

Parables of Jesus

Lessons and Stories

DLTK's Bible Stories for Children

The Lost Sheep

by Sharla Guenther

This week we are going to learn about another parable. Do you remember what a parable is? It's a story Jesus told to teach a lesson. The story should be easy to remember and will have a special meaning for us to learn from.

This is the parable of the lost sheep. Jesus started by telling the story to men called tax collectors and Pharisees. These were men who thought they were more important than everyone else and they weren't very nice. They were whispering about Jesus and how he shouldn't eat and talk with sinners.

It's funny they would say that because we all are sinners, we all do things we shouldn't. The tax collectors and Pharisees thought that they were better than everyone else. In fact, they didn't think they had to repent or say sorry to God for their mistakes.

Have you ever felt really bad for something you've done? Maybe you've hit your brother or sister and afterwards you wished you hadn't. When you really feel sorry for something and tell that person you are sorry, that is what we do when we repent.

Just like with our family we need to feel bad and say sorry to God when we've done something wrong. The Pharisees and tax collectors didn't think that they had to do this because they were so important.

Of course Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he told this parable:

Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine sheep and go find the one sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he is so excited he carries the sheep all

the way home. Then he phones all his friends and neighbors and has a party to celebrate the sheep that was found.

Then Jesus told what the parable meant: Just like there was a big party over the one lost sheep, there will be a big party in heaven over just one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine people who think they are perfect and don't need to repent.

Just imagine, when you say "your sorry" to God all of heaven has a big party just for what you've done! God is much more excited when we say we're sorry than when we act like nothing has happened and don't think we need to repent at all.

But you know, Jesus just kept going and he told another parable. Listen and see if this sounds like something you've already heard.

Suppose a woman has ten dollar coins and loses one. Does she not turn on all her lights, sweep the whole house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls all her friends and neighbors and has a party to celebrate finding the lost coin.

Just like the lost coin, there is great joy with all of God's angels over one sinner who repents.

I think the lesson here is that nobody is perfect (except God of course). It's very important that when we make a mistake we realize we have done something wrong and we tell God we're sorry. It's as simple as taking a couple minutes, going somewhere quiet would be best (but you can talk to God anywhere), and just say you're sorry for the wrong thing you've done and ask God to forgive you.

When you ask God to forgive you He immediately erases the mistake from His mind and He won't think of it again. It's pretty easy, huh?! Just think how happy God will be when you do it ,and you'll feel better too!

DLTK's Bible Stories for Children

The Two Builders

by Sharla Guenther

Today's story is about sand, rock and two builders. Jesus was telling a story to explain what it means to obey Him.

He explained that when we hear His words and do what they say we are like a wise man who builds his house on the rock.

An example of hearing God's words and doing what they say is like hearing in Sunday School that we need to love our neighbor like we love ourselves. Then the next day you notice that one of the kids at school is crying and upset on the playground and kids are laughing and making fun of them. Instead of joining in, you go over and comfort them and play with them. You do what you learned.

When you obey what you learn in the Bible God calls you wise! To be wise or have wisdom is not how smart we are but more what we do that's important. When we obey God and listen to him that makes us wise. Of course being wise is a gift from God and we can ask for it when we pray.

Getting back to the story. Jesus said that the wise man built his house on the rock. When the rain came down and the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against the house; it didn't fall down because it had a strong thing to stand on (the rock).

The people that hear God's words and doesn't practice them are like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

So, if you learned to love your neighbor as yourself and you didn't do anything to help the kid that was being made fun of on the playground, God calls you foolish.

What do you think happened to the house that was built on the sand? Think about what happens when you build a sand castle. Is the sand castle strong? What would happen if it rained and a big wind came?

Just like a sand castle, a house can't be built on sand and it comes crashing down.

We know that God is the maker of everything, He made us and knows what's best for us. So if he gives us good choices to follow in the Bible and gives us these "rules" they are meant to help us, not to hurt us.

God doesn't want to boss us around, He loves us and wants the best for us. He wants us to listen to what he says in the Bible and obey.

Would you rather be foolish or wise? If you build your life on obeying God that's like building your life on the rock. We will be strong when situations around us are hard to handle.

The Sower and the Seed

by Sharla Guenther

While Jesus was with his disciples and went around teaching to all the crowds who came to hear him, He often spoke in parables. A parable isn't a true story, it's a story that Jesus made up to teach a lesson.

Have you ever heard of the story of Goldie Locks and the Three Bears? How about the Three Little Pigs? These stories are easy to remember, just like a parable. Jesus told them so the people would remember them.

