

PICTURES OF THE KINGDOM

SCANDALOUS JESUS :THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, PART 9 · MATTHEW 21:28-22:14 · MARCH 20, 2022 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you...I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit." (Matthew 21:31, 43)

Introduction

A group of three *enacted* parables (21:1-22)

A group of three *spoken* parables (21:28-22:14)

Two themes:

- Jesus brings a great reversal in God's kingdom
- Jesus reveals the risks of religious apathy and blind reassurance

A Father and Two Sons (21:28-32)

Characters: The Father, Son #1, Son #2 and the Vineyard

Great reversal: Prostitutes and tax collectors are entering God's Kingdom ahead of the apparently religious

Risk: Failure to repent and believe risks exclusion.

→ *Response: Letting our need lead us to Christ.*

The Vineyard (21:33-44)

Characters: Landowner, the tenants, two groups of servants, the son of the landowner

Great reversal: The fruitless tenants will be destroyed and the land given to someone else

Risk: Rejecting Jesus and God's fruit leads to rejection by God

→ *Response: Opening ourselves fully to Christ.*

The Wedding Banquet (22:1-14)

Characters: King, the servants, those invited, those gathered (including the poorly dressed guest)

Great reversal: The invited will be rejected and replaced with unlikely others

Risk: rejecting God's summons leads to rejection; responding without what's due is costly

→ *Response: Hearing God's summons and responding fully.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When have you seen something happen that reversed your expectations? Maybe it was a situation in your finances, your workplace, a family relationship, etc. What happened?

2. This week we continue our series "Scandalous Jesus" by exploring three parables about God's kingdom. Each one reflects a reversal of expectations. Begin your study in prayer by asking God to speak to you through His Word, then read Matthew 21:28-32 aloud.
3. How would you summarize this first parable in your own words?
4. What would you say is the main point of Jesus' parable and teaching here?
5. How might we need to hear Jesus' words in Matthew 21:28-32 today?
6. Now read the second parable about the vineyard in Matthew 21:33-44. How would you summarize this parable in your own words?
7. While this is not always the case with Jesus' parables, this parable has elements of allegory. Who might you say the landowner, the tenants, the servants, and the son represent?
8. What is the great reversal that Jesus speaks about in 21:41-44? How do the religious leaders respond to Jesus teaching in 21:45-46?
9. Why is what Jesus saying risky?
10. Next, read the third parable in 22:1-14. How would you summarize that in your own words?
11. How would you describe the response of the invited guests as seen in 22:3-6? How does the king respond to them?
12. What happens with the next summons to those who are uninvited in 22:8-10?
13. What stands out to you about these guests?
14. Why might the ill-dressed guest have received such a negative response?
15. What is one thing God is revealing to you about Jesus through this study on the three parables? If you're on your own, write that down, pray over it, and share it with someone this week. If you are with a small group, share your answers with one another before closing in prayer.

DIG DEEPER:

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Memorize Matthew 21:42 or 21:43 or 22:9-10
- Draw, ink, or paint one or more of the parables in this section of Scripture. As you depict these scenes or episodes in your own way, take time to talk with God about what He is speaking to you.
- Consider watching the Bible Project video "How to Read the Parables of Jesus": bibleproject.com/explore/video/how-to-read-the-bible-the-parables-of-jesus/.