

1. **Parables** – Hebrew – *Mashal*. A type of comparison.

1. Story – helps deliver the message
2. Fiction – like a fable. The fictional story helps the audience remember.
3. Jesus controls the details (why does Jesus include that detail?)
4. Carries the Truth
5. Jesus usually adds a twist

Parables are an effective way to communicate a “truth” that your opponent would rather not hear.

- The story provides a means for **self-discovery** of the truth principle.
- Parables are used for complex or challenging ideas. Straightforward ideas don’t need a parable.

“a teaching without a parable is like a basket without handles”

- Solomon is said to have given “handles” to the Torah through his proverbs (also Mashal).¹

2. **Common Parable topics and comparisons:**

Unknown / Difficult	Known
- Kingdom of God (Kingdom of Heaven)	King
- God/Humanity relationship	Shepherd
- Human / Human Relationship	Father
- Old Testament text or commandment	Farmer

3. **Matt. 13** – Jesus tells us seven parables about the Kingdom of Heaven:

Difficult	Known
Kingdom of Heaven (God) – God’s reign	- Sower (hearers)
	- Weeds
	- Mustard Seed
	- Yeast
	- Hidden Treasure
	- Fine pearl
	- Fishing Net

- Jesus’ parables rely on everyday items and their inherent characteristics to convey his message.
- Almost all of Jesus’ parables have an underlying text from the Old Testament that he would be elaborating upon and that his audience would understand.

¹ McArthur and Johnston, 2014. *They Also Taught In Parables: Rabbinic Parables from the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, pp.

5. **Parable of the Sower** – should be Parable of Hearers. The soil or landing place of seed describes a type of hearer.

- From a **Christian perspective**, we generally focus on the Sower – Jesus – or the one who attempts to communicate the Gospel.
- From a **1st century Jewish perspective** – the focus is on what type of disciple you are.
 - Are you able to “hear” the word of God and know how to put it into action in your life?
- This parable should challenge us, as followers of Jesus, to see how the soils apply to our lives.

6. **Underlying Text to Parable of the Sower (Hearers):**

- **Jeremiah 4:1-4** (esp. verse 3)
- We are to continually prepare the soil of our hearts so that we can receive God’s words.

7. **Parable of the Darnel** – vv. 24-30

- ‘weeds’ is not specific enough.
 - We lose the punch because we do not know the implication of a darnel.
- Jesus is very specific about which weed he chooses, and his audience is aware of the issues with **darnel** –
 - Darnel is a toxic **twin** to wheat.
 - If mixed in with wheat for bread, it can cause dizziness or hallucinations.
 - Darnel would eventually become a symbol of subversion within society. ²
- There were Roman laws against sabotaging a wheat field with darnel – and perhaps Roman soldiers would sabotage the enemy’s field with darnel.³
 - When the audience heard an “enemy” planted darnel – Rome may have come to mind.

8. **God will judge the wicked** –

- Many in Jesus’ day – like John the Baptist – envisioned that the Messiah would immediately bring judgment for the wicked and establish peace. Jesus doesn’t.
- Man has poor judgment when it comes to going after “evil.” God has perfect judgment.

²Howard Thomas, Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Richard Marggraf Turley "Remembering Darnel, a Forgotten Plant of Literary, Religious, and Evolutionary Significance," *Journal of Ethnobiology*, 36(1), 29-44, (1 March 2016)

³Barclay, William - *The Daily Study Bible Series*, Matthew vol 3, page 73-74.