Parables Of Godly Living

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday January 7th, 2024

Text: Matthew 25:13 Scripture Reading: Mark 13:32-33

### Intro

1. As one year fades into the archives of history, many people turn their attention and focus on the new year.
   1. Many will make resolutions – most or all won’t be kept.
   2. Many reflect on the past year and determine to make changes – most changes won’t happen.
2. For the Christian, another year is another opportunity to live for God and get that much closer to eternity.
   1. We don’t know if we will be given the whole year, so we live daily for Him!
   2. *Matthew 24:36:* “But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”
   3. *Matthew 25:13:* “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.” (NKJV)
3. New Year’s Resolutions seem to be made in jest as a thing to do this time of year, or made as some lofty, out of reach goal that is soon forgotten.
4. Let us look at the teachings of Jesus and see parables for living godly in our daily lives!

#### Parable 1: Love for Neighbor/Enemy

* 1. Jesus had said, “You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:43-45).
  2. On another occasion Jesus was asked by an expert in the Law, “Who is my neighbor?” He not only answered that but also told a story of a man who did both: loved his neighbor and an enemy (Luke 10:25-29)
  3. Luke 10:25-37: The Good Samaritan
     1. A Jewish man is traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. He is attacked by robbers, who strip him, beat him, and leave him half-dead on the road.
     2. A priest and a Levite, both fellow Jews, see the wounded man, but they pass by on the other side, avoiding him.
     3. A Samaritan, a despised enemy of the Jews (John 4:9; 8:48), sees the wounded man and has compassion on him. He bandages his wounds, puts him on his donkey, and takes him to an inn. He pays the innkeeper to take care of him and promises to return and pay more if needed.
  4. Jesus asks the lawyer which of the three was a neighbor to the wounded man. The lawyer answers, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus tells him to go and do the same (Luke 10:36-37).
  5. Acts of kindness to all people are things we can do daily in our everyday lives!

#### Parable 2: Wealth

* 1. Jesus even talked about how we are to think of wealth.
     1. “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21)
     2. “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Matthew 6:24)
  2. Someone in a crowd asked Jesus to arbitrate an inheritance between him and his brother, and Jesus took the opportunity to teach against greed (covetousness) in Luke 12:13-15
  3. Luke 12:16-21: The Rich Fool
     1. A rich farmer has land that produces a bountiful harvest. The farmer decides to tear down his barns and build bigger ones to store his crops and enjoy a life of leisure.
     2. God calls the farmer a fool and tells him that he will die that night. The farmer’s wealth will be useless to him and will belong to someone else.
  4. Jesus concludes by saying that this is how it will be for anyone who is rich in this world but not rich toward God. (This teaching goes back to what He said in Matthew 6:19-21: “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven”).
     1. I Timothy 6:17-19: “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”
  5. Being grateful to God for His blessings, content with what we have and sharing with others as we have opportunity are ways we can have the proper attitude towards wealth daily!

#### Parable 3: Prayer

* 1. Prayer is something we can all improve on, and has always been important for God’s people to do!
  2. In Luke 11:1-4 the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, saying, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.” Jesus then gave them the Model Prayer (the longer version can be found in Matthew 6:9-13). He then told them a parable on prayer.
  3. Luke 11:5-10: Friend’s Request at Midnight
     1. A man goes to his friend’s house at midnight to borrow three loaves of bread for his unexpected guest.
     2. The friend refuses to help him at first, saying that he and his family are already in bed and he does not want to be disturbed.
     3. The man persists in knocking and asking for the bread, not giving up.
     4. The friend finally gets up and gives him the bread, not because of friendship, but because of the man’s shamelessness or persistence.
  4. Jesus uses this parable to teach that we should always pray and not lose heart, for if even an unjust friend will eventually help us, how much more will God answer our prayers.
     1. “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened” (Luke 11:9-10).
  5. In Luke 18:1, Jesus “was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart…”
  6. Luke 18:2-8: Widow and the Unjust Judge
     1. A widow repeatedly goes to an unjust judge who does not fear God or care about people, asking him to grant her justice against her adversary.
     2. The judge ignores her plea for a while, but then he decides to help her, not because of justice, but because he is annoyed by her constant coming and he fears that she will wear him out.
  7. Jesus uses this parable to teach that we should always pray and not give up, for if even an unjust judge will eventually give justice to a persistent widow, how much more will God avenge his elect who cry out to him day and night (Luke 18:6-8)
  8. We are to pray to God daily and not to lose heart!

