

# PARABLES IN LUKE



## PARABLES IN LUKE

(10 BIBLE STUDIES)

**EXAMINATION**

**BIBLE STUDIES**

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## THE SMALL PRINT

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## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THESE STUDIES

### **Your Commitment**

I would encourage you to make a commitment to attending your group regularly. I realise that sometimes there are things that get in the way, but do prioritise studying the Bible with other. This will involve sacrifice, and effective use of your time, but I really believe that in doing so you will get the most out of studying the Bible and praying together in your small group.

### **Your Contribution**

What you put into the group is going to determine what you get out of the group. I encourage you to contribute honestly to the discussion and workings of the group. I understand people come from different backgrounds with unique personalities & life experiences. But, we all have a big part to play, so I encourage you to be fully present and take ownership of your group.

### **Your Preparation**

These materials are primarily for use in preparing and/or leading group discussions, but they will also be useful in keeping your thoughts together in one place. The materials provide you with the passage so that you can identify and highlight recurring themes and note down your own thoughts and questions. Also, the materials include questions designed to provoke thought, and help you reflect on what the passage meant, both at the time it was written, and also what it means for us now.

I would encourage you to make good use of these materials, as doing so will help you contribute and get the most out of the group discussions. The materials are, however, only “tools” – they are there to help you, and not to restrict you, or force you to think in a certain manner. I want to see God speaking to you through these passages, and if the questions or notes don't help you, simply don't use them!

I have also included within these materials an introduction to the book. Make of this what you will, but I hope that it is helpful in getting you started with these studies!

### **Your Leadership**

Here are some useful pointers in how to lead your Bible study group. Be aware that included in this study guide are more questions than you can possibly ask and/or answer in one session. They are not designed to be used rigidly, and there will rarely be a need to ask every question! Make sure that you spend some time praying at the start and ensure you read & re-read the passages as much as possible. In relation to the passages, then consider the suggested questions with an open mind. There is rarely “a single right answer” and I would encourage you to share your thoughts with your group.

I have also included a number of quotations from relevant Christian literature, most of which are readily available online if you want to do further thinking or study. My prayer is that as you study together you would grow to love Jesus and experience Him more deeply.

I would appreciate your feedback and suggestions on how to make these materials even better!

*Steve McClure  
Spring 2019*

### What is a Parable?

Believe it or not parables make up over a third of the recorded teachings of Jesus but what exactly is a parable. In the New Testament parables are unique to the teaching of Jesus though in the Old Testament we have a couple of examples in Isaiah 5:1-7 and 2 Samuel 12:1-7.

Are they moral fables, allegories, secret codes or sermon illustrations? There are elements of truth in all of these descriptions but I am not sure that any truly sum up parables! Surely they are more than simple moral fables or spiritual folktales; they are so much more complicated than that. Though they contain deep and profound truths I would not say that they contain secret codes that we have to dig decipher in order to understand. Likewise if they were mere sermon illustrations then what does that say much for Jesus' teaching because the disciples seem to rarely understand what He is trying to say. Many would describe the parables of Jesus as allegories but while some would certainly contain allegorical elements others would argue that they are not strictly speaking themselves allegories. I defer to an English language expert on that one!

If none of these descriptions accurately define a parable then what exactly is it? The best definition I have found is that a 'parable is a made up story designed to teach a lesson through analogy comparison or contrast.' The word parable is from the Greek word "parabole". This compound word comes from "para" which means "to come along side or compare" and "ballo" which literally means "to throw" or "see" with. In Jesus' parables He wants His listeners to focus on the content of the parable in order to help them understand what it is that He is trying to teach them.

Parables are easy to remember, true to life and are designed to enable us to identify with something familiar to our understanding. One of the biggest challenges for us in understanding Jesus' parables is that they are not necessarily familiar to our understanding. We live in a different time and context and so we have to spend time trying to understand what it would have meant to Jesus' readers!

A parable is designed to communicate and illustrate wisdom; in Jesus' case they often serve as representative illustrations about the Kingdom of God. Parables are designed to make certain points and reveal them in quite immediate ways. Not every aspect of a parable is going to have a profound meaning and if you find yourself digging deeper and deeper for one you may have gone too far!

### The Purpose of Parables

In the Parable of the Sower Jesus Himself is asked why He speaks in parables and His answer is very helpful in answering the question of purpose;

*<sup>10</sup> The disciples came to him and asked, 'Why do you speak to the people in parables?' <sup>11</sup> He replied, 'Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. <sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables: 'Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. **Matthew 13:10-13***

Parables simultaneously hide and reveal truth to their hearers. Jesus is clear here that He speaks in parables to hide the meaning from those whose hearts are hardened. Those who understand them are

those that care about finding their meaning. After all the disciples rarely understood Jesus' parables but they asked Jesus to explain them because they had open hearts.

