



Nipawin Bible College
BI2133 Experiencing God Through the Parables of Jesus
Winter 2024
3 Credit Hours
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“The reality of God is revealed in the word-pictures of a parable. Jesus and the rabbis of old taught about God by using concrete illustrations that reach the heart through the imagination. They challenged the mind on the highest intellectual level by using simple stories that made common sense out of the complexities of religious faith and human experience. On the one hand, in finite terms God is beyond human comprehension, but on the other, his infinite majesty may be captured in vivid stories of daily life.”¹

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is concerned with learning to experience God. One of the major ways that we can experience Him is through studying the parables that Jesus taught. The class will dive into this powerful genre of the Gospels and specifically the teachings of Jesus.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The Bible (a translation, not a paraphrase).

Blackaby, Henry T., Richard Blackaby, and Claude V. King. *Experiencing God: Knowing & Doing the Will of God*. Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 2022.

COURSE QUESTION

How do the Parables draw the reader closer to God and help the disciple move onto God’s agenda?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course the student will:

1. Know the main point of most of the parables of Jesus.
2. Understand the unique structure and purpose of speaking in parables.
3. Gain confidence in explaining the parables to others.
4. Understand and put into practice joining God in His agenda on a daily basis.
5. Deepen their relationship with God.

¹ Brad H. Young, *The Parables: Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 3.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Please note: All electronic written assignments are to be submitted in PDF or Word form. Please submit your parable assignment rough and final drafts in paper form.

Textbook Reading, Questions, Answering, and Discussion Group - 40%

- At the end of every chapter in *Experiencing God* there are questions to answer. Use a journal to personally answer each question from each chapter assigned for that week in detail. Then, each student will partner with 2 other students to form a “small group” for the semester. This group will take time to go through the questions weekly and discuss them together before the class that the reading is due for. Each student will then submit the form below outlining their involvement for that week’s Question, Answering, and Discussion assignment.
- The student is required to read the entirety of all assigned reading. A response of false in their reading question will result in the loss of their Textbook Question, Answering, and Discussion mark for that week.
- See below for the required information on each report:

Name: _____	Date: _____								
This week I read all the assigned reading, which included <i>Experiencing God</i> pages ____ to _____ and the assigned parables.									
True/False									
This week I journaled about, and answered, each question assigned from the textbook.									
True/False									
This week I was engaged and invested in my group discussion time.									
True/False									
I would rate my involvement (from 1-10 - 10 being awesome) in the discussion time as:									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Creating a Parable (x 2) - 40%

- Each student will be responsible to craft 2 parables that will each communicate one biblical truth/principle that Jesus taught. Follow these requirements:
 - a. Your submission will first list the scripture reference that you’re expounding upon with this parable. For example, (Matthew 5:3). Pick a passage in the Gospels (**before January 24th for the first parable and before March 13 for the**

