

The Parable of the Two Sons and the Unfaithful Husbandmen Matt. 21:23-46

by R.A. Torrey

Jesus teaches about God's character, His own nature and mission, and the consequences of rejecting Him through two parables.

Scripture: Matthew 21:23

Topics: "Repentance", "God's Authority"

Description

R.A. Torrey explores the Parable of the Two Sons and the Unfaithful Husbandmen, emphasizing the authority of Jesus and the response of the Jewish rulers. He illustrates the contrast between disobedient professors and penitent sinners, highlighting that true repentance leads to acceptance in God's kingdom. The sermon underscores God's long-suffering nature and the severe consequences for those who reject His goodness, ultimately affirming that the kingdom will be given to those who bear fruit. Torrey calls for self-examination regarding our response to God's commands and the importance of genuine repentance.

Transcript

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. By What Authority Doest Thou These Things, vv. 23-27 What two questions did the Jewish rulers put to Jesus? Did Jesus directly answer the questions? Why not? How did Jesus answer the questions? Why did Jesus ask these questions? Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men? (John 1:33.) By what authority did Jesus do the things He did? (John 12:49.) In what dilemma did the Jewish rulers find themselves? What answer did they give to Jesus' question? What did this answer show in regard to their right to ask the question that they had put to Jesus in v. 23?

What did Jesus say to them (v. 27)? Wherein lay the appropriateness of these words of Jesus? 2. Disobedient Professors and Penitent Sinners, vv. 28-32 What gave Jesus occasion to speak the two parables of this lesson (v. 23)? To whom was the first of the two parables spoken (vv. 23, 31, 32)? Who does the Father in the parable represent? Who are represented by the two sons? To what two classes in our day may the parable be legitimately applied? What parable in Luke is in some respects closely akin to this?

Was this parable, or that in Luke 15, intended to teach "the Universal Fatherhood" of God? (John 8:42, 44; 1 John 3:10; John 1:12; Eph. 2:3.) What was the Father's command? What comes before work? If then we would work what must we do? "Go" where? Where was the work to be done? When was it to be done? What did the first son answer? What did he do afterward? What do we see from this that repentance consists in? Who is represented by this son? Will God accept the man who at first positively refuses to do His bidding and afterwards repents and obeys? (Acts 2:37, 38; Is. 55:7; Deut. 4:28-31; 2 Chron. 33:10-13; Ez. 18:27, 28; Jonah 3:8-10; Luke 15:17, 18, 20.)

How great a sinner is God willing to accept and pardon if he repents? (2 Peter 3:9; Is. 1:16-19; 55:7.) What did the second son say? What did he do? Who does that represent? (c. 23:23; Ez. 33:31; Ro. 2:17-25; Titus 1:16.) Have we any such persons nowadays? Who is it does the will of God and pleases Him--the one who promises to do and does not or the one who refuses and afterwards repents and obeys? What application did Jesus make of His parable? Will the despised and degraded of today in many instances "go into the kingdom of God before" the respectable religious professor?

Why were the publicans and harlots to "go into the kingdom of God before" the chief priests and elders? Are the outcasts nowadays ever more ready to believe God's word as spoken by His messengers than the moral and religious? What was it then led the publicans and harlots to repentance and salvation? What effect might we naturally suppose the repentance of the publicans and harlots would have upon the chief priests and the elders? Did it have that effect? What was the consequence (v. 31)? 3.

God's Long Suffering Goodness, vv. 33-39 To whom was the second parable spoken? (Luke 20:9.) How did Jesus preface this parable? Why in this manner? What suggested the form of the parable? (Ps. 80:8-11; Is. 5:1, 2; Jer. 2:21.) How principally does the parable here differ from these Old Testament parables? (Compare Is. 5:7 and v. 43.) Who does the householder represent? What is meant by his digging a winepress, etc.? (Is. 5:4.) Are we to take each of these details as having some special significance in and of itself? (Eph. 2:14.)

When God has fully equipped his vineyard what is He represented as doing? Who are the husbandmen (v. 43)? What is meant by God's letting out His vineyard to them? To whom is it let out today? (1 Peter 4:10.) Did these husbandmen own the vineyard? Do we? What was the proprietor's next move? What is that meant to teach? What similar teaching have we in regard to Christ? (Matt. 25:14, 15; Mark 13:34; Luke 19:12.) Did the absence of the proprietor lessen his ownership of the vineyard in any way or the responsibility of the husbandmen?

Does Christ's absence in any way lessen our responsibility to Him? What was the proprietor's next step? Was that reasonable? Who were these servants? (2 Chron. 36:15, 16; Jer. 25:4.) What were the fruits demanded? (2 Kings 17:13; Zech. 7:8-10.) Who are the servants God sends to the present husbandmen? What are the fruits they demand? How were the servants used? Was this historically true of Israel's treatment of their prophets? (c. 5:12; 2 Chron. 36:16; 24:20, 21; 16:7, 10; Jer. 26:21-24; Acts 7:52; Neh. 9:26; 1 Kings 18:4, 13; 19:2, 10; 22:26, 27.)

What light does this treatment of their prophets by Israel throw upon the theory that these prophets were not God-inspired men but simply the product of the Israelitish natural character and genius? What use of this singular treatment of their prophets by Israel did the early Christian teachers make? (Acts 7:51, 52.) Is it strange that such a people should reject their anointed King when He came? Does the world use godly men in the same way today? (2 Tim. 3:12.) Why? (John 15:19; 17:14; 7:7; Ro. 8:7.)