#### Parable 4: Humility

* 1. Jesus tells another parable to warn against self-righteousness and contempt for others in Luke 18:9-14: Pharisee and the Tax Collector
     1. A Pharisee and a tax collector go to the temple to pray.
     2. The Pharisee boasts about his religious deeds and looks down on the tax collector.
     3. The tax collector humbly confesses his sinfulness and begs for God’s mercy.
  2. Jesus says that the tax collector, not the Pharisee, went home justified before God. He adds that whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.
     1. James 4:10: “Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”
  3. In our daily everyday lives if we are focused on our own relationship to God and have humility, we won’t have time to judge others and look down on anyone!

#### Parable 5: Forgiveness

* 1. Peter came and asked Jesus, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" (Matthew 18:21).
  2. Jesus gave him the answer, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:22). Jesus then told them a parable on forgiveness…
  3. Matthew 18:23-35: Unmerciful Servant
     1. A king decides to settle accounts with his servants. He finds one who owes him 10,000 talents, a huge sum that he cannot repay.
     2. The king orders the servant and his family to be sold to pay the debt. The servant begs for mercy and the king cancels the debt and lets him go.
     3. The same servant then finds another servant who owes him 100 denarii, a small sum that he can repay. He grabs him and chokes him, demanding payment.
     4. The second servant pleads for patience, but the first servant refuses and throws him into prison.
     5. The other servants see this and report it to the king. The king summons the first servant and rebukes him for not showing mercy as he had received mercy.
     6. The king hands the first servant over to the jailers to be tortured until he pays back his debt.
  4. Jesus concludes by saying that this is how God will treat us if we do not forgive our brothers and sisters from our hearts (Matthew 18:35), meaning it is not about keeping a record of wrongs, but to have a heart ready to forgive (Colossians 3:12-14).
  5. Jesus says in Luke 7:40-43 in another parable that the one who owes the most and is forgiven also loves the most!
  6. In our daily everyday lives don’t look for the wrongs, but for ways to forgive from the heart and reconcile!

#### Parable 6: Alertness

* 1. Jesus teaches a lot on being alert and watchful:
     1. He taught His disciples to watch for the sings of the destruction of Jerusalem that would happen in AD 70 in Matthew 24:32-35 in the Parable of the Fig Tree.
     2. He taught them in similar parables to be watchful servants and to not be surprised by a thief in the night in Matthew 24:42-51 and Luke 12:35-48.
  2. In Mark 13:32-33, Jesus said, “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come” and then told a parable…
  3. Mark 13:34-37: Watchful Servants
     1. The parable of the Watchful Servants warns us to be ready and alert for Christ’s return, because we do not know the exact day or hour.
     2. It compares the situation to a man who goes on a journey and leaves his house in the care of his servants, each with their assigned task, and tells the doorkeeper to keep watch.
     3. It urges us to watch and pray, lest the master of the house comes suddenly and finds us sleeping.
     4. It also applies the message to all people, saying that what Jesus says to his disciples, he says to everyone: Be on the alert!
  4. Paul and Peter both tell saints to be “alert!”
     1. I Thessalonians 5:6: “…so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.”
     2. I Peter 5:8: “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
  5. In our daily everyday lives don’t forget Who we serve and what event we are hoping for and looking forward to: The return of Jesus Christ, our Lord!

#### Parable 7: Steadfastness

* 1. In keeping with the teaching on being alert because, “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour” (Matthew 25:13), Jesus told another parable on being steadfast and being ready…
  2. Matthew 25:1-13: Ten Virgins
     1. It compares the Kingdom of Heaven to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom, who represents Jesus.
     2. Five of them were wise and brought extra oil for their lamps, and five of them were foolish and did not bring any oil.
     3. The bridegroom was delayed, and they all fell asleep. At midnight, a cry announced his arrival, and they all got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish virgins realized that their lamps were going out, and asked the wise ones to share their oil. The wise ones refused, saying that there might not be enough for both of them, and told them to go and buy some for themselves.
     4. While the foolish virgins were away, the bridegroom came and the wise ones went in with him to the wedding feast.
     5. The door was shut, and the foolish ones were left outside. They knocked and begged to be let in, but the bridegroom said that he did not know them.
  3. The parable ends with a warning: “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.” Jesus taught the need to not only be on the alert but to be ready!
  4. In our daily everyday lives let us be ready, “with our lamps all trimmed and bright,” for that glorious day! *(from the hymn, Will Jesus Find Us Watching by Fanny J Crosby, 1876)*

## Conclusion

1. When we reflect on the last year, we can ask ourselves if we have done these things, and if we haven’t, let us “forget what lies behind” & reach “forward to what lies ahead” as the apostle Paul said (Philippians 3:13).
2. Jesus taught in parables so that we could understand what He was saying.
3. These are parables that apply to our everyday lives so let us not make lofty goals that may be unachievable and forgotten later, but strive to live godly in our everyday daily lives!
4. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent of your sins and be baptized!
5. If a Christian in error, remember from what you escaped, repent and be renewed!
6. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!