



"Nature Metaphors in Jesus' Parables"



Vincent van Gogh, "Wheatfield" c. 1888

He put before them another parable: "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.

(Matt. 13:24).

Bible Study Guide

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a.

b.

c.



Study Questions

1.	Identify three characteristics of parables that are always in Jesus' parables?
2.	Since parables often contrast two persons or groups, name 3 parables in which Jesus makes such comparisons. What strikes you about such comparisons? Do you find it helpful and if so, how could you adapt this technique to your conversations with others?
3.	How are parables distinct from fables? What is an example of a fable and how could it not be a parable?
4.	Describe the organization of Matthew's gospel and where parables are located. Why here?
5.	Why is the Sower and the Seed parable first in the three Gospels which contain parables? (And those three Gospels are:,, and)





6.	What is overall focus of all the parables and why is the 'Tares and Wheat' parable second in the line-up?
7.	How many sowings are in the Tares and Wheat parable? How many in the Sower and Seed? Who is the sower and what is the seed? Are they the same in both parables?
	What are the characteristics of a mustard seed and the plant that grows from it? How is your church imitating this plant for the 'birds' of your community?
8.	Compare the Leaven parable and the mustard seed parable. How are they similar and distinct?
9.	Write a question for each parable in this talk, for which the parable itself is the answer.



Example for question #9: Question: "Could what was happening with Jesus and his disciples really be the establishment of the Kingdom? It's so modest a start! Answer: The Mustard Seed.

1. Sower and Seed – question:	
2. Tares and Wheat – question:	
3. Mustard Seed – question:	
4. The Leaven- question:	
5. Laborers in the Vineyard – question:	
For further reading on The Parables, you might enjoy:	

- William Barclay, "The Parables". (A Scottish Presbyterian minister committed to making the Bible accessible to all, his *Daily Bible Series* is basic and insightful.)
- Gary Inrig, "The Parables: Understanding what Jesus Meant"; Discovery House, Grand Rapids, MI. 1991.
- Richard Lischer, "Reading the Parables"; from "Interpretation" series, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, KY. 2014.