


Preaching Parables

Parables were told either to **reveal** or **conceal** truth.

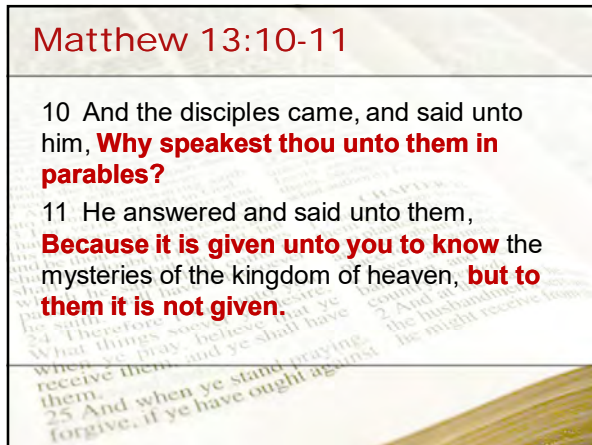
Depending on the situation and the audience.



Matthew 13:10-11

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, **Why speakest thou unto them in parables?**


11 He answered and said unto them, **Because it is given unto you to know** the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, **but to them it is not given.**



Preaching Parables

Parables are **not** intended to teach deep theological truth.


The Christian should not build soteriological or eschatological views on the back of parables.



Preaching Parables

Parables should NOT be “mined” for mysterious hidden meaning.

Parables are not enigmas that need to be solved.




Preaching Parables

“The lesson revealed in the comparison is always the **central** (and often the only) point of the parable.


A parable is not an allegory, like ‘*Pilgrims Progress*’ in which every character and virtually every plot point conveys some cryptic but vital meaning. **Parables are not to be mined for layer upon layer of secret significance.**”

- John MacArthur



Preaching Parables


- The word “parable” literally means, *“to cast along side.”*
 - In other words, *to draw a comparison.*
 - Or, *“in like manner.”*



Preaching Parables

Parables are
(almost) always:

- *Simple*
- *Easily understood*
- *Plain and practical*




Preaching Parables

Remember, Parables were originally
SPOKEN and not **WRITTEN**.

If it takes months of “*study/meditation/prayer*” in
order to finally understand what a parable
“**REALLY**” means ... then it had **NO** meaning
whatsoever to the original hearer.


Furthermore, the crowd was often illiterate –
and it was the Master Teacher’s intention to
reveal truth (to illustrate truth) to them, not
mask it behind symbolism.





Preaching Parables

WARNING...WARNING...

When you begin to allegorize,
spiritualize, dramatize or
sensationalize a parable,
there are **NO limits** to where
you can go – **except** your
own imagination.



An illustration




Preaching Parables
*Blonde Hair and a **Blue** Dress*





Preaching Parables

So then...
how do we interpret
parables?

- 1) Context
- 2) Context
- 3) Context



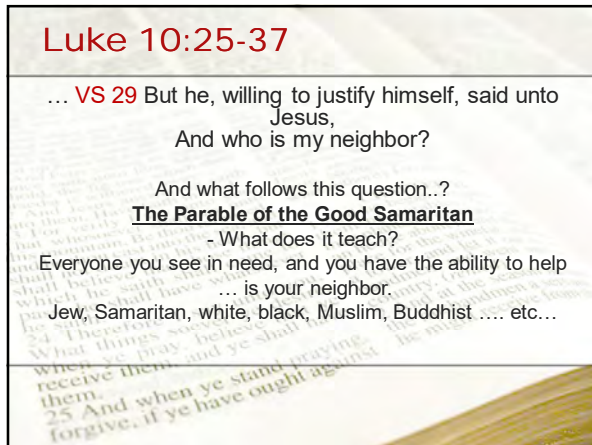
A Biblical Illustration




Luke 10:25-37


... **VS 29** But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus,
And who is my neighbor?

And what follows this question..?
The Parable of the Good Samaritan
- What does it teach?
Everyone you see in need, and you have the ability to help
... is your neighbor.
Jew, Samaritan, white, black, Muslim, Buddhist etc...



