

Parables of Jesus' Second Coming

Message 5 of 5 in the series: "Once Upon a Time: Parables that Jesus Told"

Parable = to throw alongside = a short story that explains spiritual truths by using everyday objects and relationships = an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

A. Three days before He was crucified, Jesus shared some important details with His disciples about His second coming and the end of the world.

"As Jesus was leaving the Temple grounds, his disciples pointed out to him the various Temple buildings. But he responded, 'Do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth, they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!' Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him privately and said, 'Tell us, when will all this happen? **What sign will signal your return and the end of the world?**' Jesus told them, 'Don't let anyone mislead you, for many will come in my name, claiming, "I am the Messiah." They will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately. Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. But **all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.** Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers. And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other. And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people. Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. **And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.**" Matthew 24:1-14 (NLT)

B. Jesus also shared some parables with His disciples that instructed them on how they should be living until He returns.

1. The parable of The Wise and Foolish Bridesmaids:

"Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!' All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. Then the five foolish ones asked the others, 'Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.' But the others replied, 'We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.' But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!' But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!' **So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.**" Matthew 25: 1-13 (NLT)

- Jesus may return at any moment. **"When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day.** In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. People didn't realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes. Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken, the other left. Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one will be taken, the other left." Matthew 24:37-41 (NLT)
- "However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows." Matthew 24:36 (NLT)
- We should be ready all the time. "So you, too, must keep watch! For you don't know what day your Lord is coming. Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would keep watch and not permit his house to be broken into. **You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.**" Matthew 24:42-44 (NLT)

URGENT! Being ready all the time means living our entire lives for God's glory. "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31 (NLT)

2. The parable of The Three Stewards:

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. He gave five bags of silver to

one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip. The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money. After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, 'Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.' The master was full of praise. **'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'** The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.' **The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'** Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, 'Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn't plant and gathering crops you didn't cultivate. I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.' But the master replied, 'You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn't plant and gathered crops I didn't cultivate, why didn't you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.' Then he ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. **To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away.** Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" Matthew 25:14-30 (NLT)

- Everything we have belongs to God. We only manage His things for a short time in this world. "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him." Psalm 24:1 (NLT) **"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."** 1 Timothy 6:7 (NKJV)
- God entrusts each of us with resources and opportunities in proportion to our abilities and expects us to use them to fulfill His desires. "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." Luke 12:48b (NIV) "God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. **He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.**" Ephesians 2:8-10 (NLT)
- God rewards faithfulness but punishes laziness and rebellion. "A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, **there will be a reward.** I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. But what if the servant is evil and thinks, 'My master won't be back for a while,' and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? The master will return unannounced and unexpected, and he will cut the servant to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. In that place **there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**" Matthew 24:45-51 (NLT)

URGENT! "And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight. And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved." 2 Peter 3:14-15a (NLT)

10-20-24 • John Schmidt john@centeringlives.com

Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read Matthew 24:1-14. What's the significance of Jesus comparing the signs of His second coming to "birth pains"? In your opinion, how close are the contractions coming?
2. Read and discuss the parable of The Wise and Foolish Bridesmaids. (Matthew 25:1-13) What's the difference between being ready for Jesus' return and becoming a doomsday prepper? (1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:14-15)
3. Why didn't Jesus just tell everyone when He's coming back? (Matthew 24:36-41)
4. Read and discuss the parable of The Three Stewards. (Matthew 25:14-30) What's the difference between a steward/manager and an owner? (Psalm 24:1, Luke 12:13-21)

5. What does a good steward of God's resources and opportunities look like? (1 Timothy 6:17-19, 1 Peter 2:11-12)
6. Why do you think Jesus celebrated faithfulness and readiness instead of intelligence, beauty, or strength in the parables of the bridesmaids and stewards?
7. Discuss the following quotations:

"Men are not equal in talent; but men can be equal in effort." William Barclay

"The world asks, 'What does a man own?' Christ asks, 'How does he use it?'" Andrew Murray

"If the householder had known at what time the burglar would arrive, he would have been ready for him. If the servant had known when his absent employer would come home, he would not have been found drunk in the kitchen. But they didn't. Nor will you. Therefore, you must be ready at all times." C.S. Lewis