- second parable)** and submit this as part 1 of this assignment. It can be a single verse or a small group of verses all sharing the same main idea.
- b. The parable will use modern examples that will be relevant to today's cultural context. "The stage of daily life becomes the scene for viewing the world from God's perspective."²
 - c. You are limited to a 400 word maximum.
 - d. Your parable can be from any teaching of Jesus but it should focus on communicating one truth of God to your listeners. "Jesus used the parable to drive home his message about God and God's relationship to every human being."³ Your parable should have the same goal.
 - e. You cannot overtly reveal the purpose of your parable within your parable. However, the meaning should be accessible through careful consideration. This is the hard part! Spend some real time on this. Much of your mark will come from how well you achieve this goal. "God enters the world of humanity with the challenge of religious conviction and corresponding action. The listener catches a glimpse of the divine character and the spiritual realities of life. Parables use rich imagery of language to catch the listener unaware. At first it all seems so familiar, and then a shift develops in the plot of the story. The ordinariness of the parable is transformed by a surprising twist. A consciousness of God and his way of viewing the world enters the commonplace scene to communicate the divine message. The familiar setting of the parable allows each person to understand God's will."⁴
 - f. **Do Not** just modernize one of the existing parables of Jesus. This needs to be a unique parable of your OWN creation. In fact, if there is already a parable covering a particular verse or passage, look for something else to cover. John is a good, safe bet.
 - g. Hand in a rough draft for the first parable on the due date (**February 5**) for evaluation and feedback. There will be no rough draft for the second parable.
 - h. **Without** previously discussing your context with the person, record yourself reading your passage and then communicating your parable to 2 other people (One must be non-NBC affiliated), and ask them what they thought that the parable was trying to communicate. Ask them these questions:
 1. What was the main idea that my parable was trying to communicate?
 2. Was the parable in line with the main idea of my chosen passage?
 3. The main idea of my parable was _____ - What parts of my parable were unnecessary to communicate that truth?
 4. Do you have any ideas for how I could have made the message of my parable clearer or more effective at communicating my main idea?
 5. Was the parable useful in helping you to think deeply about this passage from God's Word and what it is communicating?
 - i. Then spend some time recording yourself (this can also be in written form if you prefer) and respond to the experience of crafting your parable. Comment on

² Ibid., Young, 5.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., Young, 5.

some of the difficulties, insights, what it was like to share your parable, and generally how the whole process went for you.

- j. Submit the recording along with your paper copy of your parable (including title page) on or before the due date (**February 14th for the first parable and April 3rd for the second parable**).
- See the appropriate rubric for a breakdown of marks on this assignment.

Due Dates:

1st Parable – 20%

Scripture Chosen - **January 24**

Rough Parable Draft - **February 5**

Parable Audio and Written Assignment Submitted - **February 14**

2nd Parable – 20%

Scripture Chosen - **March 13**

Final Draft - **April 3**

Final Exam - 20%

- There will be a final exam for this class. The exam will consist of:
 1. Retelling the story of the parable briefly,
 2. Communicating the main idea behind the parable of Jesus,
 3. Talking about how this parable is applicable for Jesus' audience.
 4. Talking about how this parable is applicable for today.
- This will be an oral exam and the student will prepare to answer 2 questions that will be randomly selected at the appropriate exam time. The student can expect to get a list of the parables for the exam but they will have to fill out the main idea from their class notes.

Due: Exam Week (April 10-11)

NOTE: All written assignments are to be typed in accordance to the guidelines in Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2018) for papers. (**See NBC Sample Paper.**) Assignments will be graded on the basis of content, clarity, grammar, and spelling.

Assignments will be due **at the beginning of class** on the day that they are assigned.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Refer to the NBC Handbook 2023-2024.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY: Refer to the NBC Handbook 2023-2024.

Reading = 350 pages.

Writing = 8 pages (equivalent).

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	EXPERIENCING GOD TEXTBOOK READING	MAIN IDEA	PARABLE	TEACHING TOPIC
<u>1</u> Jan 17		Experiencing God (a new concept)	Luke 7:41-43 – Forgiveness of unequal debts Luke 18:10-14 – Pharisee and the Tax Collector	We Can Know God through experience.
<u>2</u> Jan 24	Introductions - Chapter 2-4 – (Knowing God by Experience, God Works According to His Nature, Doing God’s Will, & Being God’s Servant) – 55 pages.	Knowing God and knowing yourself (God as King, Christian as servant)	Luke 14:28-33 – Counting the Cost Mark 2:21-22 – new wine Luke 17:7-10	God owns us and we must respond to Him on His terms alone.
<u>3</u> Jan 31	Chapters 5 & 6 (Seven Realities of Experiencing God, & God Is at Work Around You) – 29 pages.	Experiencing A God who is at work now!	Luke 14:16-24 – Great Feast Matthew 20:1-16 – Vineyard Workers Luke 12:16-21 – Rich Man	God’s ways are good and our ways are broken
<u>4</u> Feb 7	Chapters 7 – 9 (God Pursues a Love Relationship with You, God’s Invitation to Join Him in His Word, & God Invites You to Join Him) – 55 pages.	God at work to bring you towards His active agenda.	Luke 15 suite with Pastor Chris – Lost to Found February 5 – Rough Parable Draft	Every lost person sought.
<u>5</u> Feb 14	Chapters 10 – 12 (God Speaks to His People, God Reveals Himself, His Purposes, and His Ways, & God Speaks through the Bible) – 39 pages.	God speaks today in the ways that you would expect.	Matthew 7:24-27 – Wise & Foolish Builders Matt 13:52 – Teacher Mark 12:1-11 – Wicked Tenants Luke 16:19-31 – Rich Man and Lazarus First Parable Audio and Written Assignment Submitted	Responding correctly to God’s good plan through His good Word.

