

JESUS THE CHRIST

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST

- Catechism teaches us about Jesus # 422 - 679
- **Names of Jesus in scripture**
 - **Jesus** – Yeshua, common name for Jewish boys of time means God is salvation or God saves in Hebrew. Jesus' very name reflects his identity and his mission as saviour of the world. It is through Jesus, and Jesus alone, that we are saved from our sins.
 - **Christ** is not Jesus' last name – it is a formal title that is used over 400 times in New Testament. Christ is Greek translation for the Hebrew word for messiah, which means anointed one. Jesus the Christ means Jesus, the anointed one sent by God to be the saviour of the world.
 - **Son of God**; title signifies special and eternal relationship with God. Jesus is only, true, eternal Son of the Father and he is part of the Trinity, God himself.
 - **Lord** – title of respect in Jesus' time. Also Lord is the Greek word they used instead of Yahweh, the Hebrew name often used for God in the Old Testament. Yahweh was considered too sacred to be pronounced out loud, so the Jews came to use the word Lord instead. When we call Jesus Lord, we recognize his divinity and acknowledge that he alone is worthy of our worship and our complete obedience.

HISTORICAL DATA ABOUT JESUS

- Jesus was a Jew, born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem sometime between 6 and 4 BC. He grew up in Nazareth, a town in Galilee.
- He was called Jesus, which means YHWH saves. His last name was not Christ. He was probably known as Jesus, son of Mary and Joseph, or Jesus, the carpenter's son. Christ, which means the anointed one or Messiah, was a title given to him by his disciples after his death and resurrection.
- Jesus' parents were deeply religious. Each year they went to the temple in Jerusalem – about a two week journey – to celebrate Passover. One story tells of Jesus going with them at the age of 12. We know little about his life before he was 30. He lived in Nazareth and probably followed Joseph's trade. Justin the Martyr, who lived in the second century, said that Jesus was a maker of yokes and ploughs.
- He was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River in the 15th year of Emperor Tiberias, around AD 27.
- Jesus began his ministry after King Herod arrested John the Baptist. Luke says that he was then about 30 years old.
- Jesus called men and women to follow him and to go to the places where he himself could not go. From among these disciples he called the Twelve. Just as Israel consisted of twelve tribes, the new Israel, which began with Jesus, was to be led by the Twelve apostles. They were to be the vanguard. From the Twelve, Jesus chose Simon Peter to be the rock upon which he would build his church.
- Jesus proclaimed that the reign of God or kingdom of God was at hand. He did what he said he would do when, at the beginning of his ministry, he quoted the prophet Isaiah Luke 4:18 – 19
- Jesus taught about the kingdom of God by telling parables, healing the sick, providing for people's needs and forgiving sins. His public ministry lasted between one and half and three years.
- In AD 30, the Romans, in collusion with Jewish leaders, condemned Jesus to death. He died on the eve of Passover. Shortly after his death, the disciples reported that they had seen the Lord Jesus. They proclaimed that he had risen from the dead, and was now the Lord who is with us until the end of time.
- At Pentecost, the disciples were transformed by an experience of the Holy Spirit. They began to preach the gospel of Jesus to the ends of the earth. This ministry has continued for two thousand years.

7 CONVICTIONS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST - CHRISTOLOGY

- **Historical human reality of Jesus of Nazareth born into a first century Jewish culture on far edges of Roman Empire.** He lived, carried out his religious mission, and died within that time. **BASIC FACTS:** Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew, a carpenter and the son of Mary. He was born in Bethlehem of Judea sometime around year 5 BCE. He was raised in the small village of Nazareth. Most of his life was lived in obscurity. At about age thirty, for a short period of three years or so, he went about preaching and teaching. God and God' coming reign were at the heart of what he taught. He apparently demonstrated some unusual powers and was referred

