



Interestingly, Jesus oftentimes spoke in parable, so those whose hearts are prepared would understand, but that it would defy the wisdom of the world. Here's what He likened the Kingdom of God to:

1: A farmer planting seed: Mark 4:26-27: "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how."

2: A mustard seed: Mark 4:31-32: "*It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs."

3: Yeast in the dough: Mat 13:33: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."

4: A hidden treasure: Mat 13:44: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

5: Pearls: Mat 13:45-46: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Are we committed to seek the Kingdom of God for our lives above all in this world?

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THE NATURE & PRIVILEGES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“And He said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables.” Luke 8:10

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How does the bible define the joy and benefits bestowed upon those who enter the Kingdom of God?

Extraordinary blessing: Luke 14:15: “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

Knowledge of God’s will for our lives: Mat 13:11-12: “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

Increased revelation through the study of God’s Word: Mat 13:52: “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

The Holy Spirit’s presence: Rom 14:17: “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Power: 1Cor 4:20: “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.”

How powerful?

Dan 4:3: “How great *are* His signs, and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion *is* from generation to generation.”

Have we availed ourselves of the privileges of God’s Kingdom?

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Jesus oftentimes pointed to the characteristics of the Kingdom of God, such as:

Luke 17:20-21: "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

To Nicodemus in John 3:3, "Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

To Pilate who asked Him if He was the King of the Jews in John 18:36, "Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews."

In Mat 6:33 Jesus commanded, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

Rom 14:17 adds, "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

1Chron 29:11 describes the Kingdom powerfully: "Yours, O LORD, *is* the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; For all *that is* in heaven and in earth *is Yours*; Yours *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all."

Finally in John 6:44 Jesus declared, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Have we been drawn to follow Christ?

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD REQUIRES SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

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John 17:15-16

Jesus gave a clear parable on the necessity to be separated from the world in Mat 13:47-50:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Obviously, we must make a clear choice between God and the world, as these additional warnings from the Word of God declare:

1John 2:15-17: "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever."

Rom 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Is our heart surrendered to Christ, or are we rather drawn to the world?

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An interesting parable Jesus gave is the about the 10 virgins in Mat 25:1-13. It says these 10 women were keeping themselves for the day they would meet their bridegroom. What's interesting to note is that while 5 of them always made sure they had their lamps full of oil to keep watch, the other five did not.

This can be compared to believers who daily study the Word to be strengthened in their faith and avoid sin, against superficial people who might claim to be saved, but are rather drawn by the flesh and this world's attractions, rather than seeking God in His Word.

The reason Jesus said in John 8:12: "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

In essence, by following Christ steadfastly in His Word, we are empowered to resist the world's temptations that lead people to spiritual death.

How committed should we be?

Luke 14:26-27: "If any man comes to Me and does not have much more love for Me than for his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be My follower. If he does not carry his cross and follow Me, he cannot be My follower." (NLV)

Are we committed to put Christ first and above everyone else in our life, even ourselves?

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In the parable of the talents of Mat 25:14-30, Jesus starts by saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them." Then he describes that when the man returns, he expects his servants to have produced fruit from investing his goods, adding that some will produce more than others.

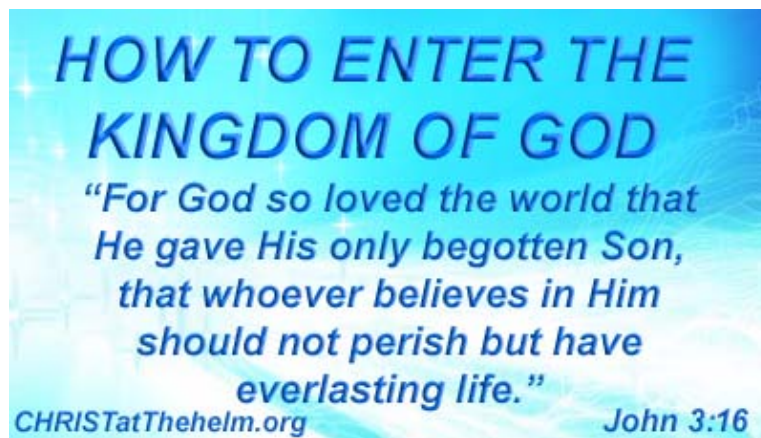
The center of the story however focuses on the servant who did nothing with what he was given, and in verses 26-28 he said: "You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents."

In John 15:1-2 Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit."

Paul in Col 1:10 said, "Live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God."

In examining our life, how much have we grown in the knowledge of God and produced fruit?

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The bible makes it clear that salvation comes through belief in Christ and thereby requires the surrender of our lives to follow Him. How then can we identify with belonging to Christ?

In Mat 5:3 Jesus said, “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Being poor in spirit relates to inviting the Spirit of Christ in our lives to lead us. As such, it requires a humble heart of repentance, and allow Christ to transform us through His Word.

The reason Jesus said in Mark 1:15: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

In Mat 18:3 Jesus added, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” In other words, to become like children is to submit to God’s will for our lives, just as small children do submit to their parents.

In essence, we must reject the world’s deceptions, lusts and evils, the reason Jesus said in Mat 19:24 tell us, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

If today was our moment of truth with God, in other words the end of this life, in examining ourselves, can we say that we are truly surrendered to Christ and abiding by His Word?

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WHO MAY ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

*“Most assuredly, I say to you,
unless one is born again,
he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

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John 3:3

In speaking of the Kingdom of God, Jesus in Mat 7:13-14 said, “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

To Nicodemus who asked Jesus how can a man return to his mother’s womb and be born again in John 3:4-7, Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’”(NLT)

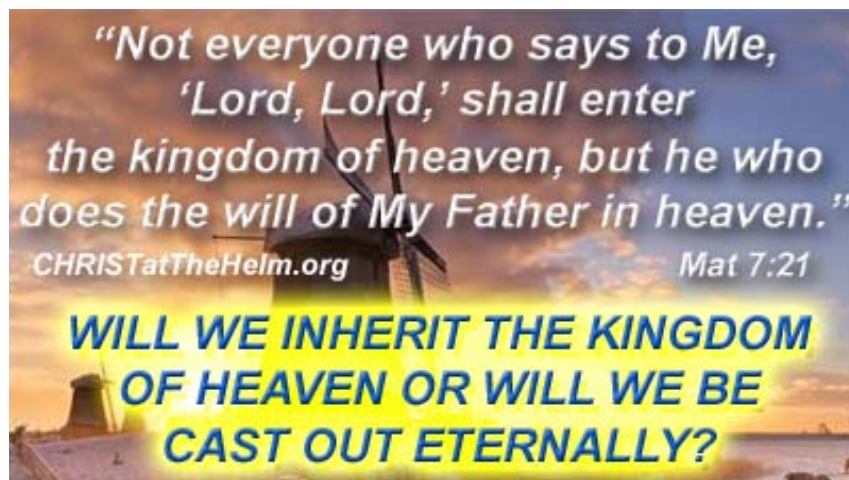
In 1Peter 1:23, the apostle explained, “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring Word of God.”

The reason Paul in Rom 6:23 said, “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Therefore, it is clear that we must be regenerated in our spirit through the Holy Spirit, and it ensues that we must become focused on following Christ through the Word of God.

Have we truly entered by the narrow gate to follow Christ, and are we moving forward in His Kingdom?

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How does the Word of God identify those who will not inherit the Kingdom of God?"

Eph 5:5: "For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

1Cor 6:9-10: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

Gal 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Rev 21:8: "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Does our life reflect the Kingdom of God, or do we identify with the cast out?

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