Parables not only reveal or conceal truth but they also preserve truth because they make truth easier to remember. They are also used on occasion to communicate truth to those who were otherwise unwilling to accept it, e.g. 2 Samuel 12:1-7 and Luke 20:9-19 (study 10).

### Understanding Parables

The trouble with understanding parables is that they are all different. In some the small details have great significance while on others they are not important. Parables usually have one central meaning while the finer details merely serve as background for that central meaning itself. Here are a few practical steps to take when trying to understand parables;

- (a) *Are there alternative versions of the parable?* Some parables appear in only on gospel account (especially those in Luke) while others might appear in most or all. If there are multiple versions look for what the author includes or excludes so that you can understand what the gospel writer is trying to communicate through what has been included.
- (b) *What is the context?* The immediate context is important to understanding the parable because it helps us to understand why Jesus told the parable. For example in Luke 19 & 20 it is really important to note the incident with Jesus overturning tables at the temple and the subsequent questioning of Jesus' authority as the context in which Jesus shares the parable of the Tenants. We may also need to look at the historical context in trying to understand the elements of the story that Jesus is alluding to. There may be things not immediately obvious to us about aspects of the parable that really help in trying to make sense of what Jesus is saying.
- (c) *What is the parable saying about the Kingdom of God?* Jesus made clear that parables often help us to understand the Kingdom of God. In Luke 13 & 17 (Study 4) we will see that the Kingdom of God is said to be both "within us" and yet also "still to come". We might therefore do well to ask ourselves what the parables teaches about what God is doing to establish His Kingdom (either now or in the future), who will be in the Kingdom, how they get there (or will get there) and what will characterise those who are there or are going there?
- (d) *What is the application?* For all our efforts to understand the parables the key reason Jesus gave them was to help us to apply truth to life. Once we have put in the work to understand the context and how the parable would have been understand to its hearers we need to be asking what the parable means for us here and now. After all Jesus said that those who hear His word and put them into practice is like the wise man who built his house on the rock. Why? Because when the storm came the house did not fall because it had its foundation on the rock.

### A final word

Studying the parables of Jesus is a real treat and I trust that the studies contained within this booklet will help you to make the most of them. Enjoy.

*Steve McClure, Autumn 2017*

**STUDY 1 – LUKE 8:1-21 – PARABLE OF THE SOILS**

**INTRODUCTION:** Hearing the Word of God will produce vastly different results in different people. This parable likens our hearts to different types of soil in order to help us appreciate the importance of our hearts in order that we might be good listeners and swift to put His words into practice.

**WHY PARABLES?** Why do you think Jesus taught in parables and how does this parable begin to help answer that question? Why did Jesus tell the parable of the Sower (see context)?

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**THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SOIL (v4-15):** How would you sum up the basic message of the parable? What do the key aspects of the parable (farmer, soil, seed etc) represent? Why is the kind of soil so important to the growth of the seed?

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**RESPONDING TO JESUS:** In what sense can our hearts be like these different types of soil both when we first hear the word of God? In what ways have you experienced others making these kinds of responses to God’s Word? How might this encourage us in sharing our faith?

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**CONTINUING TO RESPOND TO JESUS (v15):** What does it look like to persevere in having hearts that are like the good soil with a ‘noble and good heart’? What different ways does God speak to us today and what is it going to take for us to be fruitful and yield this bountiful crop?

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How does Jesus describe the following conditions which did not create lasting growth? How might our hearts respond this way as we continue to hear God in everyday life?

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**(A) THE PATH:** What kind of attitudes might make us hard of heart? How can we prevent our hearts from being hard and/or becoming hardened?

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**(B) THE ROCK:** What are the 'roots' that we need to have in order to bring lasting growth? How will these roots help us withstand times of testing? What stops us from building these foundations?

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**(C) THE THORNS:** What thorns distract us from hearing and following Jesus? What spiritual gardening do we therefore need to undertake in our lives?

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**THE MYSTERY (v9-10, 16-18):** Jesus' message was a mystery at the time (v9-10), but He didn't intend His message to remain a secret (v16-17). What impact did this have on the disciples, who were the only ones who understood it once Jesus left the world? How might this principle help us understand why Jesus taught in parables?

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**THE PARABLE LIVED OUT (v18-21):** How do you understand Jesus' words that His true family are those who do what God's word says (v19-21)? Why is Jesus so eager to stress that the principles He has brought out from the parable apply to everyone including his own family?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** Think back over the past 6 months; has God been speaking to you during this time, and what kind of soil do you think most characterised your heart? What steps can you take to ensure that your heart is increasingly like the good soil?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Thank God for His Word and ask Him to give us 'ears to hear' His voice and hearts willing to listen and obey Him. Share with one from your own experiences of God speaking to you through His Word.