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to by historians of his day as a worker of wonderful deeds. His teachings, especially what he had to say about God and God's love for sinners and outcasts, stirred great interest among the Jewish people, leading some to proclaim him a great prophet and others to reject him. . He was brought to trial, found guilty of crimes under Roman law and executed by crucifixion at the order of Pontius Pilate sometime around the year 30 CE

- **The Resurrection of Jesus:** After Jesus' tragic and violent death, something occurred that his disciples said had never happened before. The disciples believed and proclaimed that he was "raised" to a glorified life by the power of the God of Israel and exalted to a glorious union with God
 - **Belief in resurrection forms absolute basis of Christian faith** – single most important event in all history
 - Through life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ all humanity has an opportunity to share in the eternal life God has planned for us from the beginning of time
 - Refers to real historical event and also describes a profound and complex series of faith convictions that shape an entire way of looking at reality. Shapes Christian's way of believing
 - **Each of four gospels has a slightly different account** of what happened in the few days after Jesus' death.
 - **Mark** originally with several women discovering an empty tomb and an angel telling the women that Jesus had been raised. A longer ending was later added to gospel in which Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and the other disciples
 - **Matthew**, Pilate placed guard at tomb to keep the disciples from stealing Jesus' body, but an angel rolls away the stone. The resurrected Jesus meets disciples on a mountain in Galilee where he gives them a mission to go and make disciples of all nations
 - **John** has most resurrection stories – with four separate accounts of Jesus appearing to different people. Jesus reveals himself to Mary Magdalene at tomb
 - **Common elements:**
 - First women disciples and then men go to tomb and discover that body of Jesus is no longer there
 - People who go to the tomb find out from angels that Jesus is no longer dead but alive and will reveal himself to disciples soon
 - Later Jesus appears to groups of disciples to wish them peace and charge them with continuing his mission. Often the disciples' initial reaction is shock and fear. But soon they experience Jesus in such striking ways that they cannot doubt that it is he – alive again and yet somehow different from the way he was before his death
 - **Paschal Mystery has two aspects: by his death Christ liberates us from sin; by his resurrection he opens for us the way to a new life**
 - Resurrection of Jesus names a totally new act of God of Israel. The real emphasis should not be placed on the revived body of Jesus but on God's resurrecting action. This God performed another great and definitive action – the raising of Jesus to glorified life at right hand of the Father. An historical act that reverberates through all time and space
 - Resurrections asserts Jesus now lives in an entirely new and glorified mode of existence. The Jesus who lived, preached and died is the same Jesus raised to life by the power of God – yet he is different enough that some people do not immediately recognize him. His body has been truly transformed
 - Jesus has passed beyond our world to very right hand of God
 - Resurrecting act of God has resulted in beginning of new stage in human history and creation. Those who believe in Jesus will be transformed by the same power that transformed Jesus
 - Religious meaning of resurrection:
 - Jesus is confirmed as the Son of God
 - All Jesus' teachings are true
 - Teaches us death is not end – death is doorway into new and eternal life
 - Resurrection was and remains many things:
 - Unique act of God
 - An event in life of Jesus
 - Exemplar of the transforming experience at the core of Christian faith

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- **Incarnation:** Living mystery of Jesus Christ truly God with us. **In Jesus God became human like us and in Jesus the fullness of God's mystery is revealed.** When we look at the titles used for Jesus in the bible, we are led to an inescapable conclusion: the authors of the Gospels believed that **Jesus Christ was fully God. He was also fully human.** The Incarnation: True God, True Human
 - Incarnation mystery we can never fully understand. At time appointed by God, Jesus Christ, the Word of God, became incarnate. That is, without losing his divine nature, he became fully human.
 - Jesus had a human nature just as we do; he laughed, wept, was tempted, felt pain. Had human body, intellect, will. Also had a divine will and intellect
 - In Jesus, God reconciled the human family to divinity. In Jesus, God revealed divine love for us. With the coming of our brother Jesus, we became God's children. In Jesus God offers us a true model of holiness and humanness.
 - Because in Jesus Christ the human and divine are perfectly united, he is the perfect and only mediator between God and humanity. God is able to reveal God's loving plan through Jesus. In learning about Jesus we understand more fully what God requires of us. God wants us to become the image of God we were created to be.
- **Purpose of Incarnation is for our salvation.** Reason for this founded in pure love of God for all humanity and creation. God desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1Tim 2:4) The will of God seeks to effect this purpose through Jesus Christ, who is our perfect mediator.
- **Jesus Christ as fullness of true humanity:** Jesus' life plunges us into full mystery of our humanness, calling us to explore what it means to live a good human life. By looking at the life of Jesus, we come to know God
- **The continuing presence of Jesus Christ among us now:** Jesus has not left us to walk world alone. He continues to strengthen and grace those who believe in him with his unique sanctifying presence. This happens in the sacraments and in other ways.
- **Jesus Christ as Lord of the future:** Jesus also directs creation to true fulfillment