The difference between children's stories and parables is that children's stories are too make believe, bears don't talk and live in houses, and neither do pigs. But while the stories Jesus told weren't real stories, they were about real life things. They were for adults and didn't have cartoons or make believe characters.

Even though you are young, you can learn these stories too. They show us how to act towards others, how to please God, and they teach us things about what Heaven is like and how we can live with him someday.

After Jesus told a parable he would explain what it meant, but he only told people that were his real friends and really wanted to know him better.

An example of a longer parable is the one about the farmer, it goes something like this:

Jesus had gone out and sat by the lake by himself. Soon such large crowds gathered around Him that He got into a boat near the shore and people stood on the land to hear him. Then he began telling them parables:

A farmer went out to plant his garden. As he was throwing the seed on the ground some fell on the hard path nearby and the birds came and ate them.

The next seeds fell near some rocks the farmer had in a pile nearby. There was not much dirt around the rocks so the seeds started to sprout and grow the next day. When seeds aren't planted in the dirt they don't grow roots which help them stay strong and wet, which help them grow properly.

So in the afternoon when the sun was very hot the little plants that started to grow among the rocks withered away and died because they had no root in the ground.

As the farmer continued to throw seeds onto the ground some of the seeds fell among the weeds and thorns that he hadn't pulled out. The thorns grew faster and taller than the seeds, so the seeds couldn't get enough sunlight and were choked out by the thorns.

Finally, some seed fell on the good soil that the farmer had worked and dug holes for the seed to go into. Those seeds made plants and those plants produced lots and lots of vegetables.

After Jesus told the parable the disciples asked what it meant. He knew that they would really listen and wanted to get to know him better so He told them what it meant. It goes something like this:

Just like when you're listening to your Sunday School teacher, your parents or pastor. They are trying to tell you more about God and about how to get to Heaven someday. When they talk to you about these things they are planting a pretend seed in your mind. The seed is a story about Jesus and as you learn more the seed grows and gets bigger and you eventually will know lots about God and be able to tell others about Him.

If you hear them talking about Jesus but don't understand, you need to ask questions. If you don't ask, you will forget what you learned and it will be like the seeds that fell on the path that were eaten by the

birds. You will forget and the seed will be gone from your mind and it won't grow.

Sometimes you might learn something about God and you will be excited about it but you don't learn more. It helps to read Bible stories and pray and go to church if you can. If you don't do any of these things you won't have a good friendship with God.

So if you don't learn more about God the pretend seed in your mind won't grow and it will be like the seed that fell on the rocks. It grew only for a short time and then it died.

The next seed is the one that was choked out by the thorns. This can happen when you hear a lesson about God and then you start to worry about all kinds of things. You might worry about your parents, your friends, or if you have all the coolest stuff. By worrying you will choke out the pretend seed in your mind. Pray to God instead of worrying!

The last seed is the best, it fell on the good ground. If you learn from what you hear in Sunday School and church, the seed in you mind will grow. You will be able to tell others about how great God is and God will be a good friend. Instead of growing a garden, you will be helping others know God and making Heaven grow with more people to live there.

Parable of the Talents

by Sharla Guenther

This story is called the Parable of the Talents. A parable is a type of story Jesus would tell so we would learn something from it.

Jesus' stories had more than one meaning. For example, this story is about talents which was a super large amount of money in Bible times. Today a talent might be worth a million dollars!

A talent in this story can also mean our gifts or abilities. Something special and amazing God gives just to you, almost like a super power.

The parable starts like this: A man decided to go on a long trip, so he called his servants and asked them to take care of his house, his stuff and his money.

Keep in mind that the man in this story is like God and the man's servants are God's people (you and me!) The man in this story trusted his servants and believed that they would take care of his special and valuable things.

The man decided to give one servant five talents of money (lets say that it's about five million dollars), to another he gave two talents (or two million) and to the last servant he gave one talent. He gave each servant a large amount he thought they could handle or according to their ability.

Our abilities are our special gifts that God gave to each of us. He made some of us smarter about some things than others. Some of us are good at memorizing, some of us are better at certain sports, and some of us are better at knowing how to help others. Some can solve problems better and some are more generous. Our ability is something special we have that's different than anyone else.

Back to the story, the man left on his trip and the servants each did something with the money that they received.

The man with the five talents went right away and used his money and got five more! The man with the two talents also used his money wisely and gained two more talents.

But the man with one talent took his talent and buried it in the ground to keep the money safe. He didn't even try to do something with it.

He reminds me a bit like a dog that buries a bone. He had lots of time to do something with his money. He could've bought some seeds and planted a garden and made some money but he didn't do anything!