**MEMORY VERSE: LUKE 8:15**

**STUDY 2 – LUKE 10:1-37 – PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN**

**INTRODUCTION:** Having talked with the disciples about the cost of following Him (9:57-62) Jesus sends them out a second time (see 9:1-9) in His name. To further demonstrate what it was going to mean for them to follow Jesus He then shares a parable about learning to be a neighbour.

**THE PLENTIFUL HARVEST (v2-3):** Why does the command to “ask the Lord of the harvest” (v2) precede the command to ‘go’ (v3)? What does Jesus mean when He says ‘the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few’? Is this still the case and why? What did Jesus mean when He said “I am sending you out like lambs among wolves” (v3) and what does it look like for us today?

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**TRAINING IN MISSION (v4-24):** What was Jesus teaching them about the priorities for their mission in telling them not to take provisions (v4) and not to greet people / move around (v4 & 7)? What would this sense of urgency (as in v2-12) look like for us as we work amongst God’s harvest today?

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Why is it important for both us and the disciples to know that we have the authority of Jesus (v16 & 19 and see also 9:1)? What do you think was the aim of Jesus’ caution in v20? How do you respond to Jesus’ elation (v21-24) regarding the Father’s plan to reveal Himself to His people?

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**QUESTIONS TO JESUS (v25-29):** What do you think was the motivation behind the two questions that the Expert in the Law asked Jesus? In what ways might we or others today seek to *test* God or *justify* ourselves? How important are our motives as we seek God?

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**WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR (v29-37)?** What relation does the parable of the Good Samaritan have with the account of Jesus sending out the seventy two? Why does Jesus tell the parable of the Good Samaritan and what is the point Jesus is trying to make to this 'expert in the law'?

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**LOVING LIKE JESUS (v27 & 37):** What does it mean to 'love God' and 'love your neighbour'? What was wrong with the expert's notion of 'neighbour'? For the Samaritan, loving his neighbour came at significant sacrifice and inconvenience. What does it look like for us to 'love like Jesus did' among those that we live and work with? How can we demonstrate a 'right relationship' to God?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** What might it mean for us to 'ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers', and to 'go' ourselves? What does it mean for us to emphasise relationship with God rather than ritual and from the basis of our relationship with God demonstrate sacrificial love?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Talk about ways that we can labour amongst God's harvest field and pray that the Lord of the Harvest would send out workers. Pray about how you can demonstrate sacrificial love both to those who we find it easy to love and also those who we do not.

**MEMORY VERSES: LUKE 10:2-3**

**STUDY 3 – LUKE 12:13-48 – PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL**

**INTRODUCTION:** Having spent time rebuking the Pharisees in chapter 11 a huge crowd has now gathered but Jesus warns His disciples about hypocrisy (v1-12). The interruption from the man in the crowd (v13) now allows Jesus to address the dangers of greed and anxiety about making ends meet.

**THE RICH FOOL (v13-21):** To what extent was the rich man right or wrong to make provision for the future? What kind of lifestyle and character had the rich man developed? What according to the parable makes a person a fool? In what ways is such a man's heart like the rocky soil (8:6,13)?

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What is the connection between the man's question (about dividing the inheritance) and the parable Jesus told? How does the parable show that "life does not consist of the abundance of our possessions" (v15)? What does it mean to be 'rich toward God' (v21)? Why should we and what would the opposite of this look like?

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**ANXIETY (v22-34):** How is worry related to greed (see v15)? To what extent do you think that to live in worry is to miss out on what life is really about? What does worrying suggest about our concept of God? How does worry dishonour God? What reasons does Jesus give for why worry is unnecessary?

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What would you say is our primary motivation and how does that compare with v31? What does Jesus here promise with regard to our material needs? How could this apply practically to your own situation? How should we apply the extraordinary command Jesus gives in v33?

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**READINESS (v35-48):** What reasons does Jesus give for being alert? What does it take to be ready for when Christ returns? How do the mini parables about the master returning from the wedding banquet and the thief help us to get a handle on what this readiness might look like?

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How should we understand what will happen to those who; (1) justly discharge their responsibilities (v42-44), (2) abuse their authority (v45-46), (3) fail to do Jesus' will out of laziness (v47) and (4) fail to do Jesus' will out of ignorance (v48)?  
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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** What have we seen should be our attitude to money and material possessions? What steps might we take to avoid the dangers associated with anxiety and failing to be ready for Jesus' return?  
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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Share the things that often captivate your hopes for the future and the things that you often find yourselves worrying about. Thank God that He provides all we need and ask Him to help us remember this, and trust Him for our future.