MEANING OF JESUS' PASSION AND DEATH

- Jesus' death was time of suffering, doubt, pain, fear. Jesus was betrayed, put through a mock trial, tortured, and crucified. **He was fully human and was not saved from these human feeling because of his divine nature.** Jesus' commitment to follow the will of God was stronger than his fear. He willingly accepted one of the most painful and humiliating ways to die that humans have ever devised. His final words on the cross "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" Luke 23:46 signify his complete trust in his Father.
- **His death was part of the mystery of God's plan for the salvation of the human race.** This doesn't mean that Pilate, soldiers, chief priests and scribes were puppets, acting without free will. God is master of time and history and can accomplish God's purposes through freely made human decisions, even sinful decisions.
- God's purpose for death of Christ – since sin of Adam & Eve, human race has been under the curse of death as the penalty for their sin. But God would not abandon God's beloved creatures to death. **God planned that God's Son, Jesus, Godself, would take on the burden of sin for all humanity, dying so that all could be free from the sentence of death. Salvation from sin and death for every person comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ**
- **God did not punish Jesus for our sins;** Jesus bore no guilt, he never sinned. Out of love, he took on our guilt, the distance we put between ourselves and God. In fact God desired with infinite love to find a way to save the world from sin without destroying the gift of freedom.
 - Jesus himself is perfectly united to God – truly human and therefore humankind, at least in one human being is forever united to God. Even though all the world rebel, God and humanity are now inseparable.
 - Jesus is a man in whom there was perfect human love and loyalty, trust and obedience. He is the perfect opposite of sin, which an attempt to be independent, to be self-sufficient, self-willed, self-powered. Only God is God, all else is creation, dependent creation.
 - As living, feeling human, Jesus allowed himself to be taken over completely by the love of God. He was wide open to all the goodness his Father wanted to give him, all the good that was to be done. He emptied himself. He was acting as a creature should act – open to ever-present gift of his Father's love. He let it enter him and empower his every thought, word and action.
 - Why does he have to die? Because giving up one's life is the total gift; anything else would have been lesser gift. He came to a world lost to sin. He showed us how God acts in the face of hatred. God wants only to love, to forgive, to heal, to reconcile.

