

# Parables

The effective use of a parable is to stop short of making a conclusion

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<b>SOURCE:</b> tmtranscripts teamcircuits email archive April 22, 2001. Teacher Elyon T/R Jonathan			

Tom: Jesus used parables as a defense against the Sanhedrin. Upon reviewing the list of criteria, parables seem to transcend mere stories. Is this means of communication still effective today? Where does one go to find parables? Are your examples actually parables in themselves?

Elyon: You have in your reference source, The Urantia Book, a well displayed, portrayed, list of elements that make up a parable worth reviewing. I would contribute more to that expert list of qualifications that define a parable, and that is that a well crafted parable intuitively speaks to the

soul in a manner which is adapted to the efforts of the divine indwelling Thought Adjuster. Holding this in mind with a parable, if you are the one uttering such a story, you are speaking to the spirit within the other individual knowingly cooperating, providing external input that has a junction with the internal efforts of the Adjuster to speak to the mind and soul of the creature who is hearing.

A parable may contain the element of entertainment that a story does, but it also contains this principle of kinship, if I may use that word, with the efforts of the Adjuster.

Few of you are in a position like Jesus where you address large multitudes of diverse backgrounds, even languages and cultures, at one time. You will have less opportunity to demonstrate truth in a parable form. More often than not you will encounter smaller situations and opportunities to convey truth tactfully to another so as to not raise the ire of the Sanhedrin, in a sense, in the individual.

You can apply the principle of the parable by addressing issues using a "for instance" format. One can bring to the forefront of the mind of another a truth to be considered by relating the story of a third individual, what they encountered, how they reacted, and what they have done based on a similar experience. The effect of the parables the master taught was to allow the listener to identify the key element in the story and to identify with a key character. By relating your own story to another they may likewise draw into sympathetic affiliation and conclude from your portrayal a possible course of action for their own situation.

In your desire to discover a presentation in parable form or to even create one yourself, I advise that it is important to not directly convey the moral of the story, the point to be made, but to develop a picture/context, a visual, imaginatively tangible arena, series of episodes, that in their portrayal uncover the point. The effective use of the parable is to not get to a conclusion and say, "The point of the story is...". The effective use of parable is to stop short of making that conclusion and allow the Indwelling Spirit to work with the one who hears to draw the conclusion. How often does one recoil from a friend who says, "You know what you ought to do...", "You should...". A parable does not seek this end. Its effort is to create a scenario with key elements which can contribute to the one hearing the story the ability to compose a conclusion.

This conclusion developed within their own minds is far more acceptable than is advice directly given. If you wish to experiment with such compositions, become skilled at identifying contributing elements, compose them into a sequential story line, and leave the conclusion for the listeners to create themselves.

Tom: How does humor qualify in there? The punch-line is still vague and allows a listener to participate. How does humor differ from parables?

Elyon: Humor can disarm another from the tendency to guard against being told what is right by another individual. Humor can draw camaraderie to the surface. The parables of Jesus spoke of events that happened elsewhere, happened to other people than those to whom he was relaying the story. It draws the teller and the hearer closer together as they share in an experience about another. Humor, likewise, draws the humorist and those who are listening into the camaraderie of laughter. Its drawback is the potential that the truth that is lying dormant within the message will be overlooked because of the light heartedness, the potential for it to be trivialized or (rendered frivolous). Seriousness does help to emphasize the import of the lesson to be gained. But that should not rule out the use of humor as a means of creating a comfortable environment through which the lesson may be learned.

### Effective parables are about ordinary associations and ordinary actions

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Elyon: The Master's parables were commonplace events. They did not describe a religious ceremony, nor were they directly addressing a philosophic or spiritual principle. They were mundane life situations of commerce, of family. They were about ordinary associations and ordinary actions, yet their effect by way of the Master's description illuminated a universal truth, a truth that could be found regardless of the common, earthly context. To be of greater service to your fellows, to provide a meaningful form of ministry which illuminates the reality of the spiritual family of God you have to wisely discern the variety of attitude and receptivity inherent in the many people you encounter. Some willingly approach the subject; others are resistant or guarded.

Here is where the value of a parable comes in. But the best parable is a living parable, one in which you compose from the specific context of the individual to whom you are seeking to present a universal truth.

To become a better righteousness recommender it is worthwhile to practice translating your daily, apparently mundane events into a principle that has eternal qualities. How you develop it does not need to conform to any rule, any method, so I will not give any sort of approach. It is as variable as it is for any artist who walks up to a blank canvas to see what picture may unfold. However, the relevancy of the context of the story will have its best impact if it is current, personalizable, and immediately able to be put into practice.

