

TALES FROM THE CHRIST

SERMON SERIES
July 12 – August 30

Secrets of the Kingdom of God

Overview: Jesus' favorite method of teaching was with the use of parables. This word literally means to "throw alongside." These unique stories are meant to merge with our lives in a way to reveal the secrets of the Kingdom of God.

July 12 • What Kind of Soil Are You?
Romans 8:28–30 (NIV); Matthew 13:1–23 (NIV)
It is a parable that makes us reflect on the soil of our own hearts. Is it rocky, shallow or hard; or is it that good, dark loamy soil that produces abundantly? After this parable, it will make you wonder.

July 19 • Keep Your Lamps Trimmed
Jeremiah 29:4–9 (NRSV); Matthew 25:1–13 (NRSV)
What does that mean, keeping your lamps trimmed, and how does that teach me about my life of faith? In this parable of the ten virgins, Jesus reminds us that because no one knows the time or date of his return, we should always be ready. Trim your lamps!

July 26 • Forgive Us Our Sins as We Forgive
Colossians 3:12-16 (NIV); Matthew 18:23-35 (NRSV)
It is a dangerous prayer. To pray to God to use us as the standard and norm by which forgiveness is given. "Forgive me, O Lord, no more and no less than I forgive those who sin against me." Be careful what you pray for!

August 2 • The Ways of the World
Philippians 3:12–14 (NIV); Luke 16:1–13 (NIV)
You know how this world works. You know how to get ahead, get the best deal, get what you want. It's rough out there in the real world. But how does this street wise shrewdness apply to your faith?

August 9 • With Friends Like This...
Luke 11:5–13 (NRSV); Genesis 18:22–33 (NRSV)
How far would you go for a friend? How far out of your way would you help a friend in need of a small favor? It depends on what is being asked, how it is being asked and when it is being asked.

August 16 • Matters
Acts 4:12–20 (NRSV); Matthew 25:14–30 (NRSV)
The "Parable of the Talents" is a head scratcher. Is this an allegory in which Jesus is the wealthy master... or is it a lesson on how to invest wisely... or is it a warning about living in this world? It depends on how this parable is "tossed alongside" our lives.

August 23 • Lost and Found
Luke 15:1–32 (NIV)
In Luke 15, Jesus describes several different ways that people can get lost. However, in each instance there is a deep desire for the lost to be found and returned home. This is true for the lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost son. How were you lost? Better yet, how were you found?

August 30 • The Kingdom of God is Like...
Exodus 24:15-17 (NIV); Hebrews 12:28-29 (NIV); Matthew 28:16-20 (NIV)
Today we celebrate Confirmation, the rite in which our rising ninth graders affirm their faith publicly. As their faith continues to blossom, Jesus likens the Kingdom of God as something small like a mustard seed or yeast that grows in ways that surprises everyone.