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- Jesus enters into world and all its misery – he is soaked through, as it were, with the misery of the human condition. And in this he maintains his never-swerving devotion to his Father. He lets his Father's love fill his life. If that aroused the hatred of evil, and it inevitably would, so be it. There was nothing the world could do to him that would deflect his love for his father.
- **Early church used three symbolic explanations:**
 - **Jesus, the suffering servant;** looked to Hebrew scriptures and suffering servant passages Isaiah 42:1 – 4, 49:1 – 6, 50:4 – 9, 52:13 – 53:12. These passages describe an unnamed servant of the Lord who suffers greatly – not as punishment for his own sins but to save the people from theirs. The servant has been given God's spirit and his mission is to bring justice to the world. He is subject to insults and derision, he is beaten and his face is spat on. He is spurned and avoided by the people who think God is punishing him for his sins. Made connection to Jesus – Jesus' freely given obedience to God's will was part of the explanation for how we have been freed from our sins
 - **Jesus the Paschal lamb;** again in Hebrew scriptures the story of the Passover or paschal lamb. When Israelites were slaves in Egypt to convince Pharaoh to let the people go, God sent a series of ten plagues upon the Egyptian people. The last and most horrible was an angel of death that killed the firstborn son of every family in the land. Moses instructed the Israelites to kill a lamb and put its blood on their doorpost so the angel of death would pass over their home without killing the firstborn son. After this Pharaoh let the people go. In Gospel of John Jesus is called the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. To make it clear, in John Jesus is crucified on the feast of the Passover, the same day the lambs were being slaughtered in Temple. Just as the blood of the lamb liberated the Israelites from death and slavery, so too does Jesus' death and resurrection save all humanity from death and from slavery from sin.
 - **Jesus, the ransom for many;** in Roman world a ransom was the price paid to release a slave. The payment was made in front of a shrine to a local god, to indicate that the slave was becoming the property of that god and could no longer be owned by another person. The early Christians adopted this concept to help explain the saving nature of Jesus' death to Roman citizens. Idea of ransom helps us understand that Jesus paid to God the price of our freedom so that we are no longer owned by sin and death.
 - **Power of love at core of Christian understanding of the cross** – through the death and resurrection of Jesus God poured out unlimited complete love for all the people. Cross and resurrection form the new covenant that God made, through Jesus with all people. In this covenant, the cross is the symbol of how much God loves us, giving the divine Self to us completely, not only on cross, but always. Can only understand in conjunction with the resurrection.
 - **Must be careful to see these as metaphors and not translate too literally.** If we take any to the extreme God comes off as an angry and cold-hearted accountant, demanding exact payment in blood before setting us free. This is the exact opposite of Jesus' description of God as a loving and forgiving Father. What these three images want us to appreciate is that through the death of Jesus Christ, the separation between God and humanity – which is caused by sin – has been bridged. This is God's great gift for us, the freely offered sacrifice of God himself, in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - **The cross, the symbol of death, has been transformed into the symbol of freedom and life**

JESUS' MISSION: PROCLAIM THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- ✓ Jesus' public life begins with his baptism by John; afterward he went into desert to pray and fast in preparation for the mission. During that time he rejected the devil's temptations to achieve his mission through fame, comfort, political power.

Preaching kingdom or reign of God

- ✓ God is Lord of all creation, called Jews to be God's chosen people and gave them the law
- ✓ **Kingdom of God is wherever people are trying to live out God's call to love and forgiveness in way that goes beyond the minimum requirements.** Anyone can be in the Kingdom, and sometimes the people you least expect are already part of it. You don't have to be perfect to be in the Kingdom, but have to be willing to let the Holy Spirit help you grow more perfect in your love and forgiveness. Kingdom or reign of God proclaimed by Jesus was not simply me and God relationship – saw it as **communal in nature**, a new relationship among individuals as well as between God and humans. Reign of God as the **rule of God over the hearts of people and consequently as a new social order based on people unconditional love for**

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one another. Love expressed in deeds: service to others, compassion, forgiveness, reconciliation Matt 25:31 – 36 gives us a good picture of this

- **Jesus not only preached but lived the Kingdom: people around him experienced God's love and power in profound way.** His whole life, his love for the people, his care for the poor and unnoticed, his miracles, his acceptance of his suffering and death made his words real and revealed the nature of the Kingdom of God
 - Jesus welcomed all. Spent time with rich and poor, young and old, saintly people and known sinners. Always eating with people. Acceptance of every person, sign of Kingdom
 - Made special effort to reach out to individuals that other shunned; ex woman at well John 4:1 – 42
 - Forgiveness of sins – Jesus claimed the power to forgive sins directly, equating himself with God. For people then to have sins forgiven was as miraculous as physical healing
- Sermon on Mount best summary of Jesus' teachings Mt chapters 5 – 7 Beatitudes help us presents a great summary of Jesus' teaching.

