



GOOD NEWS GUIDE

THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE

February, 2019

Stories of Heaven



Jesus was a teacher. He also did many other things, of course, but what He did most of during His three years of ministry was teaching. The

disciples and the other people who came to Him called Him "Rabbi," which literally means "my master", but is generally used as a title of respect for a scholar or a teacher.

The people knew there was something special about His teaching. Mark 1:21-22 says: *They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

I have a mental picture of some of the lawyers giving lectures and qualifying each statement with "Perhaps" or "I think" or "We believe" — Jesus didn't need to qualify anything. He knew exactly what He was talking about, because He was filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit of God!

A teaching method that Jesus used often was to tell stories. The Bible calls them "parables." They were little stories Jesus made up to illustrate a point — usually just one point for each story. He would say, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like ..." and then He would talk about something that was familiar to the people who were listening, so they could relate to it.

Let's look at some of these stories and the point Jesus was trying to get across in each one.

"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well.

And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?'

He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?'

But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.' ...



Tares of Palestine

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field."

He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!" (Matthew 13:24-30,36-43)

The point of this story is that, at "the end of the age" there will be some winners and some losers. The winners will enter Heaven and "shine like the sun," but the losers will wind up in Hell, in "the furnace of fire." In today's idiom, they'll be "toast."

Each one of us has a choice. We all start out as weeds. *There is no one who is righteous, not even one. ... All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:10,23)*

The Bible says that if we turn away from our sinful way of life and allow God to be in control of our lives, He will begin and complete a "good work" in each of us, transforming us from weeds into good, productive wheat — in other words, from losers into winners.

When the angels come gathering at "the end of the age," where do you want them to put you? Do you want to shine in Heaven, and be joyous in God's

presence forever? Or would you rather wind up in the “furnace of fire,” forever tormented by the pain of having rejected God? I know which I prefer.

Two more parables:

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.” (Matthew 13:44-46)

Some Bible teachers say that these two parables make the same point. I believe they say two very different things, both of which are important.

The first story's point is obvious. Heaven is very, very valuable and desirable. It is worth whatever you have to give up in order to obtain it. Make sure you understand that.

In the second story, God is the wealthy merchant who is seeking valuable pearls. He finds one, and He gives up everything in order to buy it You are that valuable pearl, and the price that He pays for you is the death of His Son on the cross.

The penalty for all of your sins is all paid — Jesus did that for you on the cross. You are so precious and valuable to Him that He paid the ultimate price in order to save you for His Kingdom.

God doesn't ask you to sell all you have. He doesn't need money. He just wants you. He wants you to think about whatever it is that is most precious to you, and understand that Heaven—eternity with God—is much more precious than that.

But we can't see Heaven from where we are today. How do we know it's so desirable? Here's a modern story:

There was a man who was very sick, so that he thought he might die. He said to his physician, “Doctor, although I'm a Christian, I'm afraid to die. Exactly what happens to us when we die?”

The doctor, who also believed in Jesus, thought about it for a minute, then said, “I'm afraid I can't give you a good answer.” When the doctor was ready to leave, he paused by the door, wishing he could say some words of comfort. Suddenly he heard sounds of whining and scratching beyond the door. He opened the door, and his dog, who went with the doctor on his rounds, came in, all wagging tail and eager affection, obviously joyful at being with his master.

Then the doctor realized a scriptural truth he had never before put into words. Turning to the sick man, he said, “Did you see how my dog acted? He's never been in this room before. He had no idea what was inside; yet when I opened the door, he rushed in without fear, for he knew his master was here!”

Few of us Christians have seen visions of the glories that are waiting for us in Heaven, but we do know one thing: our Master is there, and that's enough!

Here are some of Jesus's final words to His disciples before He was crucified:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:1-6)

The way to get to Heaven is exactly the same as the way to come to an understanding of how desirable Heaven is. That way is Jesus.

Spend time with Jesus. Get to know Him better. Spend time regularly reading and studying and meditating on God's word. If you don't have a Bible, ask for one, and you'll receive it.

