

the Royal

MAKING SENSE OF THE BIBLE

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Pet. 2:9

Week 23 Twist and Turns, Chapter 1

This week Pastor Miles continued in The Royal series with the first part of the fifth book titled, "Twist and Turns." These twist and turns are commonly known as the parable genre. Parables are simply stories that Jesus used to communicate kingdom truths to those who would otherwise not typically understand what He would be communicating. In the sermon Miles used a great example in Matt. 18:21-35 about the concept of forgiveness and grace. This week in our groups we will focus on the following:

1. Review the Parable Observations as listed in the lesson plan.
2. We will look at Matt. 20:1-16, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. This is a simple story of the kindness and grace that the Lord shows to all believers.
3. As a group we will look at what the concept "the first shall be last, and last shall be first" really means.
4. Hopefully this will trigger conversation of how we can show more grace toward other Christians. Realizing that we are all saved by the same God with the same grace.

The Gospels are filled with a lot of parables, so if time permits, it is encouraged to look at a few different parables and discuss the kingdom truths of them as well. Have a great time and fruitful discussion.

Isn't it fun studying Scripture!!!!

In Him,

Rock Church Small Group Team

Part 1: Opening/Recap Weekly Challenge/Small Group Sermon Discussion

Opening

- Open in Prayer
- Worship (optional)
- Recap Week 22 Homework
- Small Group Sermon Discussion

Recap Week 22 Weekly Challenge

- 1. Recite John 10:10.**
- 2. Discuss experiences practicing them Study.**

Small Group Sermon Discussion

- 1. Review the Parable Observations of “Twist and Turns” as a group.**
 1. A parable uses everyday experiences to draw comparison with kingdom truths.
 2. Parables were spoken to three groups.
 - Crowds
 - Scribes and Pharisees
 - Disciples
 3. Parables communicate kingdom of God principles and require kingdom of God responses.
 4. Parables twist your mind with the intent to turn your heart/actions.
 - Parables demand the reader make a decision and do something different.
 - Parables weren't as difficult to understand as they were to obey.
 - Pharisees understood them but their hard hearts prevented them from obeying.
 5. The effect of the parable was determined by the heart of the hearer.
 - The hardhearted were twisted but not turned, thus were offended.
 - The spiritually hungry were twisted and turned, thus grew closer to God.
 - Parables 'call out' the proud and 'call up' the humble.
 6. Only acceptance of the kingdom of God and Jesus' authority can unlock the power of the parables.
- 2. Review the sermon through Matt. 18:21-35 as a group.**
 - ▶ Use lesson plan notes if you have them available.

Part 2: Read, Reflect, and Respond – Matthew 20:1-16

Read Matthew 20:1-16

Parables are great, because it is Jesus' way of making biblical and heavenly truths accessible and understandable. This parable is particularly important because it deals with God's sovereign blessing of all that the Lord calls into His kingdom. The below pre-observation is breaking down how the Lord graciously deals with all repentant sinners equally:

Matthew 20:1-16: Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

- ▶ He starts off by explaining first off that this is a picture of what the kingdom of heaven will look like (cf. v. 1).
- ▶ A denarius was the equivalent of a day's wage (cf. v. 2).
- ▶ He has an initial set of workers at the start of the day (cf. v. 1-2).
- ▶ Then at the third hour, around 8-9 am, he hired some more workers (cf. v. 3).
- ▶ Then at the sixth and ninth hour, around 11-12 am and 2-3 pm, he hired some more workers (cf. v. 5).
- ▶ Finally, at the eleventh hour, around 4-5 pm, he hired some more workers that were standing idle the whole day (cf. v. 6).
- ▶ Then the master of the house paid his workers a denarius as he promised to all the workers, but he paid those that started at 4-5 pm first, then he paid those that started earliest, probably around 6-7 am, last (cf. v. 8-9).
- ▶ Those that started earlier didn't think that it was fair for him to pay the last first. So they continued on grumbling (cf. v. 10-11).
- ▶ The master reminds the workers of the deal he made with them, and explains to them that as the owner he can make any arrangements he wants to (cf. v. 13-15).
- ▶ Jesus ends the parable in v. 16 by simply stating, "So the last will be first, and the first last."

Reflect Matthew 20:1-16

1. Why do you suppose the early workers were so disgruntled with vineyard owner?
2. What is the reason for Jesus explaining this parable as "the kingdom of heaven"? What do you think heaven will be like after you read this parable?

Respond Matthew 20:1-16

1. What does the concept of "the last shall be first" reveal about the character of God?
2. The workers saw the master's actions as unjust. Do you struggle or deal with situations that seem unjust often? How have dealt with it? Did you react appropriately or not? Be specific.

Part 3: Weekly Challenge

- ▶ **Scripture Reading Guide:** Go through the devotions that correspond with each day. These are given to everyone in their lesson plan every week. (October 18 – October 24)
- ▶ **Scripture Memory:** “Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity? So the last will be first, and the first last.” **Matt. 20:15-16 (ESV)**
- ▶ **Bible Study Tool:** Navigate through www.blueletterbible.com and discover the great resources available for free for your personal gain.
- ▶ **Spiritual Formation Practice:** Each week we will introduce a “spiritual discipline” that each person can try to adapt to their personal devotion. This week is the **Discipline of Study**.

The discipline of study has been repeated week after week because in order to understand anything in its entirety, the discipline of pursuing it has to become an essential habit. Scripture is no different, and studying the various parables is even more crucial to study. Author’s intent of writing a historic document is always hard to grasp, but is possible to get to a clear understanding of.

So for the “Twist and Turns” and even to the end of the Royal series, we are going to really focus on study. We really want to challenge you to grow in the study and knowledge of the Word, so we can grow closer to Him.