

### ***Rising to life – Matthew 13:31-33***

Look at the parable in Matthew 13:33. What do you think it is about? What thoughts and hopes does it bring into your mind?

This parable sits beside the mustard parable in vv.31-32. In what ways are the two like one another, and in what ways unlike?

What do you think we gain from these two parables by meeting them as a pair?

Might the mustard parable mimic Ezekiel 17:22-23 or Daniel 4:10-12? If so, what might it suggest by likening the growth of God's work to the scruffy but energetic mustard? Could the yeast parable also allude to anything in the Old Testament?

### ***Treasures found – Matthew 13:44-46***

Look at the parable in Matthew 13:44. What do you think it is about? What thoughts and hopes does it bring into your mind?

This parable sits beside the pearl parable in vv.45-46. In what ways are the two like one another, and in what ways unlike?

What do you think we gain from these two parables by meeting them as a pair?

Another saying about 'treasure' is in v.52. Do you think these two sayings (44 and 52) relate to one another, and if so, what do you think they communicate by appearing so close together?

## Pocket Parables

### *Good News in Miniature*

Downing Place URC, Lent 2023 (Week Three)



[servicioskoinonia.org/cerezo](http://servicioskoinonia.org/cerezo), on Mark 2.13-22.

(Week Three) Some parables of Jesus are very short – just a brief comparison, rather than a story with a plot. There are several of these in Mark 2 and in Matthew 13.

Some of these short parables come within a longer conversation, which gives us an idea about what they might have meant.

### ***Jesus the physician – Mark 2:17***

Read from v.13, then think what this parable might have meant. Some say the parable is just common sense – describing the way Jesus works. Others see a deliberate echo of the Old Testament, of ‘the Lord your healer’ (Exodus 15:26) or the servant who ‘took our infirmities and bore our diseases’ (Isaiah 53:4). What do you think? Is there a hint of the Old Testament in thinking of Jesus as physician?

### ***Jesus the bridegroom – Mark 2:19-20***

God as Israel’s bridegroom is an Old Testament idea (e.g. Isaiah 62:5; Jeremiah 2:2), taken up in various ways in the New. Here the idea is applied to Jesus, but not really explored. Certainly there is a contrast between present joy and future sorrow. Do you think that these verses about Jesus as bridegroom signal anything other than this?

### ***Physician and bridegroom:***

Do you find these helpful ways of speaking about Jesus?

Try to explain why you think what you do.

### ***Tears, tears, and tiers of meaning – Mark 2:21-22***

Read from v.18, then think what these short parables contribute to the conversation. What did Jesus mean by telling them?

Notice the bridegroom being ‘taken away’ (v.20). If this is Jesus’ coming crucifixion, is it relevant that torn cloth is a Jewish funeral image – and that cloth is torn in Mark 14:63 and 15:38?

Should we connect this to the use of wine in Jesus’ passion (Mark 14:24; 15:23; 15:38) and the shedding of his blood? Put another way, is this little pair of parables a signpost to the cross?

New wine into old wineskins: is that something that happens in church life today, and if so how can we learn to avoid it?

### ***Miniature and mighty?***

Can compressed parables like these communicate more powerfully than some of the longer parables?

If so, how do they manage this, when they are so brief and compact?

### ***Miniatures in Matthew***

... if you have time and energy to go further ...

Matthew 13 has a series of parables – about eight altogether. Five are very brief. They include two obvious pairs. See over ...