Also spend time in prayer—not just telling the Father your needs and wants, but listening also for the Holy Spirit's comfort and guidance for your situation and for the ministry to which you are being called.

Finally, make it your goal to walk with Jesus at your shoulder, and to do as He wants you to do in all your dealings with others. If you deal gently with all and speak the truth in love, never wavering, people will see Jesus in you, and be drawn to Him. And you will grow in the knowledge and grace of God, and your desire for Heaven will blossom. Hallelujah!

I have not met many of you who read these “Good News Guides.” It is my hope that I will meet many of you as we rejoice eternally with our Lord in His wonderful Home.

God bless you and give you Joy!
Your friend in Christ,

Brother Roland

The following is an account of how Ken Sanelli received the poem 'There Is a Land' through divine revelation:

About two years ago I happened to be out in our local neighborhood park where I live, giving our house pet retriever her accustomed evening walk. I have long been a Christian, and that evening, upon gazing up into the glorious and vast starry heavens, my spirit was overcome with such a foretaste of heavenly glory that I had never known possible prior to that evening. It was joyous beyond human expression, absolutely off the charts from our feeble concepts. As the celestial zephyrs wafted into my innermost being, a peace unlike any I had ever sensed before flooded my soul with rivers and rivers of unfathomable peace, fantastic peace. I had previously known the initial peace and joy of first trusting in Christ, but this was different...Way, way more and intense in degree. You will just have to wait and see for yourself. As the evening concluded, I walked back to my house and attempted to share with my good, Christian wife my experience, but she simply couldn't partake of it, it was for me alone, or was it? To my great surprise, upon walking the dog the following evening, the same identical experience repeated itself, all over again, and I was eating it up with indescribable relish. Here is where all this gets interesting: This cycle, this enduring heavenly foretaste kept up its blessed repetitive rounds for about two and one half weeks until I began to shift from bliss to fear as I finally asked the



an unaccountable peace and assurance that I was not coming home, but that I was a member of a race and planet that are soon to end. That is half of what I feel this whole experience was about; it is God's will for the Christian Church to get ready for heaven. Our

Lord, "Lord, what are you trying to tell me? Are you doing this to prepare me for my coming home?" The next day I had

history will be concluding before too long and time is of the essence for us. Well, off to the park the next evening and guess what? Yeah, you guessed it... All over again, on and on, each evening for about four and one half weeks total of the same evening, heavenly foretastes. I was beginning to crush under the load of glory and found my bliss an unshakeable distraction to my daily duties! Realizing that there had to be some other purpose for this visitation, I finally conceived that it just might be possible that the Lord wished for me to preserve my burden in some literary fashion for others. Yes, that was it! I walked calmly into my study, took up my pen and began to write out, as best I could, and the stanzas flowed out onto the paper like the oil down upon Aaron's beard. When my little poem of fifteen stanzas was completed I, of course, walked out into our local park at the next opportunity, expecting the usual waves of bliss to assuage my now overflowing soul, only to find that my heavenly raptures had ceased. It had accomplished its intention, and I am now left with this little poem which I also share with you. May it bless your soul, as it did mine then and now, in the love of Christ.

THERE IS A LAND

There is a land beyond the clouds, beyond Orion's brow,
Where angels gowned, in grace renown, look down and ponder, 'How?'
'Oh how, oh how do mortal men, those transient specks in time,
Enwrap their eyes with all that dies, while nobler things, sublime,
Are set on every verdant hill, in every fragrant vale,
In every glimmering, golden hall, where we immortals dwell?'
Where is this land, where every breeze sings soft in metered rhyme?
Where every thought, or look, is sought to dwell on things divine?
Where is a tree, a flowery bough, so weighed with blossoms there,
That glory blooms with sweet perfume, profusely in the air?
Oh, show me now that marbled court, immeasurable to see,
Pavilioned square, yet ends nowhere, to walk eternally.
If but to reach, to touch, to hold, to tell them all my heart
With words of love, like those above, in sentimental art.
To trek that endless, vast domain, immense beyond our dreams,
Yet ever find another kind of new and glorious scene.
Oh, show me now, Seraphic guest, oh, guide me to the gate,
And take my hand, throughout that land, where all these treasures wait.
Then, in another, different tone, I hear a voice, divine,
Call sweetly there, 'My realm I'll share, and show you where to find.
'Now take my hand, you'll know it by a lonely nail print there,
'For heaven is of my limitless love, which sails throughout its air.
'And no one finds a silvery stream, or tastes celestial wine,
'Or seeks to touch, with holy hush, the smallest thing of mine,'
'No eye has every yet beheld, the Mighty Mount of God,
'Where choruses blend, their praise to send, in joyous, solemn bond,'
'But only those who find that gate, will walk on streets of gold,
'When galaxies pine, away with time, and lower worlds enfold.'
'I am that Gate,' He said to me, 'I am the Truth, the Way,'
'Oh, seeking soul, this Gate behold,
'I AM, I AM THE WAY.'