**MEMORY VERSE: LUKE 12:34**

Do you really want the world to revolve around you? If it's all about you, then it's all up to you. Your Father rescues you from such a burden. While you are valuable, you aren't essential. You're important but not indispensable. Still don't think that's good news Perhaps a story would be helpful. My father, an oil-field mechanic, never met a car he couldn't fix. Forget golf clubs or tennis rackets, my dad's toys were sockets and wrenches. He relished a wrecked engine...Dad did with a V8 engine what Patton did with a platoon – he made it work. Oh that the same could be said for his youngest son. It can't. My problem with mechanics begins with the ends of the car. I can't remember which one holds the engine. Anyone who confuses the spare tyre with the fan belt is likely not gifted in car repair. My ignorance left my dad in a precarious position. What does a skilled mechanic do with a son who is anything but? As you begin formulating an answer, may I ask this question: What does God do with us? Under His care the universe runs like a Rolex. But His children? Most of us have trouble balancing a bank account. So what does he do? I know what my dad did. Much to his credit, he let me help him. He gave me jobs to do – holding wrenches, scrubbing spark plugs. And he knew my limits. Never once did he say, "Max, tear apart that transmission, will you? One of the gears is broken." Never said it. For one thing, he liked his transmission. For another, he loved me. He loved me too much to give me too much. So does God. He knows your limitations. He's well aware of your weaknesses. You can no more die for your own sins than you can solve world hunger. And according to Him, that's okay. The world doesn't rely on you...We don't know what it takes to run the world, and wise are we who leave the work to His hands. To say "It's not about you" is not to say you aren't loved; quite the contrary. It's because God loves you that it's not about you. **(From It's Not About Me by Max Lucado)**

**INTRODUCTION:** Many of Jesus' parables regard the "Kingdom of God" and in these passages this phrase is used seven times (13:18, 20, 28-29 & 17:21). It is compared to yeast and a mustard seed. We are to make every effort to enter it and there will be a feast. It is not something we will be able to spot because it is within us. This study will help us think more about the nature of this Kingdom.

**MUSTARD SEED & YEAST (13:18-21):** In what sense is the Kingdom of God like a mustard seed (18-19) and yeast (20-21)? Why do you think Jesus uses these examples and what is He communicating through these mini-parables? How should we respond to these parables?

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**THE NARROW DOOR (13:22-30):** How do you respond emotionally and intellectually to Jesus' teaching on the narrow door (v24) and the parable that he tells in the subsequent verses (v25-27)? In what sense is the door to the Kingdom both *wide* (v18-19, 28-30) and *narrow* (v25 & 27)?

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What does Jesus mean when He says 'there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last' (see also Mark 9:35)? On what basis will people enter OR not enter the Kingdom of heaven?

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**SORROW FOR JERUSALEM (13:31-35):** What do these verses (aka, 'the lament of the Rejected Lover') reveal about Jesus' character and mission? How do you understand the description Jesus gives to the Pharisees of how God's people had (and still do) rejected Him and ignored Him?

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**THE KINGDOM WITHIN US (17:20-21):** In what sense was the Kingdom of God already among His hearers (v20-21 and also 1:23-33, 4:18-21)? Why were the Pharisees unable to perceive the Kingdom already among them or already available to be within them (see also 11:34-36, 39-44)?

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**THE RETURN OF THE KING (17:22-37):** What did Jesus say to do when people claim that the Son of Man has returned (v22-25) and why? In what sense will the days of the Son of Man be like the days of Noah and Lot (v26-35)? What does the lightning metaphor warn about the nature of His coming?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** Try to summarise what we have learned about the Kingdom of God; How can we describe it? What's it like? How do we enter into it? How do these ideas clash with the Pharisees expectation that the Kingdom of God would be visible and earthly?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Pray that the Kingdom of God would advance 'like yeast working through the dough' (13:21). Pray for friends / loved ones who don't know Jesus; that they would be 'willing' (13:34), and that they would 'make every effort to enter through the narrow door' (13:24).

**MEMORY VERSES: LUKE 17:20-21**

**STUDY 5 – LUKE 14:1-35 – PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET**

**INTRODUCTION:** Jesus develops the theme of a banquet (13:22-30) further here. Jesus eats at the house of a prominent Pharisee (v1-14) and during the dinner He told them parables about a wedding feast (v8-14) and a Great Banquet (v15-24). Once back on the road, Jesus spoke to the large crowd's following Him about the costs involved in being His disciple.

