

NT/HM 142 (3 credits)
Preaching the Parables of Jesus
Rev. Dr. Todd Brewer, Spring 2017
Time TBD, Sherred Hall, Room TBD
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Course Description

Jesus was remembered by his followers to be a dynamic storyteller, using these stories to both challenge and capture the imagination of his audiences. However influential these parables were, they present unique challenges to the modern-day preacher. Preaching the Parables of Jesus will examine several parables in their literary and historical contexts for their contemporary homiletical potential.

See course site log-in at <http://my.gts.edu/estudent/login.asp>

Required Texts

Snodgrass, Kline. Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 2008.

Capon, Robert Farrar. Kingdom, Grace, Judgment: Paradox, Outrage, and Vindication in the Parables of Jesus. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 2002.

Wierzbicka, Anna. What Did Jesus Mean? (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2001.

Brewer, Todd. Hermeneutics and Early Christian Gospels: Two Case Studies. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), 2017. (A pdf will be provided).

All other readings will be supplied electronically on the CAMS website and/or will be available on reserve in the library.

An NRSV Bible (with apocrypha), or an equivalent “word-for-word” translation.

Course Objectives

- To read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the form, content, context and theological issues of the Parables of Jesus.
- To analyze contexts and frameworks of the parables for their political, ethical, and theological values.

- To explore and practice the homiletical opportunities of the parables.
- *Written Requirements and Assessment of Objectives (for due dates, see below)*

All papers must be submitted electronically by midnight on the date indicated in the calendar below. Late papers will be docked 2% for *each day* they are not handed in after the due date. Extensions are available if needed provided the proper paperwork is submitted *before* the paper's due date.

- Weekly sermon preparation for the assigned texts. Students should come to class prepared to offer a brief sermon on the parable on the basis of the weekly readings. These will form the basis of the discussion for the second half of class. They will not be graded, but each will count for 1.5% of the final grade.
- The first paper of 1,500 words (+/- 150) will answer one of several essay questions provided by the instructor on the practice of interpreting the parables. The essay should answer the essay question and support this answer on the basis of the biblical text(s) and related scholarship. The bibliography at the end of the paper should have no more than 6 sources, of which none can be from an internet publication (blogs, Huffington Post, etc.). This paper will count for 25% of the final grade.
- Two sermons, totaling 1500 words each on selected parables. (20% of the final grade each). These must both reflect your researched and informed reading of the parable (supported by footnotes, if necessary) and function well as a sermon.
- One children's sermon, totaling 1000 words on a selected parable (20% of the final grade). This must both reflect your researched and informed reading of the parable and function well as a sermon for children.
- A Rubric for grading will be distributed and discussed on the first day.
- All classroom speaking & writing must reflect the seminary's Inclusive Language Policy on the Registrar's page:
<http://www.gts.edu/academics/course-offerings-a-registrar>

- Complete the assigned reading –from the English Bible as well as from the textbooks and secondary sources – by class time on the dates indicated on the course schedule below.

Diverse Learning Styles

The Seminary is committed to meeting the needs of qualified students with disabilities who meet the academic and technical standards requisite for admission to the Seminary or participation in the Seminary's educational programs or activities. It is the Seminary's intent to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities in order to afford them full participation in the Seminary's programs and activities and give them equal opportunity to attain the same quality of education as students without disabilities

PLEASE NOTE: NT142 treats many subjects about which competent scholars are not always in agreement. Areas in which there is substantial uncertainty will be indicated in class, and attention will be given to the positions held and theories advanced by a representative cross-section of modern authorities. Normally, it will be pointed out which views are most widely held and which views command less acceptance. Although it is important that each student understand the different major views and their supporting evidence, in *no case* will the student's standing in the course depend upon his/her agreeing with the instructor or the views presented in the required reading. By the same token, academic study of the New Testament can be a challenging, but fruitful endeavor intended to critically deepen one's knowledge and understanding. It is intended that the course will enable students to form their own intelligent, well-founded perspectives.

Written Assignment Grading

To take a good deal of uncertainty out of the grading of written work, a rubric will be used and passed out on the first day by the instructor for all evaluation.

Plagiarism

Please be advised that plagiarism is not acceptable in any submitted work. Plagiarism is defined in Section G of the seminary's Academic Regulations as "the appropriating and presenting as one's own of the writings or other creative work of another person or persons without acknowledgment". Accordingly, "Plagiarism is subject to academic penalties including a failing grade for the course in which the plagiarism occurs. It is also subject to disciplinary penalties up to and including dismissal from the Seminary." As a rule of thumb for plagiarism, when in doubt, cite your sources.

Office Hours

Students who wish to discuss any aspect of the course are encouraged to speak with Dr. Brewer individually; unless otherwise posted his regular office hours are Tuesday and Thursday, from 11-12:30. Students may also email to set up another time to meet.

Course syllabus

| Date | Topic | Readings |
|------|---|--|
| 1/31 | Introduction | Brewer, Chpt One |
| 2/6 | The Parable of the Sower | Snodgrass, p145-178. Capon, p54-74, Wierzbicka, p257-265 |
| 2/13 | The Parable of the Secret Seed/Wheat-Tares | S, p 179-190. C, p75-93 |
| 2/20 | The Parable of the Mustard Seed/Leaven | S, p216-235. C, p94-103, W, p 274-291 |
| 2/27 | The Parable of the Lost Sheep | S, p95-110. C, p179-188, W, p 292-299 FIRST PAPER DUE |
| 3/6 | The Parable of the Tenants | S, p276-298. C, p441-454, Brewer, Chpt |
| 3/20 | The Parable of the Banquet | S, p299-326. C, p455-465, W, 341-355 |
| 3/27 | The Parable of the Pearl/Treasure | S, p236-254. C, p113-123, W, 266-275 FIRST SERMON DUE |
| 4/3 | The Parable of the Talents | S, p519-542. C, p502-512, W, p 404-411 |
| 4/10 | The Parable of the Sons | S, p117-144, 266-275. C, p272-301, W, 300-309 |
| 4/17 | The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard | S, p362-378. C, p386-397, W, 320-331 |
| 4/24 | The Parable of the "Unjust" Steward | S, p401-418. C, p302-309, W, 414-421 |
| 5/1 | The Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector | S, p462-476. C, p337-346, W, 429-440 CHILDREN'S SERMON DUE 5/1 SECOND SERMON DUE 5/8 |