

## AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP-ROSELLE

### MIDWEEK SERVICE BIBLE STUDY

**Study Series: Speaking in Parables**

**Wednesday, May 31, 2023**

**Lesson 17: The Parable of the Two Sons**

**Facilitator: Pastor Tunde Odeyemi**

**Scripture text: Matthew 21:1-46**

**Matthew 21:28-32.** 28 “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ 29 “‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. 30 “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go. 31 “Which of the two did what his father wanted?” “The first,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

#### **How to Understand the Parables**

The standard principles of exegesis (interpretation of scripture) should also be used for interpreting the parables. It is essential to ask what the parable meant to the original listeners of Jesus and the original readers of the Gospels. These principles are particularly appropriate to the parables, which contain a complete story with characters and a plot.

1. Look at the parable in its proper context: what led to the parable? Was it a question, a problem to solve, or an issue to resolve?
2. Know that parables usually have one central point: Parables are not allegories. An allegory is a more detailed story in which all, or nearly all, of the details, have significance in the message of the story. On the other hand, parables contain a central message; there is no need to read into every element of the parable.
3. Parables are not secret codes; they focus on telling people about the nature of the kingdom of God.
4. Remember the cultural gap: Some images and metaphors have rich meanings to people in Jesus’ time that are not as easy to recognize for those living in the 21st century.
5. Some of the parables were already interpreted by Jesus; no need to add to the interpretation.

**Question 1:** What led to Jesus telling this parable?

**Question 2:** Why did Jesus tell parables to some people but not to others? Matthew 13:10-17.

**Question 3:** Who does the man and father of the 2 sons in the parable represent?

Jesus uses a challenge to His authority by the chief priests and elders as a teaching moment for people to see humanity from God’s perspective. First, all humans are His offspring. Acts 17:24-31. We are descended from Adam who is descended from God. Luke 3:34-38. Hence the man/father representing God and 2 sons representing 2 broad categories of humans.

Second, God loves both sons and desires for them to do His will and enter His kingdom. God loves people and He wants us to love people too no matter their station in life.

**Question 4:** The first son represents which category of humans?

**Question 5:** The second son represents which category of humans?

### **The Ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus. Luke 7:18-35**

God the Father in His love sends John the Baptist to show the way of righteousness, the way into the kingdom to both categories of humans and was met with two very different reactions. Luke 3:1-18. One group heard the message, repented and believed. The other did not; even after they saw sinners including prostitutes repent and believe the good news! Luke 7:29-30.

God then sends Jesus, again to both categories and their reactions to the message are about as they reacted to John the Baptist. Luke 7:31-35.

### **Doing the will of God, the Father**

**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.** 13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

**Matthew 7:21.** "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

**James 1:22.** Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

**Luke 16:16.** "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it.

Be careful not to be so spiritual/religious as to reject those God in His love for you sends your way. Luke 16:19-31.

It is not late to change your mind and do His will. Remember that the first son in the parable first said no but later changed his mind and did what his father wanted. The word of God is full of stories of those who initially were resistant to doing God's will but God in His love worked with them and gave them another chance to do His will and live up to their full potential.

Moses said he could not speak.

Jonah ran away from his assignment.

Gideon initially did not believe and put God to the test.

Peter denied Jesus three times.

Paul persecuted the church of God.

These all went on to do great things with God, so can you. He is calling you!