

**Luke 10-15 PARABLES ONLY FOUND IN LUKE**

Before we cover Christ's final weeks, there are several important parables with great spiritual truths that He gave and are only covered in Luke 10-17.

Parable of the Good Samaritan

We begin in Luke 10: "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' So he answered and said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'Your neighbor as yourself. And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.' But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise'" (Luke 10:25-37).

This account accurately fits the facts about the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, which descends approximately 3,000 feet in about 17 miles. Jericho was a priestly city where many priests and Levites would go visit. It also was a dangerous road to travel, since robbers hid along its steep, winding way. So it happened that a man was attacked by thieves and left half-dead. Later, a priest, who was expected to love others, shunned the wounded man. Perhaps he justified it by thinking that if the

man was dead and a priest touched him, he would be ceremonially unclean for seven days. He probably thought his job was more important than aiding a man who was probably dead or about to die. Then, a Levite, who assisted the priests, came by and also avoided him. Only a Samaritan, who was scorned by the Jews because of their mixed Jewish and Gentiles heritage, was moved with compassion and helped the wounded man, spent money to have him nursed back to health and didn't ask anything in return. So he was closer to keeping God's law of love and mercy than the lofty priest or the Levite, who had broken the second great commandment of loving your neighbor as yourself by applying the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you" (Mt. 7:12). Sadly, a word of caution needs to be added today. Nowadays, you have to be careful not to be tricked into believing someone is injured as a ruse to rob you or to move an injured person without permission or you can be sued.

The Parable of the Rich Fool

Here is the next parable: "Then one from the crowd said to Him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' But He said to him, 'Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?' And He said to them, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.' Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: 'The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'" (Luke 12:13-21).

Normally, an inheritance between two brothers was divided back then with two thirds going to the firstborn and one third going to the second brother. Yet, through legal trickery there were

ways to increase the percentages, and this person wanted Christ to back his case. Jesus used the occasion to teach an important lesson on obsessing about money instead of developing spiritual character. If all a person focused on was increasing material goods, what will happen when they die and eventually face God's judgment? Did they take into account God and His work while they could? What Christ warns about is to rightly balance between the material and the spiritual. He said our main goal in life should be: "Seek the kingdom of God [which includes being faithful in our tithes and offerings] and His righteousness [developing spiritual character], and all these [material] things shall be added to you" (Mt. 6:33).

Parable of the wedding guest

The next parable deals with humility. "So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: 'When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted'" (Luke 14:7-11).

This is an important principle we should apply in all circumstances. It means don't seek to be exalted, but rather let others determine our place.

Fred Wight in *Manners and Customs in the Bible* explains, "When the Pharisees were invited to a banquet, they were very covetous of having the highest places of distinction at the table. Jesus condemned them for this proud spirit. He said concerning them: They '...love the uttermost rooms at feasts'" (Matthew 23:6). In many native homes one room has a higher floor, and in this room the guests of honor are assigned places, and those of less honor on the lower floor or level. A place of special honor would be on the right of the host, and the next highest place on his left. James and John asked for such positions in Christ's kingdom (Mark 10:37). But Jesus advised guests to take the last

place. Where was this place located? It was on the lower level and nearest the door. The guest who would take this humble place might be invited by the master of the house to take a place on a higher plane and farther from the door" (chapter 6, *Special Suppers and Banquets*).

Parable of the Great Feast

Jesus also said at that time, "Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, 'Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!' Then He said to him, 'A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper'" (Luke 14:15-24).

Jesus, when He heard someone brag how great it will be to attend God's banquet in the kingdom of God, cautioned him not to be so sure he would be there. The leading Jews thought because they were Abraham's descendants, his righteousness being imputed to them by being duly circumcised, scrupulously doing sacrifices, being ritually clean and keeping the oral law, they would automatically be in God's kingdom. Jesus gives this parable to explain exactly the opposite outcome. The owner here represents God inviting the Jews, including the rich and influential, to be part of His kingdom. But the majority was not happy with how Jesus carried out His ministry and did not want to be a part of His work. So God said He would go to those Jews and others who were considered humble and

modest of means, and invite them to be part of His work and kingdom in the First Resurrection. Some Jews did accept, but there was still room for more, so He went out to call more, those who were considered “on the outside” – the Gentiles who would believe. Luke in Acts mentions this when he wrote, ‘Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, ‘It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’ Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:46-48).

Parable of the Prodigal Son

Next we read, “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them.’ ...Then He said: ‘A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’ And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put

a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry. Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’ But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found” (Luke 15:1-32).

Here is the most wonderful depiction of God’s forgiveness of a repentant sinner. Of course, God is represented as the loving father. He has a sinful son that goes into the world and loses what he had. Yet, once he comes to his senses and returns repentant to God and His way, instead of receiving a scolding, he receives God’s love and forgiveness.

This certainly applies to a wayward member who returns repentant to the church. No one should act like the other son, ready to cast the first stone, but rather he should rejoice that the person has come back. God forgives us more than seventy times seven, and we should learn to also be merciful and forgiving of those who repent.

As James says, “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins” (5:19-20).

Of course, this parable is also directed to those Pharisees who, like the older brother, were judgmental toward others and regarded them as lost sinners (see Luke 18:10-14). Instead, Christ wanted us to have the father’s loving and forgiving attitude.