**QUESTIONS (v1-6):** Why do you think Jesus asks so many questions? In what ways does the silence of the religious experts surprise you given that they were carefully watching Him? How might you use questions to cause others to think and where necessary to change?

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**PLACES OF HONOUR (v7-14):** In picking the places of honour (v7) what were the guests revealing about their way of thinking? Why do you think guests would choose the places of honour? What according to Jesus is the benefit of taking the least important place?

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In what other situations have we got a tendency to exalt ourselves? What does it take to humble ourselves? Why does Jesus give advice about who to invite to dinner (v12)? What is the motivation for inviting "outsiders" to a banquet? In what other situations could you apply Jesus instructions?

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**THE GREAT BANQUET (v15-24):** The banquet referred to by the guest was spoken of in Isaiah 25:6-10. In the parable that Jesus subsequently tells him what impression do you get of the man who is hosting the banquet? What do you make of the excuses that people give (v18-20) and why did they respond in this way? To what extent was the master justified in being angry?

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What do you think Jesus is really talking about here? What does the banquet represent? Who are the people who are initially invited? Who ends up coming to the banquet? How might we be able to apply the lesson of this parable to our own lives?  
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**COUNTING THE COST (v25-35):** Notice the common phrase in v26, 27 & 33; how would you summarise what Jesus is saying here about being a disciple? How might we balance our everyday responsibilities with our discipleship? What has it looked like for you to count the cost?  
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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** How would you summarise the thrust of Jesus' message to us here about the Great banquet that awaits us and the life we live here and now as disciples? What is it going to take for us to come hungry to Jesus rather than to just make our excuses?  
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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Talk about your own experience of trying to get the best places and/or exalt yourself above others. Thank God for his desire for people come to his banquet and pray for some non-Christian friends to hear & respond to the invitation.

**MEMORY VERSE: LUKE 14:11**

**STUDY 6 – LUKE 15 – PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN, SHEEP AND SON**

**INTRODUCTION:** Jesus tells these parables in response to the Pharisees attack on His dining companions (v2). Despite Jesus' tough words about discipleship, people were still coming to Him. Jesus tells them 3 parables where three items of increasing value go missing; 1 of 100 sheep, 1 in 10 coins and 1 in 2 sons. In all the central character searches for what was lost and rejoices when found.

**UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT (v1-2):** Why do you think that Jesus told these parables? We are not told anything about the response of Jesus' hearers but what do you suppose it might have been?

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Why do the hearers need to understand that there is rejoicing in heaven over a sinner who repents? Who do we consider to be "sinners"? What is our attitude towards people we think of as "sinners"?

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**LOST SHEEP AND COIN (v3-10):** Compare the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin; identify the similarities and the differences? Jesus compares finding a lost sheep or coin with a "sinner repenting", what is the similarity between these things? Is this or isn't this a helpful comparison?

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**THE WAYWARD YOUNGER SON (v11-21):** What was motivating the younger son at the start of the parable? Why do you think he wanted to leave home? In asking for his share of the inheritance what was the son effectively saying to his Father (v12)? Why is it such a surprise that the father grants the request? (v12) How do you think the Father feels?

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What happened to him after he had left home (note 'the distant country' would have been outside Jewish territory & pigs were regarded as unclean)? How did he end up in such a desperate situation?



What was the turning point for him? Do you think it would be easy for him to return home? Why or why not? What did his plan for what he would do when he got home reveal about him?

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**THE COMPASSIONATE FATHER (v22-27):** Why do you think that the Father didn't go and rescue the son? Why do you think the Father reacted in the way he did to the return of the younger son (note the running, the robe and the ring)?

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Do you think that God would throw a party if you 'came back home'? Why or why not? ... If you've already 'come back home', do you think God held a celebratory feast for you? Or is that just for others?

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**THE PROUD ELDER SON (v28-32):** How does the older son feel about his brother, his father and his situation? Do you think he has a problem or is his reaction justified? How does the father respond to the elder son? What do you find surprising about what he says to the older son?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** Who do you think the main character of the story is, the son or the father? Would you give this story an alternative title? To what extent can you relate to any of the characters in the story? If so who, and why? In what ways does this parable challenge and/or move you?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Thank God for His great love and the lengths that He has gone to welcome each of us back. Whether you are more like the wayward younger son, or the proud elder son, thank God for welcoming you back through His extraordinary outpouring of love and compassion.

**MEMORY VERSES: LUKE 15:31-32**

**STUDY 7 – LUKE 16:1-31 – PARABLE OF THE SHREWD MANAGER**

**INTRODUCTION:** Following the parables in chapter 15 Jesus turns to His disciples and instructs them to use money rather than be used by it. The Pharisees overheard and sneered at Jesus (v14). Jesus contrasts their outward piety with their deceitful hearts through their disregard for helping the poor.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** Why do you imagine that Luke follows up Jesus' parables about the lost sheep, coin and son with these two parables?

