



SPORTS IN FOCUS

THE KINGDOM PARABLES

Matthew 13:1-58 • Lesson Seven

READY

- Jesus was a master teacher, and nothing showed this better than His use of parables. Think of a time when a story really touched your heart or taught you something. Why are stories useful and powerful tools?

SET

Context of Matthew 13:1-58

Jesus came to earth to offer salvation and the kingdom of God to Israel. But it was clear that Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day were rejecting His offer. Did this mean that God's plan was frustrated? And what was to be the nature of the kingdom now? Jesus addresses some of these questions about the kingdom of God with a series of eight parables. The underlying truth of these parables was that the kingdom in its final fulfillment would be postponed until the time that Israel believe in and receive her King.

Keys to Text

Parable: The Greek word translated "parable" is a compound word made up of a form of the verb *ballo* ("to throw, lay, or place") and the prefix *para* (meaning "alongside of"). The idea is that placing or laying something alongside something else for the purpose of comparison. A spiritual or moral truth would often be taught using a parable which was a common form of Jewish teaching.

GO

Read Matthew 13:1-58

1. Give an example of a sports parable.
2. Who was Jesus' main audience for these parables? How did these stories relate to their lives?
3. What are the lessons contained in the parable of the soils?
4. What was Jesus' explanation to the disciples of the parable of the tares?
5. What is "leaven" and why would Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven to it?
6. What happened when Jesus returned to his hometown of Nazareth (vv. 54-58)?
7. What are some of the "thorns" that threaten to choke out your faith?
8. Jesus compares the kingdom to "treasure." How can your life reflect this reality?
9. In light of all we have in the gospel and the treasure of eternity, why do so many believers act "ho-hum" about Christ?

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During the Nebraska football game against Texas, former Husker Heisman Trophy winners Johnny Rodgers, Mike Rozier and Eric Crouch were recognized for their accomplishments to the cheers of thousands of adoring fans. There is no greater treasure for a college football player than to win the Heisman Trophy. Here in Matthew 13, Jesus uses the parable of *the hidden treasure* and *the pearl of great value* to explain the kingdom of heaven. While we might make much of the Heisman Trophy, it pales when compared to the kingdom of heaven. The point of these two parables is that these men were willing to sacrifice everything they had in order to possess the treasure or pearl of great value. In this context, the kingdom of heaven represents the saving knowledge of God through trust in His Son and all the benefits and glory that relationship brings. No earthly treasure can favorably compare to this heavenly treasure. www.nebraskafca.org