

Introduction:

- The start of three confrontational parables aimed against the religious leaders of the day. Unlike Mark and Luke, Matthew takes these three parables and puts them together for an impressive and startling body of teaching.
- All three parables focus on the failure of Jewish leadership to respond to God's call and the consequences to future generations.
- All three parables compare: one, those who feel they have a right to their privileged position and two, those who unexpectedly find themselves promoted. *"Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you."* (Matthew 21:31, NKJV)
- All three parables radically show how the people of God in the future will differ from the people of God of the day.
- What Jesus stresses in these three parables has already been outlined in: *"And I tell you this, that many Gentiles will come from all over the world—from east and west—and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven. But many Israelites—those for whom the Kingdom was prepared—will be thrown into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* (Matthew 8:11-12, NLT)
- Text Mt 21:27-ff. We need to remember that there is no break between verses 27 and 28.
- "This parable, like the two which precede it, speaks of people who do not live up to expectation and so lose their place of privilege, to be replaced by a more surprising group; the first are last and the last first." France, R. T. (2007). NICNT Matthew (p. 821). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
- "This parable is to be read more generally as a warning, as in the preceding two parables, that those who refuse God's call face ultimate exclusion and replacement," France, R. T. (2007). (p. 822). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
- This parable's focus, as in the two prior, points to "where's the fruit?"

I. The Kings Invitation

- A. The servants are sent to the "invited." These have already received the invitation. The privileged group are the Pharisees, Priests and teachers of the law. They have already been invited but now it is time to come to the feast.
- B. *"When they ignore this second invitation, having already accepted the first, they are going back on their word, like the second son in 21:30 and like the tenant farmers whose acceptance of their tenancy carried with it the obligation to pay the rent."* France, R. T. (2007). NICNT Matthew (p. 824). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co. Are you seeing the common thread through this parable?
 1. Their refusal is an insult to the King.
 2. The refusal in light of everything now being ready, 'doubles' the offense and betrayal to the King.
 3. In their refusal they have better things to do. vs. 5 'his farm, his business, abuse of servants.' They put their selfish concerns before the concern of the King. vs 6 missing treating the servant is literally showing contempt for the King.

4. They 'ignored', *Gr ameleo* to have no concern for, they just do not care...about the will of God.
5. The offense goes even deeper when they hurt, kill the messengers. (Jesus is included in that group.)

II. The Kings Response

- A. He is furious!
 1. Sends an army to burn their town. Almost all commentators agree this is a prophetic Word to Jerusalem that is fulfilled in AD 70. Throughout the OT, invading armies were seen as judgement of God, especially in the words of the prophets.
 2. Their city is again a pointer to the failure of the religious leaders of the day to respond to the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Their rebellion is their undoing.
- B. More servants sent out! vs. 8-10
 1. When the elite (those of privileged position) refuse to come, the King calls 'those others' the ordinary and under privileged.
 2. These guests are not as 'worthy' as the former guests but they come to the banquet at the first invitation.
 3. The coming of 'these others' reflects the open offer of Jesus to 'who-so-ever' will come! The bad, the good, all are welcome!

III. The Coming of the King vs 11; 21:40

- A. The coming of the king, the owner, or review of two sons is to bring the reader/hearer of the story to the place where all are struck to the heart that they are there to find fruit!
- B. As the King comes into the banquet hall He finds a guest not properly dressed. And He has this guy thrown out and burned! What the point of the parable? Even though you may not be of the privileged class but are of the 'those others' you still have to have the right garment to get in.
 1. *"The symbolism is of someone who presumes on the free offer of salvation by assuming that therefore there are no obligations attached, someone whose life belies their profession: faith without works."* France, R. T. (2007). NICNT Matthew (p. 827). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
 2. Entry may be free but it still has conditions.
 3. We are reminded of the parable of the sower. The master is still looking for fruit. As in the parable of sower the Word sprang up but only in good soil did it bear fruit. The invitation is free! But the King is looking for fruit.
- C. Summary: *""For many are called, but few are chosen.""* (Matthew 22:14, NLT)
 1. Sums up the message of this parable and the two prior to it.
 2. The first group of guests had all been 'invited' (vs. 3, 4, 8) but that did not mean that they would enjoy the feast. Therefore others are invited in their place (vs 9) but even one of them cannot get in!
 3. Who then are the chosen?
 - a) The 'many' and the 'few' speak of the weeding out process.

- b) The chosen are the new tenants who will produce the fruit, no matter who they are Jew or Gentile.
- c) Their 'choseness' does not depend on their origin but upon their response to God's summoning and their being ready to produce fruit for Him.

Conclusion:

- Triumphant entry and cleansing of temple. I am Messiah!
- Cursing of fig tree. Where is your fruit?
- Three parable looking for fruit:
 - This parable...these three parables really 'tick' the privileged religious leaders off. It judges them by forcing them to ask themselves 'Where is our fruit? What authority do we have?'
 - And that sets up the three challenges that finish chapter 22.