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**THE SHREWD MANAGER (v1-7):** How do you instinctively respond to the seemingly wasteful actions of the manager? Which would you say that the "shrewd manager" valued more: money or relationships? Why? How is the manager's predicament the same as every sinners predicament?

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*NB: The Greek word for "wasting" (v1) is the same word as is used in the previous parable (15:13) in regards to the prodigal son. This word is used only a few times in the entire NT, and is usually translated as "scattered."*

**THE MASTER'S COMMENDATION (v8-15):** Why does the master commend his manager (v8), when he had depleted the master's wealth in both the past and the present (v1 & v5-7)? What would your course of action be if you were the master in this scenario? The manager?

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**ADDITIONAL TEACHINGS:** How do these strangely placed verses fit into the overall theme of this passage? Why do you think that Jesus chose to highlight that particular point concerning adultery in that place and context?

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**THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS (v19-24):** Compare and contrast the lives of the rich man and Lazarus before and after death. Who do you most identify with? Why do you think Luke chose to include this parable in his Gospel when none of the other Gospels record it at all?

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**LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:** What (if any) principles can we draw from this parable about the nature of life in eternity? In what ways does this snapshot of eternity excite or motivate you?

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**REVISITING THE CONTEXT:** Notice that the 1<sup>st</sup> parable is directed towards the disciples (v1), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> parable is directed at the Pharisees (v14); how does this impact your understanding? How would each group fit into each parable; the disciples into the parable of the shrewd manager, and the Pharisees into the parable about Lazarus and the rich man?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** Are there any similarities between the two parables, especially in the sense of how these two seemingly unrelated individuals handled their possessions? What can we learn from either or both of these stories about how best to sow or “scatter” our money?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Talk about your attitude towards money and possessions. In the context of this passage, do you have a healthy understanding, use, and attitude of and towards money? Pray that you will be able to faithfully use the resources God has given you, and be sensitive towards the needs of others in both a temporal and eternal sense.

**MEMORY VERSE: LUKE 16:13**

**STUDY 8 – LUKE 18:1-30 – PARABLES OF THE WIDOW, PHARISEE & TAX COLLECTOR**

**INTRODUCTION:** Jesus teaches the disciples about persistence in prayer, the confident & proud about humility & child-like faith and the rich ruler about the cost of following Him. In all these things we come wrestle with Jesus' hard call on our lives to follow Him. There is however much encouragement here that whatever we give up for Jesus' sake will be hugely rewarded both here and in eternity/

**THE PERSISTENT WIDOW (v1-8):** Why does Jesus say that He tells this first parable to the disciples (v1)? Why do you think the widow is so persistent and what might such 'persistence' look like?

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**THE UNJUST JUDGE:** What motivates the unjust judge to act? How does Jesus compare this unjust judge to the Father (look for similarities and differences)? NB: Luke records a similar style of logic ("if the lesser is true, then how much more so the greater") in 11:11-13, 12:6-7, 12:25-27, & 13:15-16.

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From your own experience, do v7-8 seem to ring true? Why or why not? If not, is there anything we can do to bring about justice in this world? In what ways does this parable encourage you to pray? If the Son of Man came to you today would he find faith?

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**THE PHARISEE & TAX COLLECTOR (v9-14):** What was wrong with the Pharisees prayer (v11-12)? Would it be possible to say a prayer such as that in the proper spirit and attitude? Compare and contrast the lives and prayers of the Pharisee and the tax collector. Whose prayer do you think yours are most like in appearance and attitude?

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**LITTLE CHILDREN (v15-17):** Why do you think Luke sandwiches these verses about how they show us what it means to receive the Kingdom of God like little children? Does this child-like trust mean that we should not question and test the things we hear about God? Why or why not?

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**WHY DO YOU CALL ME GOOD (v19-22)?** Why does Jesus ask the question “Why do you call me good” and what point is He trying to make? How should this influence the rich young ruler’s attitude towards and perception of Jesus in the conversation to follow?

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**THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS (v23-30):** Why did the rich young ruler appear to turn down Jesus’ offer to follow Him (v23)? What have you already given up in order to follow Jesus and what might be keeping you from following Jesus more fully? How do you respond to Jesus words of encouragement to Peter regarding all that he had already given up to follow Jesus?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** This passage is broken into 4 sections; two parables and two real-world examples; how would you summarise this passage? Be mindful of expectations: how would the original hearers and observers of these stories and events have expected things to play out? Do you think their expectations were met? What does this teach us about the Kingdom of God?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Discuss what you have and have not left behind to follow Jesus. Can you honestly say it has it been worth it? What do you think Jesus might be asking you to set aside to follow Him more fully? Pray for wisdom and strength, to know what to do and then to be able to do it.

