

THE PARABOLIC TEACHING ABOUT CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Lesson 1: The Gospel of the Kingdom of God and How It Comes: Why Parables?

15-Point Chronological Discussion Outline & Worksheet • Dr. Dallas Willard Lecture Series (1983)

1. Teaching What Christ Taught in His Manner

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~00:00 – 06:15]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 28:19–20; John 6:60–66; 1 Cor. 11:1

Dallas Willard Insight: True discipleship requires not only sharing Jesus' message, but adopting His gentle, uncoercive teaching method that respects human freedom.

Discussion Question: How does teaching what Jesus taught in the manner He taught it change how we share faith today?

My Notes & Answer:

2. Message & Faith OF Christ vs. ABOUT Christ

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~06:15 – 11:30]

Scripture Focus: Galatians 2:16, 20; Matthew 8:23–27

Dallas Willard Insight: Moving beyond doctrines about Jesus into entering the living faith of Jesus—trusting God's present reign in daily life as Jesus did.

Discussion Question: What is the difference between having intellectual faith in Christ and walking in the active faith of Christ?

My Notes & Answer:

3. Present Availability of the Kingdom ('At Hand')

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~12:00 - 13:20]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 3:2, 4:17; Mark 1:14–15

Dallas Willard Insight: 'At hand' does not mean 'about to arrive later,' but that God's rule and governance is present, open, and accessible right now through Jesus.

Discussion Question: What does Jesus mean when He announces that the Kingdom of God is 'at hand' right now?

My Notes & Answer:

4. Shared Vision of John the Baptist and Jesus

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~13:20 – 16:00]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 3:1–3, 4:17, 11:2–6

Dallas Willard Insight: John and Jesus preached the same core message: turn around (repent) because God's active rule is directly within reach.

Discussion Question: How did John the Baptist and Jesus prepare people for the present availability of God's reign?

My Notes & Answer:

5. Greater Than John the Baptist

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~15:45 – 20:30]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 11:11; Luke 7:28

Dallas Willard Insight: Even the least disciple living in the present reality of Christ's Kingdom possesses greater spiritual resources than John had.

Discussion Question: Why is the least person walking in the present Kingdom greater than John the Baptist?

My Notes & Answer:

6. The Kingdom Suffers Violence (Universal Access)

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~20:27 – 24:45]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 11:12; Luke 16:16; Luke 15:1–2

Dallas Willard Insight: Entering the Kingdom requires no rigid religious protocol or social status; whoever has a sincere heart can freely press in.

Discussion Question: What does it mean that the Kingdom suffers violence and that anyone can enter without religious protocol?

My Notes & Answer:

7. Defining a Kingdom: Rule, Allegiance, & Care

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~25:00 – 27:50]

Scripture Focus: Psalm 145:10–13; 1 Samuel 8:4–9

Dallas Willard Insight: A kingdom is a society governed by a King where citizens offer love and allegiance, receiving divine protection and provision.

Discussion Question: How does Dallas Willard define a kingdom in terms of allegiance, provision, and personal relationship with the King?

My Notes & Answer:

8. God's Governance vs. Human Coercive Power

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~28:00 – 30:30]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 20:25–28; Micah 6:8

Dallas Willard Insight: God's Kingdom works like a loving family or healthy neighborhood rather than coercive human governments backed by force.

Discussion Question: How does God's rule operate like a loving family rather than through coercive human government or force?

My Notes & Answer:

9. New Birth into the Kingdom

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~30:30 – 32:20]

Scripture Focus: John 3:1–8; Colossians 1:13

Dallas Willard Insight: The New Birth is the literal spiritual entry into the living power and governance of God's present Kingdom on earth.

Discussion Question: How does the New Birth in John 3 serve as our literal entrance into life in God's Kingdom?

My Notes & Answer:

10. The Meaning of Parable (Para-Bole: Throw Beside)

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~32:30 – 37:30]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 13:10–13; Mark 4:33–34

Dallas Willard Insight: Human minds learn through contrast. Jesus places everyday earthly stories alongside spiritual realities so truth can be understood.

Discussion Question: How does placing an everyday story beside a spiritual truth help our minds grasp Kingdom reality through contrast?

My Notes & Answer:

11. God Respects Human Freedom & Personality

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~37:30 – 38:20]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 13:11, 23:37; John 3:17–18

Dallas Willard Insight: God is a gentleman who never forces or coerces compliance. He invites hearts to respond freely without dropping spiritual bombs.

Discussion Question: Why does God refrain from forcing salvation on hard hearts, choosing instead to act as a gentleman?

My Notes & Answer:

12. Parables as Divine Mercy for Hardened Hearts

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~38:20 – 39:45]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 13:14–15; Isaiah 6:9–13

Dallas Willard Insight: Directly confronting a hardened, insensitive heart causes greater hostility; parables gently offer truth without provoking judgment.

Discussion Question: In light of Isaiah 6, why are parables an act of mercy toward people with insensitive hearts?

My Notes & Answer:

13. Parables as 'Spiritual Time Capsules'

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~39:40 – 40:30]

Scripture Focus: Mark 4:26–29; Psalm 119:11

Dallas Willard Insight: Stories bypass intellectual defenses and sit quietly in human memory like time capsules, ready to open when the heart softens.

Discussion Question: How do parables act like 'spiritual time capsules' that bypass defensiveness and blossom in receptive hearts later?

My Notes & Answer:

14. The Gentleness of Christ the King

Audio Timestamp: [Audio ~40:30 – 46:15]

Scripture Focus: Matthew 12:14–21; Isaiah 42:1–4

Dallas Willard Insight: Jesus fulfills Isaiah's prophecy as a King who will not break a bruised reed or extinguish a smoldering wick in His gentle care.

Discussion Question: How does Isaiah's prophecy of the battered reed and smoldering wick reveal Christ's gentle approach to souls?

My Notes & Answer:

15. Practical Message for Today

Audio Timestamp:

Scripture Focus: Matthew 12:14–21

Dallas Willard Insight: A Christian should be more like Christ in the way he/she talks about the Kingdom of Heaven.

Discussion Question: What does it look like in daily practice to talk about the Kingdom like Jesus does?

My Notes & Answer: