

## *Course on social justice*

### *The financial dimension of Jesus' parables*

Our world today has reached a level of financialization that has completely removed humanity from everything that is related to the economy and finance. World economic monetary and financial institutions have developed programs that have found themselves to be completely inhumane. In Africa, South America, and Asia their various programs of restructuring have proved themselves to be catastrophic and completely disconnected from human local realities. Unfortunately, the sad reality of the failure of the Wall Street system is no longer a debate. The 2008 financial and economic crisis, just to mention one, has revealed the necessity to reconsider our world economic and financial system. The needed restructuring should be done with a fundamental consideration of God's orientation of economic and finance fundamental principles. To understand and explore some of the foundations of finance according to Biblical orientations, let us look at some financial considerations of Jesus's financial dimensions of his parables. Exploring the financial dimension of Jesus's parables can offer insightful lessons on money management, stewardship, and values. In his teachings, Jesus often used parables to convey spiritual truths in a relatable way, including those related to finances. Here are a few examples of Jesus's parables with financial themes and the lessons they impart:

Each of these parables offers valuable insights into financial wisdom, generosity, integrity, and the spiritual implications of how we handle money and possessions. Reflecting on these teachings can help individuals navigate the practical and ethical dimensions of financial matters in their lives.

Our course will be divided into four parts. First, the principle of use of parables as a means to teach a lesson from a particular situation that Jesus wants to call the attention of his audience. Jesus used parables to call attention to situations that were presenting failures that needed to be corrected. Our world economic and financial system is presenting a huge failure.

The second part of the course will consider the chaotic reality and failure of the current economic and financial system. A review of the world economic and financial programs and orientations since the 1924 crash up to 2008 recession. Failure of IMF and WB programs in Africa, South America, and Asia programs will be reviewed.

The third part of our course will be the identification of some points of failure that led into the crash of the system. In this part, we shall identify some points that are missing in our economic and financial system. Those points are: Cultural, religious, ethical and moral.

The fourth part will find into the Bible especially into Jesus parables some teaching of what a new financial and economic system should consider as fundamental if it means to be a system that serves man and not enslaves him. Some of the parables we mentioned upward will be used as pillar principles for a better economic and financial system.

1. **Parable of the Talents:** This parable illustrates the importance of using God-given abilities and resources wisely. It highlights the concept of stewardship and being accountable for what we have been entrusted with.
  2. **Parable of the Prodigal Son:** While not directly about finances, this parable touches on themes of inheritance, repentance, forgiveness, and the value of relationships over material wealth.
  3. **Parable of the Rich Fool:** In this parable, Jesus warns against greed and the pursuit of wealth for its own sake. It emphasizes the fleeting nature of material possessions and the importance of being rich toward God.
  4. **Parable of the Good Samaritan:** Though not a financial parable per se, it teaches about compassion, generosity, and the true meaning of wealth in terms of love and care for others.
  5. **Parable of the Unjust Steward:** This parable challenges conventional ideas about money and stewardship, prompting reflection on using worldly wealth to gain eternal benefits.
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1. **Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15):**This parable illustrates how different people respond to the message of the Kingdom of God.
  2. **Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32):**This story highlights God's unconditional love and forgiveness toward those who repent.
  3. **Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37):**This parable teaches about loving your neighbor as yourself, regardless of differences.
  4. **Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19):**It describes the Kingdom of God starting small but growing extensively.
  5. **Parable of the Lost Sheep (Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:3-7):**This parable shows the value of each individual to God.
  6. **Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:46-49):**It emphasizes the importance of building one's life on a strong foundation of faith.

### The Parables of Jesus

Parable	Matthew	Mark	Luke
The Purpose of the Parables	13:10–17	4:10–12	8:9–10
The Sower	13:1–9, 18–23	4:1–9, 13–20	8:4–8, 11–15
The Weeds	13:24–30, 36–43	4:26–29	
The Mustard Seed	13:31–32	4:30–32	13:18–19
The Leaven	13:33		13:20–21
The Hidden Treasure	13:44		
The Pearl of Great Value	13:45–46		
The Net	13:47–50		
The Lost Sheep	18:10–14		15:3–7
The Unforgiving Servant	18:23–35		
The Two Sons	21:28–32		
The Tenants	21:33–44	12:1–11	20:9–18
The Wedding Feast	22:1–14		14:16–24

Parable	Matthew	Mark	Luke
The Ten Virgins	25:1–13		
The Talents	25:14–30		19:11–27
The Good Samaritan			10:29–37
The Rich Fool			12:16–21
The Barren Fig Tree			13:6–9
The Wedding Feast			14:7–11
The Lost Coin			15:8–10
The Prodigal Son			15:11–32
The Dishonest Manager			16:1–9
The Rich Man and Lazarus			16:19–31
The Persistent Widow			18:1–8
The Pharisee and the Tax Collector			18:9–14