BEATITUDES MATT 5:1 – 11 ARE THE BEST SUMMARY OF JESUS' WEALTH OF TEACHING

- **BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD**
 - Poor in spirit not material poverty but of our helplessness as humans. We are all poor. We need God. We could not exist, without God. Jesus taught us to recognize our dependence on God.
 - Called to also keep our focus on the poor; be in solidarity with those whom the world denies the basics of life, including the sick, the homeless, the hungry, the illiterate, the unemployed.
- **BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN, FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED**
 - Jesus talking about value of suffering. Jesus suffered and his suffering revealed the value of who he was. His suffering revealed how much he valued his relationship with God and with all humans.
 - Jesus was surrounded by people broken by life. He went to work healing and comforting.
 - We are called to offer our friendship with the lonely, the abandoned and those society consider different; create a dialogue with those who apparently differ from us in an attempt to break down barriers that keep us in ghettos of religion, ethnic groups, nations, groups or gangs.
- **BLESSED ARE THE MEEK, FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH**
 - The meek know that everything and everyone is a gift from God. Everything and everyone that exists is a sign that God is always with us. Gentle, reflective, compassionate.
 - Called to take the side of the lowly, those who have no voice, or whose voice is not heard, Not an invitation to be passive or spiritless.
 - Meek – healthy medium between apathy and anger. Jesus was meek in this sense. He was gentle, reflective, compassionate, but, when the situation called for it, he used anger and personal power.
- **BLESSED ARE THEY WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE, FOR THEY SHALL BE SATISFIED**
 - Blessed are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires. Intense longing for social justice. Jesus used stories to teach us about justice or the consequences of lacking justice: rich man ignores Lazarus, camel has easier time getting into heaven than the rich person, Samaritan person who goes out of his way to help the injured and victimized man.
 - Calls us to seek to be in right relationship with God, the world and each other; know that each of us is a child of God, who calls to God not with our tongue but with our lives.
- **BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY**
 - Being merciful does not mean looking at world, feeling sorry for it, and then turning away. Rather it means looking at the world, loving it, living in it and healing with its struggles and sufferings.
 - Ability to get inside another's skin, to see with the other's eyes, to feel their feelings.
 - Calls us to overcome the negative situations that produce suffering among us. With true mercy we can experience forgiveness and the understanding among one another. When a woman caught in

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adultery was brought to Jesus he not only showed her mercy, but showed her accusers that they too needed mercy.

- **BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD**
 - Pure can be translated as single-minded – all our actions and living points to God. Focus not on ourselves but on others in which they see the face of God
 - Calls us to live with a pure heart, where there is transparency and openness, with no hidden agendas, intentions, hypocrisy
- **BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD**
 - Work of a peacemaker is to establish right relationships among people; one who faces headon the difficulties of building relationships between human beings that are based on God's values, the values God has placed into every human heart.
 - Calls us not to accept violence, and the competition and hate that lead to violence and separation.
- **BLESSED ARE THEY WHO SUFFER PERSECUTION FOR JUSTICE'S SAKE, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**
 - Called to imitate Christ: depend on God and have God at the center of our lives, use our emotions wisely and be understanding, merciful and comforting toward others, serve God by working for the dignity and rights of others, be willing to accept discomfort, even persecution for this.
 - Jesus showed us his work is to be done not just in context of our homes, but in greater world. Living our faith out daily, living out the beatitudes can cost us.
 - Calls us to be a person of hope, trust, and joy because Jesus is with us, helping to make possible a new life.
 - To help establish right relationships among people was the highest task a person could perform (Jews) This is work of peacemaker.

