

A DISCIPLESHIP ROADMAP

The mood, meaning and purpose of the parables change as the Gospel story of Jesus develops – especially as Jesus sets his face toward Jerusalem and his impending death. Since the mystery of the Christian life is experienced by dying and rising with Jesus in Baptism, the faith journey of a disciple runs parallel to Jesus' journey to the Cross and the Tomb. Like all spiritual journeys, the Christian disciple's journey creates changes of perception, and challenges to deeper commitment and greater maturity.

The "discipleship roadmap" of the parables reveals a pattern that the early followers of Jesus would have encountered in a world hostile to the Gospel:

After hearing the Good News of the Kingdom,	[Jesus shares his Father's kingdom vision]
the new disciple sees the world with new eyes,	[Parables of delight and discovery create enthusiasm]
realizing that old ways of living must change	[Parables of development shape the disciple's growth in the Kingdom vision]
even as new mistakes are made, and new risks must be taken	[Parables of discipline correct the disciple's pitfalls as the demands of the Kingdom increase]
because no matter how bad it gets, the Cross and the empty Tomb	[Parables in the face of disaster]
truly reveal God's loving plan for this world.	[Parables against despair]

The following parables are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. All of them are from Matthew's Gospel. You will find the chapter and verse citation from that Gospel after each parable.

Jesus shares his Father's kingdom vision

- A sower went out to sow (13:3-9, 18-23)
- The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field (13:24-30)

Parables of delight and discovery create enthusiasm

- The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed (13:31-32)

- The kingdom of heaven is like yeast *(13:33)*
- The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field *(13:44)*
- The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls *(13:45-46)*
- The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea *(13:47-51)*

Parables of development shape the disciple's growth in the Kingdom vision

- What goes in and what comes out *(15:10-20)*
- Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven *(18:1-5)*

Parables of discipline correct the disciple's pitfalls as the demands of the Kingdom increase

- A shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray *(18:12-14)*
- The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. *(18:21-35)*
- The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. *(20:1-16)*
- A man had two sons *(21:28-32)*
- There was a landowner who planted a vineyard *(21:33-41)*
- The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. *(22:1-14)*

Parables in the face of disaster

- A hen gathers her brood under her wings *(23:37-39)*
- The Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour *(24:3, 21, 40-44)*
- The faithful and wise slave *(24:45-51)*

Parables against despair

- Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise *(25:1-13)*
- A man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one *(25:14-30)*
- A shepherd separates the sheep from the goats *(25:31-46)*