

A Harmony of the Gospels

Parables

- Characteristics of the Parables in scripture.
 - Brief-omit unnecessary descriptions
 - Taken from everyday life but not necessarily realistic-sometimes uses hyperbole Matthew 18:24
 - They provoke thought (which often led to further revelation of truth by Jesus) Matthew 13:10ff
 - Frequently call the hearer to pass judgment on the events of the story. Luke 7:40-43
 - Often require a reversal in thinking-the Samaritan as neighbor, tax collector as righteous
 - Invitations to changed behavior and discipleship.

Parables

- Used prior to Jesus (Seven examples from the Old Testament)
 - Nathan's parable to David about the poor man and the lamb. 2 Samuel 12:1-10
 - The woman from Tekoa's story about her two sons. 2 Samuel 14:5-20
 - The prophet's acted parable condemning Ahab 1 Kings 20:35-40
 - The Song of the Vineyard Isaiah 5:1-7
 - The eagles and the vine Ezekiel 17:2-10
 - The lion and her cubs Ezekiel 19:2-9
 - The vine Ezekiel 19:10-14

Parables

- One of the main and powerful uses of parables in scripture is to present a truth in a way to bypass our objections, biases and defenses so we can receive and accept the truth.

Secrets About the Kingdom Given in Parables

- The setting of the parables Matthew 13:1-3a; Mark 4:1-2; Luke 8:4
 - The terrain around the Sea of Galilee forms a natural amphitheater in many areas.

Secrets About the Kingdom Given in Parables

- The parable of the sown seed Matthew 13:3b-23; Mark 4:3-25; Luke 8:5-18
 - The immediate single truth from this parable is that the seed sown produces a crop. Jesus will give further explanation as He identifies this parable in the category of allegory and applies the story to the Kingdom of God.

Secrets About the Kingdom Given in Parables

- The parable of the sown seed Matthew 13:3b-23; Mark 4:3-25; Luke 8:5-18
 - Jesus gives the reason for speaking in parables in response to a question
 - To expose the hardness of heart of those who did not want to hear
 - To reveal the truth to those who respond to it.
 - He lays down the principle that those who hear and long for more will be rewarded with more insight.
 - He also lays down the principle of the dulling effect of the truth to those who reject it.
 - Jesus pronounces a blessing on those who embrace truth. They were living in the time of fulfillment for which many before them had longed for but not experienced.

Secrets About the Kingdom Given in Parables

- The parable of the sown seed Matthew 13:3b-23; Mark 4:3-25; Luke 8:5-18
 - Jesus responds to the inquiry of the disciples as to the meaning of this parable. His explanation reveals parable is an allegory.
 - The Word of God faithfully shared will produce reproducing disciples.
 - One who hears the Word of God must be careful to wholeheartedly embrace it for it to do all that it has the potential to do within him or her.
 - We should never become discouraged from sharing the Word of God when people do not allow the Word of God to do what it has the potential to do within them.

Secrets About the Kingdom Given in Parables

- The parable of the seed's spontaneous growth Mark 4:26-29
 - God's people have a part to play in the growth of God's kingdom but it is God who accomplishes the miracle of growth. A strong parallel to Paul's message to the church at Corinth: ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 1 Corinthians 3:6 (ESV)
 - We must diligently work in the work God has given us to do and diligently trust Him in the things beyond our control.

Secrets About the Kingdom Given in Parables

- The parable of the wheat and the weeds Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43
 - Another parable further interpreted by Jesus and in doing so identified as an allegory.
 - The judgment of those who belong in the kingdom of God does not belong to us.
 - The danger of misidentifying those who belong in God's kingdom is greater than the damage done by those who are not true followers of Christ.