<p><u>6</u> Mar 6</p>	<p>Chapters 13 – 15 (God Speaks through Prayer, God speaks through Circumstances, & God Speaks through the Church) - 37 pages.</p>	<p>God speaks through regular life to regular people on regular days with extraordinary results.</p>	<p>Luke 11:5-8 – A friend in need. Luke 18:2-8 – Persistent widow. Mat 13:33 - Yeast.</p>	<p>God desires a partnership with His people that is dynamic and growing.</p>
<p><u>7</u> Mar 13</p>	<p>Chapters 16 & 17 (God's Invitation Leads to a Crisis of Belief, & Joining God Requires Adjustments) – 31 pages.</p>	<p>God expects us to conform to His good ways.</p>	<p>Mark 4:3-20 – Sower. Matt 13:47-50 – Fishing net. Luke 14:7-11 – Lowest seat.</p>	<p>Choosing God is so easy and so hard.</p>
<p><u>8</u> Mar 20</p>	<p>Chapters 18 – 20 (Joining God Requires Obedience, God Accomplishes His Work, & Returning to God) – 33 pages.</p>	<p>Humility, flexibility, and death to self.</p>	<p>Luke 12:35-40 – Watchful servants. Luke 12:42-48 – Wise and foolish servants. Matt 21:28-32 – Two sons.</p>	<p>God prepares His people rightly but how His people respond identifies their heart motivations.</p>
<p><u>9</u> Mar 27</p>	<p>Chapters 21 – 23 (Experiencing God as Couples, Joining God's Activity in Your Children's Lives, & Experiencing God in the Church) – 25 pages.</p>	<p>Practical expressions of joining God's agenda</p>	<p>Matt 22:2-14 – Wedding banquet. Matt 25:14-30 – Talents. Matthew 13:24-43 – Wheat & Weeds.</p>	<p>God's plan goes beyond our lives and moves all towards His eternity.</p>
<p><u>10</u> Apr 3</p>	<p>Chapters 24 – Closing Remarks (Experiencing God in the Marketplace, Experiencing God in His Kingdom, Continuing to Experience God, & Closing Remarks) – 21 Pages.</p>	<p>Kingdom focus that moves the Christ follower to daily action in this world.</p>	<p>Mark 4:21-22 – Lamp. Luke 13:6-9 – Barren fig tree. Mark 4:26-29 – Growing seed. Luke 10: 30-37 – Good Samaritan. Second Parable Audio and Written Assignment Submitted</p>	<p>Called to live and love as Jesus did.</p>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Select readings that will enhance the students' understanding of the Parables.

Hunter, Archibald MacBride. *Interpreting the Parables*. London: Scm, 1964.

Burke, John. *Mud and the Masterpiece : Seeing Yourself and Others through the Eyes of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books A Division Of Baker Publishing Group, 2013.

Snodgrass, Klyne. *Stories with Intent : A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018.

Longenecker, Richard N. *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000.

MacArthur, John. *A Tale of Two Sons : The inside Story of a Father, His Sons, and a Shocking Murder*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008.

MacArthur, John F. *Parables*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2015.

Stein, Robert H. *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981.