MESSAGE   STUDY GUIDE   GROUP MATERIAL   SONGS

Community Group Material:

Check with each other how you are doing.

Sermon Summary:

Jesus was a master storyteller, and the synoptic Gospels contain over 30 of his parables. These stories have shaped language and culture, giving us phrases like "prodigal son" and "good Samaritan." Many parables remain unexplained, compelling readers to reflect deeply on their meaning.

Understanding parables requires some guiding principles. They primarily reveal Jesus' mission to usher in the Kingdom of God, and we should approach them with an open heart and mind. Jesus often said, "Whoever has ears, let them hear," emphasizing the need for attentive listening.

When interpreting parables, we must avoid two extremes: glossing over them and missing the point, or over-analyzing every detail for hidden meanings. Instead, we should seek the main message Jesus intended, often highlighted at the story's conclusion. In the coming months, let's apply these principles and tools to uncover the richness of Jesus' parables.

Discussion:

1. What makes parables interesting?
2. Read Matt 13:10-17. How do these verses prove that the parables are about the kingdom? Why can some see and understand while others cannot?
3. Why did Jesus speak to people using parables?
4. One principle in interpreting the parables is related to how much of the parable should be allegorized. Prior to 1900 many would allegorize every aspect of the narrative. Why might this be a problem?
5. Why is it important to consider the context (the place, the people it was spoken to, and the culture of the day) in which the parable was originally given?
6. What are some of the questions that we should ask when attempting to interpret a parable?
7. What should be the last question we ask?
8. What should be our attitude in interpreting the parables?

Prayer:

Pray for each other.

Pray for a right attitude and willingness to have our understanding rearranged as we go through the parables.