

Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he went, always pressing on toward Jerusalem. Someone asked him, 'Lord, will only a few be saved?' He replied, 'Work hard to enter the narrow door to God's Kingdom, for many will try to enter but will fail. When the master of the house has locked the door, it will be too late. You will stand outside knocking and pleading, "Lord, open the door for us!" But he will reply, "I don't know you or where you come from." Then you will say, "But we ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets." And he will reply, "I tell you, I don't know you or where you come from. Get away from me, all you who do evil."'"

Luke 13:18-27 (NLT)

"Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, 'The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, "Here it is," or "there it is," because the kingdom of God is within you.'"

Luke 17:20-21 (NIV)

Clash of the Kingdoms

"His disciples came and asked him, 'Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?' He replied, 'You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not. To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them. That is why I use these parables, for they look, but they don't really see. They hear, but they don't really listen or understand. This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah that says, "When you hear what I say, you will not understand. When you see what I do, you will not comprehend. For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes— so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.'"

Matthew 13:10-15 (NLT)

Why did Jesus teach in parables? The crowd did not judge the parables; the parables judged the crowd. The careless, or **insincere** listener, who thought he knew everything, would hear only a story that he did not really understand, and the result in his life would be judgment. The **sincere** listener, with a desire to know God's truth, would ponder the parable, confess his ignorance, submit to the Lord, and then begin to understand the spiritual lesson Jesus wanted to teach.

1. Jesus used parables both to hide the truth and to reveal it

Our Community Groups meet throughout the Denver Metro Area. You can find a listing of these groups online at www.fbcj.org/smallgroups. For more information or questions, please contact Ceely Ann at 303.424.2121, ext. 92407 or ceelyann.lonergan@fbcj.org.

**Please feel free to come down to the front
for prayer after service.
"...pray for one another..." James 5:16**

Every person was born into a story, a story that began before we got here and will continue after we are gone.

Here are our options:

- Believe there is no story
- Make up your own
- Become part of God's story

A parable begins innocently as a picture that **arrests our attention** and **arouses our interest**. But as we study the picture, it becomes a mirror in which we suddenly see ourselves. If we continue to look by faith, the mirror becomes a window through which we see God and His truth. How we respond to that truth will determine what further truth God will teach us.

2. Worldviews become **distorted** because of **context**

Frei Betto: "The head thinks where the feet stand."

"Jesus called them over and responded with an illustration. 'How can Satan cast out Satan?' he asked. 'A kingdom divided by civil war will collapse. Similarly, a family splintered by feuding will fall apart. And if Satan is divided and fights against himself, how can he stand? He would never survive. Let me illustrate this further. Who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man like Satan and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house.'" Mark 3:23-27 (NLT)

Three Kingdoms We Will Consider

3. The **Magic** Kingdom

"Beware! Don't always be wishing for what you don't have. For real life and real living are not related to how rich we are." Luke 12:15 (TLB)

"Prosperity knits a man to the world. He feels that he is finding his place in it, while really it is finding its place in him." C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

4. The **Tragic** Kingdom

"But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful."

Matthew 13:16-22 (NIV)

5. The Kingdom of **God**

"Then Jesus said, 'What is the Kingdom of God like? How can I illustrate it? It is like a tiny mustard seed that a man planted in a garden; it grows and becomes a tree, and the birds make nests in its branches.' He also asked, 'What else is the Kingdom of God like? It is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough.'