

Devotion, Week of July 12, 2026

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

We have begun looking at several parables in church in Matthew. The word “parable” comes from the root word “paraballo,” or in the Greek “parabole.” This compound word comes from “para” which means “to come along side or compare” and “ballo” which literally means “to throw” or “cast.” A parable is a short allegorical story designed to illustrate or teach some truth, religious principle, or moral lesson. They are only in the synoptic gospels. None are in John, and out of the 28 parables in the gospels, Mark only has 4, that are very short and terse.

Parables have distinctive features:

- Images are always familiar and drawn from everyday life
- They are characterized by intriguing plots
- They have an element of surprise or revelation
- There is often a tension between good and evil, or sinful and holy
- They often use a significant comparison between two objects that may be used as a mirror image of a comparable object, like good versus bad soil
- Jesus often introduces them with “The Kingdom of heaven is like...”

Jesus states in Matthew 13 that he speaks in parables to hide the meaning from those who choose to reject him and the message of God and to clarify or give a fuller meaning and understanding to those who believe in the Lord. He usually concludes a parable with phrases that alert the listener to pay close attention to what was just said, like “He who has ears, let him hear,” “Most assuredly I say to you,” and “How much more.”

We talked about good and bad soil this past week, and this week we will talk about wheat and weeds. I hope you will hear and understand Jesus’ message for us today.

Jeanne