



FATHER



MASTER



BRIDEGROOM



KING

A Bible Study in 6 Sessions on the Kingdom Parables

FATHER MASTER BRIDEGROOM KING

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on the Kingdom Parables

“When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” Luke 18:8

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INTRODUCTION

The prophet said, “Your king is coming to you” (Zechariah 9:9), and now he is here! In the days after his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and before the dark hours of his enemies’ triumph, Jesus the King presents lessons about the kingdom. His enemies will kill him, but that will not be the end of his story. He will rise from death and ascend into heaven to rule his people as they live and serve their King and wait for his return. When the time is right, he will come again. The King will return to claim his kingdom, “and every eye will see him” (Revelation 1:7).

In the first five sessions of the study, you will read five parables about the kingdom of God. In these parables, God has different roles—father, master, bridegroom and king. God’s people play different parts, too, as sons, servants, stewards and sheep (and virgin bridesmaids!) in lessons about belief and unbelief and about living and serving and waiting for the King. The last session is a description of the day when Jesus of Nazareth, the King of kings, will return and summon the nations to stand before him. As events unfold on that great day of terror and joy, we learn the answer to the question the King asked during his ministry on earth, “*When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?*” (Luke 18:8).

TIPS FOR USING THIS STUDY GUIDE

1. Always begin each session with a prayer. One is included for each session. You are encouraged to expand each of them with prayer concerns from the group.
2. Feel free to follow the format of each session as presented here or rearrange and adapt the material to meet the needs of your group.
3. You will need Bibles to look up the verses listed in each session.
4. As you work through the material in this study guide, be sure to write down in the margins any questions that come to mind or any thoughts that arise in the course of the discussion and your contemplation of each session's Scripture verses.
5. Throughout each session, think about specific ways you can apply the themes of the study to your life. Think about these themes during your personal devotional time.
6. If you are using this guide in a group setting, consider assigning printed Bible verses to various people in the class to read aloud at the appropriate time. This will move the session along more efficiently.

Note that some of the questions ask for facts. Typically, the answers to these questions will come from the Scripture verses just read. Other questions are more subjective, asking for your opinion or an example from your own experience. Since your life experiences are different from anyone else's, answers to these questions are neither right nor wrong. A Leader's Guide that accompanies this material is available from Creative Communications for the Parish (Code FML).

SESSION 2

THE MASTER AND HIS TENANTS



*"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."
Matthew 21:42*

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, for the sake of our salvation you were rejected and crucified. Teach us to cling by faith to you, the true Vine, so that we might bear the fruit of love and service in your name. Amen.

ICEBREAKER DISCUSSION

Have you ever planted a vegetable garden or a larger plot of land? What kind of work was involved? Was the planting successful? Were you able to enjoy the “fruit” of your work?

INTRODUCTION

“The vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel” (Isaiah 5:7). In this parable we find ourselves once again in the vineyard of God. In this parable, Jesus foretells what lies ahead for him in the days to come. The Master of the vineyard of Israel has sent his Son to collect the fruit of faith that is owed to him.

PART 1

- **Read Matthew 21:33-41.**
1. What similarities do you find between the vineyard that Jesus describes here and the vineyard described in Isaiah 5:1-7? What differences do you find?
 2. The master of the vineyard sends his servants to get the fruit that is due him. How are the servants treated? Read Matthew 23:29-36. How did the people of Israel treat God’s servants, the Old Testament prophets? Jesus tells the scribes and Pharisees, “Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers” (Matthew 23:32). According to this parable of the vineyard, how will the religious leaders finish what their ancestors began?
 3. What will the master of the vineyard do to the unfaithful tenants? What will faithful tenants do for the master?

PART 2

- **Read Matthew 21:42-46.**

1. The religious leaders of Israel, who should have welcomed the Messiah, instead plot to throw the Master's Son out of the vineyard and kill him. Read Acts 2:22-24. Why did this all take place?
2. How does the Son describe himself in verse 42? Jesus is quoting Psalm 118:22-23, verses about his resurrection. Read 1 Peter 2:7-8 and 1 Corinthians 1:22-24. How is Christ crucified a stumbling block to people today?
3. Read the words of Paul and Barnabas to the Jews of Antioch in Acts 13:43-49. How does this incident illustrate the fulfillment of Jesus' words in Matthew 21:43? With whom will the good news of the kingdom be shared?
4. The chief priests and Pharisees know Jesus is talking about them. What prevents them from arresting him?
5. Read Romans 11:17-24. Here the apostle Paul describes Israel, not as a vineyard, but as an olive tree. Gentiles (the wild olive shoots), through faith in Jesus the Messiah, have been grafted into the "nourishing root" of Israel. Why were some branches broken off? What warning does Paul give to the Gentiles?
6. The tenants said of the Son, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance" (Matthew 21:38). Read Galatians 3:29. Who are Abraham's offspring and heirs? The Jewish religious leaders rejected Jesus as their Messiah and condemned him to death. Yet it was our sins, too, that sent the Son to the cross. For our sake he was killed and raised up. Read 1 Peter 1:3-5. What inheritance do we receive through faith in the Son?

7. Read Ephesians 2:18-22 and 1 Peter 2:4-10. Jesus is the Son thrown out of the vineyard. He is the Stone rejected by the builders. But through his death and resurrection, the rejected Stone has become the cornerstone of the household of God, where both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus are built into a temple in the Lord. What is your task now as “living stones,” as God’s holy nation?

SUMMARY

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2). As the parable foretells, the Son will be rejected and killed. But Jesus will be raised to life, and Jews and Gentiles who trust in him become by faith “the planting of the LORD” (Isaiah 61:3), branches of “the true vine” (John 15:1): *“When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”*

HYMN

(Tune: Old Hundredth LM)

Almighty Father, bless the Word
Which through your grace we now have heard.
Oh, may the precious seed take root,
Spring up and bear abundant fruit!

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CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father and Master of the vineyard, you have called us out of darkness into your marvelous light. Help us to be bold witnesses in our words and action to the inheritance of forgiveness and hope we have through Jesus our Savior. Amen.

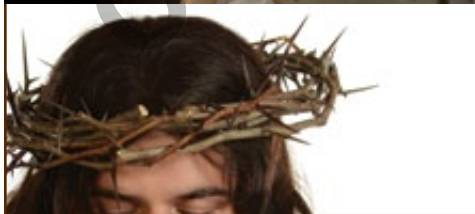
FOR NEXT TIME

Read Isaiah 62:3-5. How are God's people described?

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This Bible study for any time of the year looks at parables about the kingdom of God and the different roles of God and God's people presented in each. In the process, students learn lessons about the role of God in their lives today and the roles they have been given to carry out. Each session includes study questions, prayers and reflections. The large-format leader's guide includes all the answers, helpful study notes and session directions.