED, not our DEED.

"But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." Romans 5:20

*We don't enter the Kingdom by EARNING it,
but rather by ACCEPTING it.*

Parable of the Talents

STORIES JESUS TOLD - PART 6

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." Matthew 25:13

THE KINGDOM CAN'T BE EARNED, BUT IT CAN BE WASTED.

see Matthew 25:14-30

LESSON 1: God distributes gifts universally and fairly, but not evenly.

"And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability." Matthew 25:15

"His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises..." 2 Peter 1:3-4

LESSON 2: Every gift is an opportunity to glorify God and experience His Kingdom.

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." Romans 12:6-8

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31

LESSON 3: GOD REWARDS FAITHFULNESS, NOT OUTCOME.

“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.” Matthew 25:21

“If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.” John 12:26

“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.” Colossians 3:23-24

LESSON 4: GOD IS LOOKING FOR A RETURN ON HIS INVESTMENT IN YOU.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” Matthew 11:12

“For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.”

Matthew 25:29