

Stories : Old and New

(Parables of Jesus for 21st century society)

Stories of Revolution (part 1)

Read Matthew 13:10-17; other verse quoted: Matt 7:28-29; Matt. 3:2; 4:17, 23; 5:3, 10; 11:2-6; 13:9, 19, 24, 31, 33, 43, 44, 45, 47; Mark 1:15.

1. Which parable of Jesus speaks most deeply to you? Why?
2. “Earthly stories with a heavenly meaning!” In which way is this an inadequate view of the parables?
3. The Kingdom is mentioned over 120 times in Matthew, Mark and Luke. What is the Kingdom of God/heaven? (Look up some verses: Matt. 3:2; 4:17, 23; 5:3, 10; 13:19, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47). What were some of the evidences of the Kingdom of God/heaven in the Gospels?
4. As you have observed our world, have you ever asked “In which way is God supposed to be in control?” What was happening in 1st century Israel to cause Jews to ask the same question? In the light of the political situation, why was Jesus’ message so dangerous?
5. Did you find Steve’s concept of the Kingdom of God being thought of as the Revolution of God helpful? In which way does God’s “revolution” differ to other revolutions in our world? How does it make you feel, personally, to be involved in a revolution?
6. “What is revolutionary is a revolution which isn’t violent!” Thoughts?
7. Why did Jesus speak in parables? See Matthew 13:10-13. What did Jesus mean by this? In which ways do the parables reveal and conceal?
8. Brian McLaren says that the genius of a parable is: “it doesn’t grab you by the lapels and scream in your face, ‘Repent, you vile sinner! Turn or burn!’ Rather, it works gently, subtly, indirectly. It respects your dignity. It doesn’t batter you into submission, but leaves you free to discover and choose for yourself.” Thoughts? In which way is a parable more like a poem than like an advertising slogan?