**BUT HERE IS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE
OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE
BEGIN TO ALLEGORIZE**

?  **?**




Preaching Parables

Case in POINT...

Augustine submits that in the parable of The Good Samaritan:

- the "certain man" represented Adam.
- Jerusalem represented the garden.
- Jericho signified the moon.
- The thieves who stole from him are Satan and his demons.
- The priest and Levite stands for the OT laws and sacrifices.
- The oil and wine equal hope and diligence.
- The inn is the church.
- The innkeeper is the Apostle Paul...and the outlandish list goes on.




Preaching Parables

The question is ... is Augustine wrong? Is that outlandish speculation?

If you arrive at a different meaning/symbolism

Who/what makes him wrong, and your interpretation right?




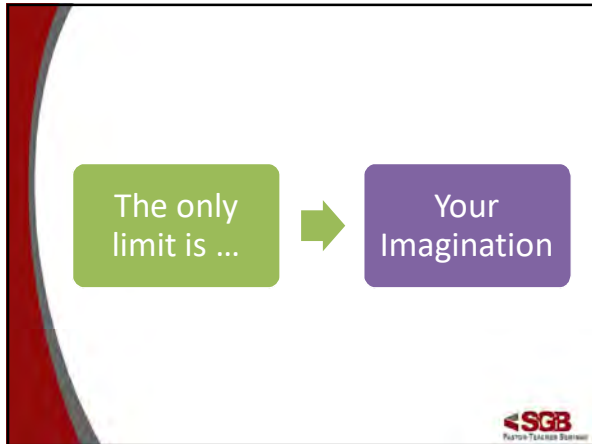
Preaching Parables

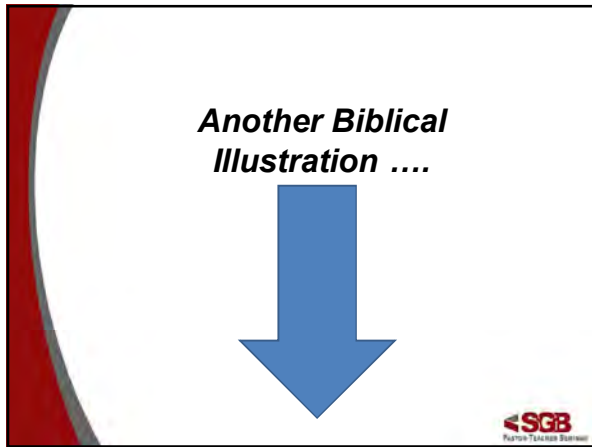
Therein lies the problem with allegorizing or spiritualizing the parables.

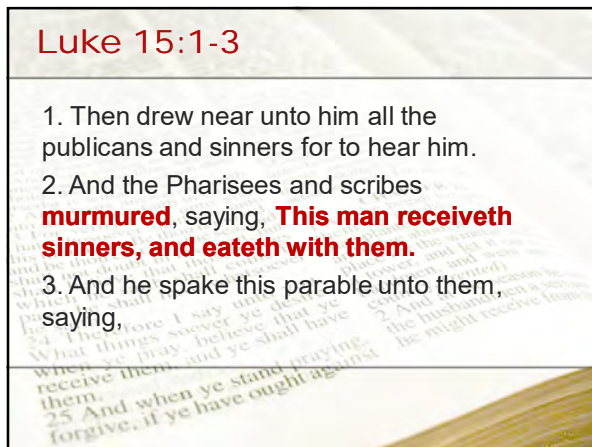
There are NO rules for interpretation.

NO exegetical guidelines one must abide by.










Preaching Parables

What follows in Luke 15:4-32 is a trilogy of parables...

1. The Lost Sheep
2. The Lost Silver
3. The Lost Son

What do these three parables all teach..?


- **GOD is in the business of restoring wayward souls.**
- **God delights to save sinners.**



Preaching Parables

The parable of the lost sheep is NOT intended to teach us the 5 points of the Doctrines of Grace.