After a nice long trip the master came back and wanted to know what his servants did with his money. The first man with the five talents said, "You trusted me with five talents and I made five more!"

His master smiled and replied, "Great job, good and faithful servant!" You are trustworthy with a few things so I will put you in charge of lots of things. Come celebrate with me!

I think it's interesting that the master says he trusted him with a FEW things. He gave him five million dollars! That's ALOT of things. But to this master it was small compared to what he would give and trust him with now.

Then the man with the two talents came and said, "You trusted me with two talents and I made two more!"

His master smiled and replied, "Great job, good and faithful servant!" You are trustworthy with a few things so I will put you in charge of lots of things. Come celebrate with me!

Then the man who received the one talent came and told his master, "I know you work hard for your money, so I was afraid to lose any of it. I decided to bury it and keep it safe. Here is your one talent back."

The master was not impressed and said, "You lazy servant! At the very least you could've taken the money to the bank and you would've at least collected some interest from it."

He immediately took the talent away from the man and gave it to the first man who used his money to make more.

The point Jesus was trying to make is that if you use your special gifts and abilities God will give you more to keep doing these things you are good at. He will trust you with so much more.

If you have a chance to do something for God that he gave you special abilities for and you don't do it, you will lose your special gift.

God considers you very valuable and trusts you to do something for him using your gifts and abilities. If you have a chance to do something and don't because you want to watch tv, play video games or because you just don't want to do anything; God will take that valuable gift and give it someone who is doing something with their gifts.

Maybe you're not sure what your special abilities are yet. Ask your parents or teachers what they think your gifts are.

Listen and watch when others compliment you or notice something good about what you're doing. To you it might be something small but to God it's a special and very valuable gift that only you can give. If you keep using it God will continue to make it bigger and better.

Also try to encourage and compliment others if you notice something special in them. Your friends, teachers and parents might forget that God put something special in them and you might see it. Tell them that they're good at it and remind them that it's a special ability given to them by God.

The Good Samaritan

by Sharla Guenther

This is the last parable we will be looking at. There are many other parables in the Bible, so if you want to hear more ask your parents to read them to you.

This next parable started with a man asking Jesus a question. The man who asks Jesus a question was very smart. Maybe he was trying to trick Jesus and see if he was a good teacher or not. This is what he asked: "Teacher, what should I do so I can go to Heaven and live forever?"

Jesus replied, "What is written in the Bible? What do you think?"

The man answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself."

"That is right!" Jesus said. "Do this and you will live forever in Heaven."

But the man wanted to know more so asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus decided to answer this question with a parable to help everyone who was listening understand.

Jesus said:

"There once was a Jewish man walking along a road. He was coming from Jerusalem and was heading to Jericho, which was a full day or two of walking.

The road was rocky and there were small hills all around. The man was just humming to himself and enjoying the nice day when suddenly a group of men jumped out from behind a hill. They took all his belongings and tore off most of his clothes. They didn't want him to follow them so

they beat him up very badly, and left him lying and bleeding on the side of the road.

A few minutes later, a priest was walking down the same path and noticed the man lying on the side of the road. Do you know what he did? You'd think he would run over and help the man. Instead he crossed the road and walked on the other side and acted like he didn't see the man.

About an hour or so later, another man, called a Levite, was walking down the road. Levites were people who assisted priests with their work. He would probably help the man. But you know what he did? He slowed down and walked a little closer to the man, but then kept walking without helping him at all.

You might be thinking that maybe the man lying by the side of the road looked like he was resting or something and that is why the priest and the Levite didn't stop to help. The trouble is, it was easy to tell he was badly hurt. The man was bleeding, had most of his clothes ripped off him, and he was bruised and hardly breathing.

Just a few minutes later, another man came walking. He was a Samaritan. One thing you should know about Samaritans is that Jews didn't like them. Jews usually didn't treat Samaritans very well, so they never got along. The man who was dying on the road was a Jew. So what do you think the Samaritan did? You would think he would walk by and maybe even laugh at the man.

But as soon as he saw the man, he went over to him and felt compassion for him. He put bandages on his sores and poured oil and wine (which were quite expensive) on the sores to prevent them from getting worse. Then he lifted the man on his own donkey and took him to a hotel to take care of him.

The next day the Samaritan took out enough money so the man could stay at the hotel until he was well enough to leave. He paid the man at the front desk and asked him to take care of the man. If he wasn't better

after about two months the Samaritan would come back and pay for any extra cost."

After Jesus finished the story, he asked, "Which of the three men do you think was a neighbor to the man who was left beaten on the side of the road?"

The man who asked him the question at the beginning replied, "The one who had compassion and helped him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do the same."