JESUS TEACHES WITH PARABLES

Parables offer a balance to challenging teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. They are stories Jesus told that often had a surprising twist, to shock people into a new way of seeing. A parable is a story that compares something we don't know with something that we do know. A parable usually has a surprise twists that helps us to see things in a new way. In this way parables provide clues and signposts that lead us to insights and deeper understandings Jesus used parables to give us a glimpse of the mystery of the kingdom of God. He used metaphors and similes drawn from nature or common life to capture hearers' attention and to leave them in doubt about its precise application so as to tease the mind into active thought. Parables do not define precisely but use comparisons to describe some aspect of how God acts or interacts with human beings.

- **The word parable comes from a Greek word that means "casting beside" or "throwing beside".** In his parables, Jesus takes similar and dissimilar things and puts them side by side. At first glance, we can say Jesus' parables are comparisons. But most of the parables are more than comparisons, because they usually contain metaphors. **A metaphor compares a word, idea, or object to something that it does not literally represent.** In other words, Jesus does not always explain to what or whom the comparison refers. It is up to the listeners or readers to infer the meaning.
- Jesus' parables are more than just simple metaphors. They are also allegories. **An allegory is a metaphor in which the people, actions, and objects in a story are symbols which represent a truth or meaning beyond the narrative of the story.**
- **Jesus used parables as his main teaching device.** He used many stories when he spoke to the people and he taught them as much as they could understand. Parables represent almost a third of Christ's preaching. Jesus knew that he was teaching difficult concepts and he appreciated that not everyone was ready to understand and accept his message. His "simple" parables, which centered on the most common elements and objects drawn from daily life – sheep, coins, yeast, weeds, workers, fishing nets, and the like – were meant to intrigue, to draw the listeners closer, to urge them to ponder the meaning, and to want them to hear more. The people had to be ready to listen.

Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10: 30 – 35 The Traits of parable as seen in this parable

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- **A parable is a story:** here it is a story of a traveller between Jerusalem and Jericho who falls into the hands of robbers, is severely wounded and receives help from a Samaritan.
- **A parable is a comparison:** This parable compares the kingdom of God with the story of the man wounded by robbers who is lying in the ditch.
- **A parable contains a crisis:** The wounded man expects to be helped by the priest and the Levite, who are, after all, fellow Jews and religious people. But they both pass by on the other side of the road to avoid any contact. Help does not come from those from whom we might expect it.
- **A parable has an ending:** A Samaritan, who would normally not be expected to help a Jew because of their religious biases against each other, arrives on the scene and goes far out of his way to assist the wounded man. He is moved with pity and goes to him, bandaging his wounds and soothing the pain with wine and oil. He then puts him on his animal, brings him to an inn, and pays the innkeeper, probably a Jew, for any expenses incurred. He even promises to come by on his return and pay any additional expenses. This is generosity gone to the limit. Imagine doing this for someone who would normally be considered an enemy.
- **A parable is about God's kingdom or way of acting among us:** Such is the reality of God. God's help comes from an unexpected source. God will surprise us again and again with help that is so bountiful, so generous, that we can only gasp with surprise and joy. That is the kingdom of God that is among us.

Parable of the Lost Sheep Luke 15: 1 – 7 – breaking open a parable

It weaves metaphors into an allegory that points the listener to a deeper understanding of God's limitless love and, at the same time, gives us an insight into what the Kingdom of God is like.

- Jesus begins by answering a question from the Pharisees and scribes about why he eats with sinners. He answers with a question in story form: "If any one of you has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost, what will you do? Won't you leave the ninety-nine in the field and go look for the lost sheep until you find it? And when you find it, you will be so glad that you will put it on your shoulder and carry it home. Then you will call in your friends and neighbours and say, 'Let us celebrate! I've found my lost sheep' Jesus said, 'In the same way there is more happiness in heaven because of one sinner who returns to God than over ninety-nine good people who don't need to.'"
- To understand fully the parable, the listener must recognize that Jesus is comparing the lost sheep to those who have been lost to sin. We must further infer that Jesus is telling us that God seeks out sinners in the same way that Jesus welcomes sinners, and eats with them. Jesus is also telling us that a change of heart is a source of great rejoicing in heaven; those who are complacent and satisfied with their religious practice will never be "found". Finally, we can conclude that when we sin and repent, we, too, will be welcomed back by our loving God, the Shepherd.
- The parable is rich in metaphors and contains a rich allegory about God. Jesus never mentions that he is comparing the lost sheep to us and to all people. He never explains that God is the loving shepherd. Yet, those are the essential truths found in the parable.