**MEMORY VERSES: LUKE 18:28-30**

**STUDY 9 – LUKE 19:1-27 – PARABLE OF THE TEN MINAS**

**INTRODUCTION:** Jesus' meeting with Zacchaeus sets the scene for the Parable of the Ten Minas. Luke continues to build on the idea of the Kingdom of God which he says is both present and coming. The challenge throughout the passage is about will we accept Jesus as King? Jesus may have been alluding here to a recent event; Archalaeus received the "rulership" Judea from his father Herod, but before he could take over, he had to go to Rome to be confirmed by Caesar.

**INTRODUCING ZACCHAEUS (1-4):** What does Luke tell us about Zacchaeus? What do you think he believed about Jesus and why do you think he was so interested to see Him (note Matthew, a tax collector had become a disciple and many others had repented and been baptised by John)? What do you think caused Jesus to notice Zacchaeus up the tree (divine power or the mocking crowd)?

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How would Jesus' initial reaction to Zacchaeus (i.e. command to come down immediately and inviting Himself to dinner at his house) have gone down with the crowd (note that inviting yourself to dinner was an unheard of social practice in that culture)? How did this demonstrate love and acceptance?

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**EMBRACING JESUS OFFER (v5-9):** How does Zacchaeus demonstrate that he has truly embraced Jesus' offer of salvation (see also Leviticus 6:2-5)? What might it look like for you to offer the grace you have received to others... i.e. who should accepting Jesus impact our lives?

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**TO SEEK AND SAVE THE LOST (v10):** How does Jesus define his mission in v10? What does Jesus do to seek and to save Zacchaeus? In what ways did the crowds misunderstand Jesus' mission? What do these encounters mean for our mission? Who might be modern day examples of these people? Are you willing to scandalise public opinion for the sake of the gospel?

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**THE PARABLE OF THE TEN MINAS (v11-27):** To what extent is Jesus like the man of noble birth in the Parable of the Ten Minas? What elements in the parable might lead you to think that he is talking about Himself? What is the judgement of the servants based on and how does he reward his servant? What impression does this give you of the king?

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**SERVING FAITHFULLY:** What do you think motivated the servants to do what they did with their mina? Were they told about the reward? How does the king treat his enemies (v27)? Does this shock you? How does this compare with their attitude towards the king (v14)? How does this compare with the kings treatment of the third servant (v24)?

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**WAITING FOR THE KING:** What does this parable have to say to us about what we should be doing while we wait for the King to return? To what extent does the knowledge that there will be a day of judgement affect how we live our lives today?

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**TALENTS AND MINAS:** If you have time contrast with Matthew 25:14-30 and question whether there a difference between a “talent” and a “mina”? What do you think these could actually represent and what are you currently doing with your talent/mina?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Talk about what it means to have Jesus as Lord over us and our role as his servants. Think of some people you know who do not want Jesus as their king (v14,27) and pray for them that God will change their hearts.

**MEMORY VERSE: LUKE 19:10**

**STUDY 10 – LUKE 20:1-26 – PARABLE OF THE TENANTS**

**INTRODUCTION:** Jesus is at the temple (see v1 and 19:45-48) and we find Him talking to the people in the temple courts. In that context the religious leaders repeatedly question His authority; at first this is head on but after the parable they come at him more subtly with a question about tax.

**SETTING THE SCENE:** To what extent do you agree that asking questions is a good thing? What part do our manner and motivations play in this regard?

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**QUESTIONING JESUS' AUTHORITY (v1-8):** Why do you think the chief priests and teachers of the law asked Jesus the question they did in v2 (see prior context)? Why do you think that Jesus didn't directly answer their question but instead shot a question back on them?

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**UNDERSTANDING THE PARABLE (v9-16):** In the parable, who do you think the various characters represent; the owner; the farmers; the servants, the son & the "others" the owner gives the vineyard to in v16? Who (if anyone) do you think you best identify with or as?

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The background to this parable is Isaiah 5:1-7; how might this passage help us to understand what it is that Jesus is trying to say through the parable?

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**RESPONDING TO THE PARABLE:** To what extent do you think that the hearers of this parable understood its meaning (see their reactions in v16 & 19)? How do you think you would have reacted if you were a first-century Jew who heard Jesus say this, and realised that it was directed at you?