What was the last resource of the householder to secure his due? How did this messenger differ from all others? What does this teach us in regard to the difference between Jesus and the greatest of the prophets? In what book in the Bible is this distinction especially emphasized? (Heb. 1:1, 2, 5; 3:5, 6.) What does Mark add as to the character of this Son? (Mark 12:6.) What did he say about sending the Son? Are we to understand from this that God did not really know how the Son would be used? (Acts 2:22, 23.)

What do these words mean? Do we find similar forms of expression elsewhere in the Bible? (Jer. 36:3; Zeph. 3:7.) What was the actual reception which the Son received? Are we to understand from this that the Jews and their leaders clearly recognized in Christ the Messiah and deliberately planned to get His Kingdom from Him? (Luke 23:34; Acts 3:17; 1 Cor. 2:8.) Did they recognize in Jesus a superior being at all? (John 11:47.) What was their excuse then for putting Him out of the way? (John 11:48-50.)

What then was their object in killing Him? Did the secret conviction which they were unwilling to admit even to themselves make them any more kindly in their feeling toward Jesus? Who is the bitterest kind of an infidel? Did they actually carry their plot into execution? Is there any way in which we can have a part in this appalling treatment of God's Son? 4. God's Relentless Severity Toward Those Who Despise His Goodness, vv. 40-46 With what searching question did Jesus just then turn upon His hearers?

What other question in the Bible does this suggest? (Heb. 10:28, 29.) What did they answer? Whose doom did they thereby declare? Is this doom of Israel for the rejection of Christ spoken of elsewhere? (22:6, 7; 23:35-38; 24:21, 22.) When was this doom executed? (Luke 19:41-44.) Is there a similar doom awaiting those who now reject Christ? (Heb. 12:25.) What is to be done with the kingdom when these husbandmen are destroyed? What nation is this? (Acts 15:15; 1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 5:9.)

How did Jesus confirm this teaching? Where is this Scripture found? (Ps. 118:22.) Who is the rejected stone? (Is. 28:16; 1 Peter 2:6, 7; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11.) Who were the bungling builders? Who made the rejected stone the head of the corner? Does it ever happen now that the stone man rejects, God gives a place in His building? (1 Cor. 1:26, 27.) What is the application Christ makes of His own parables? What fate does He say will overtake those who fall on this stone?

Those upon whom it falls? What two classes are here indicated? Had there been any prophecy of this in the Old Testament? (Ps. 2:12, 9; 110:5, 6; Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; Is. 8:14, 15.) Did the Scribes and Pharisees know whom Jesus meant? What effect had it upon them? What restrained them?

CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. God Does everything for His kingdom necessary for its fruitfulness, 33; compare Is. 5:4; entrusts cultivation of His kingdom to men, 33; expects those to whom He entrusts the kingdom to repay Him with the fruits thereof, 34; sends His messengers to receive the fruits, 34. Bears long with the rebellious: sends servant after servant, 35, 36; at last sends His own Son, 37; pardons the rebellious when they repent, 31; admits the rebellious, when they repent, into His kingdom, 31.

Deals in relentless severity with those who persistently despise His goodness, 40-44; takes the kingdom from them, 43; miserably destroys them, 35-41; compare Luke 20:15, 16. Gives the kingdom to others, 43. God's command to His sons: "Go," 28, 30; "Work," 28, 30; "Today," 28, 30; "In my vineyard," 28, 30. 2. Jesus Christ (1). His nature: Divine--while all the prophets were merely bondservants (34 R. V. margin) He was a Son, 37. (1). His characteristics: Obedience, 37, 38; subordination to the Father, 37; calmness, 25-46; heroism, 28-46; skill as a teacher, 40, 41. (3).

His inheritance: God's kingdom, 38. (4). His first mission: To Israel, 37. (5). His position: The head of the corner, 42. (6). How He was treated: Hated by the chief priests and Pharisees, 45, 46; honored as a prophet by the multitudes, 46; rejected by the Jewish builders, 42; made the head of the corner by the Lord, 42; cast out and killed, 39. (7). His authority for His doctrine: God's Word, 42. (8). The consequences of rejecting Him: The rejection of Him the final and damning sin, 39-41; he that falleth on Him is broken to pieces, 44, R.

V.; the one on whom He falls scattered as dust, 44, R. V.; He is the foundation stone upon which we may build to heaven or the stumbling stone over which we may stumble into hell, 42, 44. What will you do with Jesus? 3. The Kingdom of God God has provided everything needful for its cultivation and fruitage, 33; its cultivation entrusted to men, 33; first entrusted to Israel, 43; taken from Israel because of their unfaithfulness, 43; given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, 43; entrance secured by true repentance, 29-31; entered by repentant publicans and harlots rather than by Pharisees who profess but do not, 31, 32. 4.

Israel Highly and exceptionally favored of God, 33-37; entrusted with the care of His vineyard, 33; God's servants sent to them to receive His fruits, 34; His Son sent to them, 37; rejected the stone which God made the head of the corner, 42; misused God's messengers, 35, 36; murdered God's Son, 39; the kingdom taken from them and given unto others, 43; destroyed for rejecting the Son of God, 41. 5. Repentance (1). What it is: Such sorrow for sin as leads one to forsake it, 29 (see Greek). (2).

What it comes from: Believing God's Word, 32. (3). How it manifests itself: In doing what God bids, 29. (4). How it is rewarded: By entrance into God's kingdom, 31. 6. The Sinner's Three Steps into the Kingdom Believing, 32; repenting, 29; obeying, 29.

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