SOME OTHER PARABLES

Prodigal son: that the errant sinful son is not disowned but welcomed home No matter how far we have gone astray, God is waiting joyfully to welcome us back Luke 15:11 - 32

Rich man and Lazarus, taught that a rich person who ignores needs of poor are not part of the kingdom of God Luke 16:19-31

Good Samaritan, taught that even those who aren't Jews can be members of the Kingdom of God. If people want to be part of the Kingdom they must open their hearts to everyone, even outcasts of society Luke 10:30 –37

Lost sheep, shepherd leaves 99 sheep to look for and find the lost. No ordinary shepherd would do this. Shows God's gracious love. Tells us God takes the initiative and seeks out those who stray. Matt 18:12 – 14; Luke 15:4 – 7

Lost coin, shows God will go to great lengths to find us and then will rejoice when we are finally found. Luke 15:8 – 10

Labourers in vineyard, shows overwhelming generosity of God, shows that God operates out of a completely different economic system than one used by people Matt 20:1 – 16

Pharisee and tax collector, tells us we should adopt basic attitude of humility if we are going to participate in the Kingdom. Tax collector recognizes that the need for repentance in life is real Luke 18: 9 – 14

Rich fool, shows need to rely on God's graciousness rather than solely on our own resources Luke 12: 16 - 21

Talents, tells us we are to make good use of our talents in order to reveal the kingdom Matt 25: 14 – 30

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Great feast, two points made about God's invitation to heavenly banquet of Kingdom – all are invited, even those world considers undeserving, those who think of themselves as deserving of God's invitation, but refuse to accept it, do so at own risk Luke 14: 16 – 24

Weeds among the wheat and ten bridesmaids, both point to the end time, or future day of judgement by God. Matt 13:24 – 30; Matt 25:1 - 13

Unforgiving servant, taught that even though God is quick and generous to forgive, we cannot be part of God's kingdom if we do not practice forgiveness ourselves. Golden Rule Matt 18:23 – 35

PARABLES	WHEN WHERE TO WHOM	WHAT IS SURPRISING ABOUT THIS PARABLE	WHAT DOES IT TELL YOU ABOUT THE KINGDOM	THE QUESTION JESUS IS ASKING US TODAY	COMMENTS
The Sower Matt 13: 3 – 9	To people on shore while in a boat on Sea of Galilee	It is the wonder of the sower starting with a small bag of seeds and ends up with bushels full	God's kingdom will bring harvest no matter what difficulties it encounters	Are you willing to believe that God will come through, even though things aren't good so far?	The thought about this parable is "Don't despair when God's word seems to have little effect. God's will is done, though sometimes we are not aware of it."
The Mustard Seed Matt 13: 31 – 32	To people on shore while in a boat on the Sea of Galilee	Don't be fooled by appearances: small beginnings can have great endings	The kingdom may have small beginnings – but it will have a great ending	Are you discouraged by my apparent insignificance?	The kingdom of God may be barely discernible in our world; but it grows and spreads just as that mustard seed grew into a mighty bush
Lost sheep and Lost Coin Luke 15: 1 – 10	The Pharisees and scribes who were grumbling at the company Jesus was keeping	It's surprising that the shepherd leaves the 99 to look for one, and it's surprising that Jesus spends time with sinners, but he does it on purpose to bring them into the kingdom	Jesus reaches out to the outcasts and the lost. The kingdom is for all, especially the outcasts. The dignity of the human person.	Will you accept that God lives you no matter how small you are, as if there is no one else?	A lost sheep is usually the weakest and the most helpless. Unless the shepherd searches for it, the sheep will be unable to return by itself and will therefore die. God actively searches out the lost and weak and carries them like a shepherd, into the kingdom.
Hidden Treasure Matt 13:44	One of many parables Jesus told his disciples by Sea of Galilee	Such a gamble! But with persistence it's worth it, because the kingdom is so great	The kingdom is pure gift	Are you big enough to be able to accept something that's beyond your wildest	Decision: I'll do anything for this