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What point does Jesus make by quoting from the Messianic prophecies (from Psalm 118:22 and also quoted in the other gospels, Acts 4:11 and 1 Peter 2:7) in v17-18? What does the interaction in 20:9-19 have to do with the leaders challenge in v1-8?

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**PAYING TAXES TO CAESAR (v20-26):** Jesus' reaction to the question in v22 mirrors His response in v2; would you say this is typical of the way Jesus usually handles questions? Why or why not (see v20 & 26)? What questions would you ask Jesus if you had the chance?

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Jesus implies that the denarius belonged to Caesar because his image was on it and he'd made it. If we bear the image of God (Genesis 1-2), what implications does this have for what we do with live our lives? What does it mean to give to God what is rightfully His (try and be specific)?

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**DRAWING IT TOGETHER:** How might these encounters help us to know how to answer those who question our faith? What most impresses you about the way that Jesus challenges the Jewish authorities and presents them with an illustration of what God was doing with His people?

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**IDEAS FOR PRAYER:** Think about what questions you would like to ask Jesus and ask Him to help you ask with good intentions in an honest and teachable spirit. If you feel comfortable to, share with the group and think together about how Jesus might answer them.

**MEMORY VERSES: LUKE 20:17-18**

“Captured in a portrait is a tender scene of a father and a son. Behind them is a great house on a hill. Beneath their feet is a narrow path. Down from the house the father has run. Up the trail the son has trudged. The two have met, here, at the gate. We can’t see the face of the son; it’s buried in the chest of his father. We can see the mud on the back of his legs, the filth on his shoulders and the empty purse on the ground. At one time the purse was full of money. At one time the boy was full of pride. But that was a dozen taverns ago. Now both the purse and the pride are depleted. The prodigal offers no gift or explanation. All he offers is the smell of pigs and a rehearsed apology. He feels unworthy of his birth right ... The boy is content to be a hired hand. There is only one problem. Though the boy is willing to stop being a son, the father is not willing to stop being a father. Look at the tears glistening on the [fathers] leathered cheeks, the smile shining through the silver beard. One arm holds the boy up so he won’t fall, the other holds the boy close so he won’t doubt. “Hurry!” he shouts. “Bring the best clothes and put them on him. Also, put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get our fat calf and kill it so we can have a feast and celebrate. My son was dead, but now he is alive again! He was lost but now he is found!” (Luke 15:22-24 NCV). How these words must have stunned the young man, “My son was dead...” He thought he’d lost his place in the home. After all, didn’t he abandon his father? Didn’t he waste his inheritance? The boy assumed he had forfeited his privilege to sonship. The father, however, doesn’t give up that easily. In his mind, his son is still a son. The child may have been out of the house, but he was never out of his father’s heart. He may have left the table, but he never left the family. Don’t miss the message here. You may be willing to stop being God’s child. But God is not willing to stop being your Father.”

**(From The Great House of God by Max Lucado)**



# MEMORY VERSES

## STUDY 1: LUKE 8:1-21 – PARABLE OF THE SOILS

<sup>15</sup> But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. **Luke 8:15**

## STUDY 2: LUKE 10:1-37 – PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

<sup>2</sup> He told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. <sup>3</sup> Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

**Luke 10:2-3**

## STUDY 3: LUKE 12:13-48 – PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

<sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. **Luke 12:34**

## STUDY 4: LUKE 13:18-35 & 17:20-37 – PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

<sup>20</sup> Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, 'The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, <sup>21</sup> nor will people say, "Here it is," or "There it is," because the kingdom of God is in your midst.'

**Luke 17:20-21**

## STUDY 5: LUKE 14:1-35 – PARABLE OF GREAT BANQUET

<sup>11</sup> For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.' **Luke 14:11**

## STUDY 6: LUKE 15:1-32 – PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP, COIN AND SON

<sup>31</sup> "My son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." **Luke 15:31-32**

## STUDY 7: LUKE 16:1-31 – PARABLE OF THE SHREWD MANAGER

<sup>13</sup> 'No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.' **Luke 16:13**

## STUDY 8: LUKE 18:1-30 – PARABLES OF THE WIDOW, PHARISEE & TAX COLLECTOR

<sup>28</sup> Peter said to him, 'We have left all we had to follow you!' <sup>29</sup> 'Truly I tell you,' Jesus said to them, 'no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God <sup>30</sup> will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.'

**Luke 18:28-30**

## STUDY 9: LUKE 19:1-27 – PARABLE OF THE TEN MINAS

<sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.' **Luke 19:10**

## STUDY 10: LUKE 20:1-26 – PARABLE OF THE TENANTS

<sup>17</sup> Jesus looked directly at them and asked, 'Then what is the meaning of that which is written: "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone"? <sup>18</sup> Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.' **Luke 20:17-18**