The parable of the prodigal son should not be allegorized or sensationalized to make the younger brother represent _____ and the older to represent _____.



Preaching Parables

**Not Only the Context ...
but just read the TEXT....**

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares
Matthew 13:24-30

The Parable of the Mustard Seed
Matthew 13:31,32

The Parable of the Leaven
Matthew 13:33

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure,
The Pearl of Great Price, the Dragnet
Matthew 13:44-50



The Parable of the Laborers
Matthew 20:1-16

The Parable of the Wedding Feast
Matthew 22:1-14

The Parable of the Ten Virgins
Matthew 25:1-13

**DO YOU KNOW WHAT ALL THESE
PARABLES HAVE IN COMMON?**


The kingdom of heaven is like....



Preaching Parables


If we believe that there is a difference between the Kingdom and the Church, then I think Jesus knew what He meant when He said, repeatedly... the kingdom of heaven, and not the church....

Why then not simply interpret the parable the way Jesus presents it?



Preaching Parables


NOW...
having said all
that....




Preaching Parables

When, on the few occasions the Bible tells us that there **is** a secondary meaning, or a spiritual meaning behind the parable...

Then and only then, can we be certain that **there is one**. **AND** what the parable symbolizes.



A Biblical Illustration



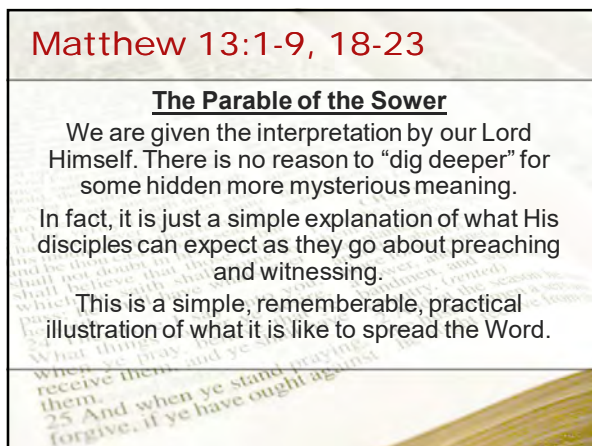
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

The Parable of the Sower



We are given the interpretation by our Lord Himself. There is no reason to “dig deeper” for some hidden more mysterious meaning.

In fact, it is just a simple explanation of what His disciples can expect as they go about preaching and witnessing.

This is a simple, rememberable, practical illustration of what it is like to spread the Word.



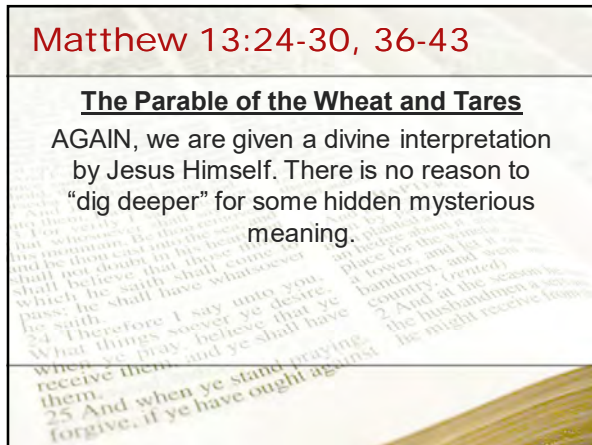
Another Biblical Illustration

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares

AGAIN, we are given a divine interpretation by Jesus Himself. There is no reason to “dig deeper” for some hidden mysterious meaning.




Preaching Parables

Here is where I will warn you against –
CROSS comparison of Parables.

Just because the seed and the sower may be one thing in one parable, doesn't mean they represent the same things in another parable.

Just take those two parables as an example.




Preaching Parables

Parables will preach all by themselves.

You don't have to embellish.
You don't have to spiritualize.
You don't have to twist and turn them into something the Lord never intended.

In so doing, we are no longer interpreters,
but freelance authors working without guidelines or rules.



Preaching Parables

“Parables are ingeniously simple word pictures with profound spiritual lessons.”

John MacArthur

