



SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 3 March 30, 2025

“The Parables of the Kingdom”



OPENING PRAYER

O God, by grace alone you bring us into the story of your saving work. As we read and reflect on stories your Son Jesus told, may we find the places you would have us be in the story. May your Spirit excite our imagination that we, too, may help others see new possibilities for living in your truth, your justice, and your peace. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Matthew 13:10 (NIV)

The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”

Because of the length of our two other scripture passages, please have your group look it up in a Bible or through an online resource such as BibleGateway.com.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is located in Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of the Prodigal son is located in Luke 15:11-32

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus of Nazareth was a master teacher, and some of his most well-known teachings are told in short stories called parables. Jesus used parables to tell us something about God, himself, and the Kingdom of God. And in two of his most famous parables he tells us something important about God’s will for us and he tells us something important of the character of God.

Like the Good Samaritan, Christians are called to help our neighbor in need regardless of ethnicity, social status, race, or religion. Jesus followers should ask themselves “What am I doing to help the Kingdom of God to come on earth as it is in heaven?” In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus says God is like the father who runs to his lost children to hug them, wrap his arms around them, kiss them, and show them mercy. If you have wandered from a relationship with God, he is inviting you to ‘come home’ with open arms.

QUESTIONS

1. Read Matthew 13:10 (on page 1). Why do you think Jesus taught in parables?
2. Read Luke 10:25-37 (Parable of the Good Samaritan)
 - a) What is surprising about who does and doesn’t stop to help the wounded man in the story? How would Jesus produce a similar surprise if he told the parable today?
 - b) When have you, like the priest and Levite in Jesus’ parable, “passed by on the other side” when confronted with someone who needed help?
3. Read Luke 15:11-32. (Parable of the Prodigal Son)
 - a) Who do you identify with the most in this parable, and why?
 - b) Is the older son justifiably angry about the homecoming reception his younger brother receives? How has God’s mercy toward someone else ever seemed unfair to you?
 - c) Pastor Eric finds the father in the story a powerful image of God. Do you? Why or why not?

FINAL APPLICATION

What can you do this week to help a neighbor in need? What can this group do to help?