The Master often began a parable by saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like..." and then proceeded to describe a quality of the kingdom that could be comprehended by the following who stood to hear. This conviction of the Master drew forth the attention of the listeners. He did not say, "I think perhaps the kingdom might be like..." By addressing with such certainty others who are truly desirous of grasping the truths of the kingdom will be that much more attentive. Your conviction is what is convincing. If you make the gospel your sustenance and apply it with persistence, you will meet with little resistance.

Jesus during His life on earth often needed to retreat from the throngs that gathered around him for personal peace and quiet and time with the Father. You also know from the study of his personality that he was not one to pursue celebrity status, and yet ever more people would gather to be about him. He knew the value of enriching the value of another human being by considering them, whether they believed it or not, to be his brother or sister. To feel so readily accepted is magnetic and will draw another into your presence for that soothing enrichment that the soul of one who is uncertain so desires.

By inquiring of another what their dilemmas are at the time, what their triumphs are at the time, you begin to discern a framework wherein you may compose a relevant parable for the illumination of truth. "He who has ears to hear let him hear" applies to the one also who is composing the parable to be portrayed. Discerning relevancy is a major element to the success of the story. One's conversion into a trust that one is truly a son or daughter of God often is brought

about by the simple conversation that you share with them, not as much the content, as that you willingly, caringly, and openly spoke with them inclusively, accepting their status as a child of God in spite of the doubt of the one with whom you are sharing. Believing in another breaks down many barriers of doubt, of insecurity and uncertainty.

To be of value to the spiritual advancement of your fellows, "teacher" is not as appropriate a term as is "coach", for athletes know how a coach's confidence in them has brought them to excellence in performance.

It is admirable that many are motivated toward evangelism, the desire to help another realize the importance of the relationship with God. However, I would hope to see as the years progress that this

evangelistic approach would adopt the attitude that the one being sought evangelically is already considered one of the family of God, not to be coerced, scared, or enticed into becoming a member of the family, but rather that it is revealed that they already are, that trust and faith are all that lack. Every child who grows up in a healthy family already knows they belong, and this is true throughout the universe.

Ginny: I like what you mentioned that when one knows they are a member of the family of God there's a magnetic confidence that pulls people. Also that one of the attractive parts of Jesus on this planet was his authority, which attracts people to speak and act with authority.

Elyon: True, indeed. His authoritative approach was genuine and compassionate rather than militaristic and forceful. This authority, this substantial conviction, is what is so hungered for in a truth-seeking soul. It is noticeable and irresistible and will be sought after. There have been abuses of this mechanism within the soul of followers by leaders who use authority for their own personal gain. You should not desire to be leaders but to point to the Creator as the one who leads and who we all follow.

Evelyn: I am reminded that if you are trying to convince someone by brilliance of argument or loudness, your success will be inversely proportional to just relaxing and letting conviction show itself.

Elyon: Indeed this is true, and it often requires a stretch of time to be convincing. Argumentative defense often is given with a sense of time pressure, that the convincing must be immediate or nearly so, where truth often must be repeatedly displayed or portrayed before one realizes its significance and its reality. Herein enters the virtue of patience and that fatherly perspective. It may require repeated encounters wherein you leave feeling as though you had made no progress in demonstrating a spiritual truth only to find that over time inroads were made, insights gained, and belief begun.

Helena: Speaking of parables, spring is a good time to use as a subject that is so close to you and so familiar to most of you, as you all have your hands in the dirt a fair amount of time and are occupied with this season in your efforts to encourage plants to grow.

As you dig and you till your soil you understand that certain plants need more care, more prepared soil, more delicate watering, more careful choosing of sun or shade. Some plants grow anywhere. As with the souls that you touch, some are more delicate and need more attention and more careful planning of how you will present your lessons. Other souls who are hardy will be able to handle more simple ways of approach, will be able to handle rougher treatment in the sense that less preparation and less carefulness is needed. It is well worth your while to fully understand the soil that is needed for these plants to grow. It is well worth your while to understand the soil that is needed for your words and your actions to be fruitful.

As you play and dig in your gardens you might want to think of this parable. As you gaze upon each plant and its own personal beauty, you might want to think of all that is necessary to help it grow. As you deal with our Father's children, you will need to think as a gardener does of all these circumstances that may be necessary to help them grow and to be healthy souls.

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