Feel free to send me your Bible questions or ideas for a Good News Guide teaching.

Brother Roland, PO Box 14, Fayetteville, PA 17222

Heaven

More than a place, Heaven is being in the presence of Jesus and the Father. That's why it begins here and now, in our hearts and the way we live.

Puzzle:

W F R W J I U L W A T E R O F L I F E W P A T E B M D P R A
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C S B D R S Q X G G L V R T X H P X D L J I A C T A N K Z K
H N T O S R A N E A X L I B X P R A I S E B T Z H H T X S M
W O O N Q O J A O L T C O D Z E G W N X P F Q D A O C E H F
D I N T I W K C B T Y E E F Q C I D G M S H F Y N L L K U T
B T S H H A H G L L R F S F J T R A S Q T X N E K T C B C E
R A O I N I S M O C I O T O H A S H U W R L H K S N J L W F
B D C C N E N H E L R H U E F Y S T P K E A K O G F J E D I
Q N K K I O E G F L R O L B Q P H P P G E U P Y I J V S Z L
F U F T X H S O U O A A W D L E E O E L T A D Q V V N S L F
U O Y D T B E O N N M S U N H E S A R R S N T S I X N E P O
J F J Q S E O E R B C R U O S B S L R O O X O W N E F D U K
S D P Y R A O E O R E L L R F O B B H L F A G S G C E N D O
I E N T T F O F M V O Y E E E R F U G X G F T Q H C E E W O
C L F R G I G H I A O W L A V J E R Y A O X C V A A F S R B
F E S O X O N R X N Y L I I N Y W W I E L B E E W W M S S P
Y W D H D H L R E Y O T M N O U C E A G D N P L L Q L E W A
K E G P I A N O E W J B Q K P N O O N R H N O S A D N E S S
R J L Z T N F L S T N A W F A W S F J L D T N U W N J A L A
W J N S G I I H Y N E V Q K I J V E Q Z P S E P O S G J S X
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O B L L E W D A I Z O S E G R U E R U R D Z Y K V Y H A S S
K V E E W W P Y V Y N R U S H J R M F W Z G R M W Q X X A S
T E U Q N A B V A Q C H Y J A Y P R T K V J Z A V L T V X C

Words:

ALPHA AND OMEGA
ANGELS
APOSTLES
BANQUET
BLESSEDNESS
BOOK OF LIFE
CROWNS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
CRYSTAL RIVER
ETERNITY
FELLOWSHIP
GATES OF PEARL
GOD'S GLORY
JESUS
JEWELLED FOUNDATIONS

JOY
NEW JERUSALEM
NO PAIN
NO SADNESS
NO SHAME
NO SORROW
NO TEMPLE
NOTHING UNCLEAN
NO TROUBLES
PEACE
PRAISE
REWARDS
SAINTS
SEA OF GLASS

SERVANTS OF THE LORD
SHINING ROBES
STREETS OF GOLD
THANKSGIVING
THE HOLY CITY
THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL
THE LAMB OF GOD
THRONE OF GOD
TREE OF LIFE
WALL OF JASPER
WATER OF LIFE
WEDDING SUPPER
WORSHIP