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				imagination	
The Unmerciful servant Matt 18: 23 – 35	While in the house at Caphernaum to his disciples	He got thrown in jail for wringing his rights out of a labourer	The kingdom demands that you live up to it. If you have been forgiven, you must forgive	When you are right and you know you are, can you forgive the one's who's done you wrong?	Illustrates forgive us our sins as forgive those who sin against us.
The Two Sons Matt 21: 28 – 32	To Jewish leaders during Holy Week	The man who said "no" turns out to be the better one in the end	It's not what you say, it's what you do	Can you do what you say it right, even when the pressure is on	The righteous one does the will of God rather than simply saying he or she will do it. Jesus pointed out that those sinners who believed and repented were far more righteous than the so-called faithful Jews who spoke of righteousness but did not practice it.
The Good Samaritan Luke 10:25 – 37	To young lawyer in answer to question "who is my neighbour?"	The surprise is that an outcast did better than the religious people, and really knew what a neighbour was	The kingdom demands that we respect the rights of everyone, give love freely, recognize the worth of all	Are you prepared to accept everyone, even those your society (group) tells you to hate or avoid?	Deals with "Who is my neighbour" Jesus includes as neighbour everyone who you'd rather not include

JESUS'S MIRACLES: MAKING THE KINGDOM REAL

- ❖ People did not believe Jesus just because he had an inspiring vision of the kingdom of God – they believed him because he actually lived the reign of God. People who were around Jesus experienced God's love and power in a profound way. His whole life, his love for the people, his care for the poor and unnoticed, his miracles, his acceptance of his suffering and death made his words real and revealed the nature of the Kingdom of God. Jesus' miracles are a powerful sign that he made the Kingdom of God present and real.
- ❖ Miracles show Jesus had power over all creation and that in the kingdom we are rescued from evil, suffering, pain and death. Miracles are all signs of God's power and loving presence
- ❖ Jesus' miracles often grouped into 4 categories
 - **Physical healings** - relieving suffering of people (curing people of paralysis, blindness, leprosy and so on). Wherever evil and its effects are most directly and dramatically evident in lives of people, in suffering, pain, death, Jesus heals and restores fullness of life Forgiveness of sins – many miracles reflect a deeper and more important level of healing than healing of body – Jesus often mentions that the physical healing is directly linked to their acknowledgement of their sin and Jesus' forgiveness of it
 - **Exorcisms** - dramatic accounts which portray Jesus as driving out evil spirits or demons from people (driving our demons) The extent of God's power chief lesson here – God, in and through Jesus, can confront the power of sin in its most direct form and conquer it
 - **Bringing dead back to life** – stories of three people Jesus brought back to life (Mark 5:1 – 23, Luke 7:11 – 17, John 11:1 – 44)

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- **Nature miracles** - show Jesus' apparent control over the forces of nature (feeding 5000 with a few fish, walking on water, calming storms and so on) Shows God's reign over all creation is present in Jesus and is being revealed to world through him

JESUS' DISCIPLES SHARE THE MISSION

- ✚ Jesus calls disciples and prepares them to share in his mission to proclaim the kingdom of God. Scripture speaks of twelve special disciples who were his inner circle: Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Cananaean, Judas Iscariot (Matt 10:2-4) There were many disciples other than the inner circle. There also were a group of women who were among his closest followers: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna – they financed his ministry, traveled with him and became witnesses to his death and resurrection They were called into a community of disciples They were sent out to preach, live and proclaim kingdom message