



# PEACE RIVER NEW CHURCH CURRENT

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

MAY 2013

## SPEAKING IN PARABLES

By Rev. Coleman Glenn

*"All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; and without a parable spoke He not unto them." (Matthew 13:34)*

This month, we'll be looking at some of the parables of the Lord. What is a parable? The American Heritage Dictionary defines it a parable as "a simple story illustrating a moral or religious lesson." The word comes from the Greek word "parabole," meaning "to compare." What do they have to do with "comparing"? A parable takes something natural and simple that is comparable to something spiritual, something that parallels it on another level. For example, the Lord told a parable about a man who lost one sheep, and left 99 others to find it. The point of the story, of course, has nothing to do with sheep or shepherding: it parallels a spiritual reality, that the Lord will do everything in His power to seek out His "lost sheep."

That quote above from Matthew 13 says that Jesus always spoke to the crowd in parables. And it seems fair to ask, why? If Jesus came to proclaim the truth to the world - why would He do it by telling stories, rather than just speaking plainly in straightforward terms? The Word gives us the answer - in fact, it gives us a few of them.

The first answer might be the most confusing, but it's also the one given most often: the Lord spoke in parables so that people WOULD<sup>N</sup>T understand Him. When His disciples asked why He spoke to the crowd in parables, He said,

"To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that 'seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.' " (Mar 4:11-12)

How does that make any sense? Doesn't the Lord *want* people to be forgiven? He does - but as He taught in several places, if a person began to follow Him and then later turned away, it was *worse* for them than if they'd never followed Him at all. So, He spoke in such a way that unless a person was *actively seeking* to understand, they would not be able to. He spoke in parables to protect people from believing temporarily then turning away.

The other primary reason the Lord spoke in parables was that, rather than being a round-about way of avoiding the truth, stories and parables can tell the truth even more fully than doctrinal statements. The book *Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture* says, "Divine Truth, in the sense of the Letter of the Word, is in its fulness, its sanctity, and its power" (SS 37). Truth has the most power when it is expressed in natural terms that contain spiritual ideas within them.

And the specific parables told by the Lord contain even more meaning than most people realize: "Each and all things the Lord spoke in parables are representative and significative of the spiritual and celestial things of His kingdom, and in the highest sense, of the Divine things with Him; and therefore the man who does not know this must suppose that the Lord's parables have no more in them than ordinary comparisons." (*Arcana Coelestia* 4637)

We can see the truth of this by thinking of particular examples. Think about this: it is a truth the God loves us and forgives us our sins. That statement is powerful - but it is not as powerful as the image of the prodigal son, crawling home destitute and broken, seeking only to be a servant - and his father running to meet him, to throw his arms around him, and saying with tears, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." We can (and should!) try to describe all the doctrinal lessons within

that story - but the greatest power comes from reading the story itself, with those deeper lessons in mind.

In the New Church, we are blessed by knowing the things that the Lord has revealed about Himself in the internal sense of the Word. But we still need those stories - we still need the parable of the literal sense. And although the history described in the Word is *literally* true as well, it also can be thought of as a parable, since every word of it contains a deeper meaning. We can't know someone apart from their body, and it is in the literal stories of the Old and New Testament that we come to know the Lord in person. The truths in the Writings infill those truths, showing us more than ever before what is behind and within those literal stories - but they do not do away with it. When we know the genuine truths - that God is love, that Jesus Christ is Jehovah God incarnate - then we see the whole picture most powerfully within the letter of the Old and New Testaments. The Word is there in its fullness, its holiness, and all its power.

## PARKING LOT WORK

We are hoping to start work **this month** to shoot and level the parking lot (we aren't putting it on the calendar yet because it depends on when the frost is out of the ground). We've had a number of people pledge donations to the project; thank you to those who have! We still have a fair amount to raise - especially if we want to think about moving the telephone pole (which would cost an additional \$10,000). If you are interested in donating to the project, please contact **Rev. Coleman Glenn** or **Tracy Bouchard**. And if you'd like to help out with the physical work, please give one of us a call as soon as possible, and we'll let you know when we can get started!

## WESTERN CANADA FAMILY CAMPOUT

Another reminder: our annual campout will take place this year at Camp Emile on Moberly Lake from **July 19th-21st**. This year we've decided to start charging a flat fee so that people know what they can expect to pay; it will be \$30 per family unit (e.g. parents and young children) per night.

We do not want anyone to not be able to attend camp because of the financial burden, and there is money set aside to help with the cost for those who need, so please don't hesitate to ask about that if you're on the fence about coming because of the cost.

## LITURGY DEDICATIONS

As mentioned in a previous newsletter, you are invited to donate \$10 per book to dedicate the new liturgies to a loved one who has passed on. The inscription on the books reads: "Donated to the Dawson Creek Church of the New Jerusalem in Loving Memory of ...." So far 13 books have been donated; there are 100 altogether, so plenty more opportunities left to contribute in this way.

## SECOND GARAGE SALE!

The Ladies' Group garage sale on April 27th was a big success, drawing in \$1,187.36! A *huge* thank you to everyone who helped, especially to Bev and Arthur Bourbeau and Scott and Kathy Beattie who spent countless hours pricing and organizing the sale.

**Because we still have lots of items left to sell, we will be holding a *second* garage sale on Saturday, May 4th.** If you had things you wanted to donate but weren't able to in time, feel free to drop them off at the church; and if you weren't able to stop by for the first sale, this is your chance to buy something useful while contributing to a good cause. Hope to see you there!

## COMMUNITY CLEANUP

The Dawson Creek community clean up day will take place on **Saturday, May 11th**. In the past we have had a group representing the Ladies' Group, and I'm wondering if there's enough interest to do the same this year. To qualify as a group that can earn an honorarium, we have to have at least 10 workers. **So, if you're interested, PLEASE LET REV. COLEMAN GLENN KNOW BY MAY 7th.** Thank you!

### THE DAWSON CREEK CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSAEM

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# CHURCH CALENDAR

## MAY 2013

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
28	29	30	1	2	3	4 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Garage Sale
5 11 a.m. Family Service: "Parable of the Minas"	6	7	8	9	10	11 8:30 a.m. Community Cleanup (Memorial Arena)
12 <i>MOTHER'S DAY</i> 11 a.m. Traditional Service: "Parable of the Sower" 4:30 p.m. Worship & Class (Grande Prairie)	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 11 a.m. Traditional Service: "Parable of the Prodigal Son" 12:30 p.m. Pastor's Council	20 <i>VICTORIA DAY</i>	21	22	23	24	25
26 11 a.m. Traditional Service: "Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus" 4:30 p.m. Traditional Service (Debolt)	27	28	29	30	31	1

**Note: All events take place at the Dawson Creek Church of the New Jerusalem unless noted otherwise**