

Parable: An example. *Specifically*, a usually short, fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle

Jesus shares many parables with his followers and disciples. Through these parables he demonstrates for us the wisdom of heaven and the truth of God the Father.

Matthew 4:2: *He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: “**Listen!**...” Did you notice that last word? (Hint: The one highlighted.)*

Listen.

Jesus is announcing **take heart, notice what I’m about to say because it’s of great importance.** In this particular portion of Matthew’s gospel he goes on to share the parable of the sower.

Mark 4:1-8 Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water’s edge. He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they up quickly, did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

My thoughts...

You may be familiar with this parable or it may be completely new to you. It is the parable Jesus told to illustrate the Word of God, and how it is received by... *us*. Yep, plain old people like you and me. The seed represents the word of God and the soil represents each person who hears it. What part of this parable resonates most with you? Has the Word of God fallen onto rocky soil in your life? Shallow soil? Was it choked out by weeds or eaten by birds? Has it fallen onto good soil?

Culture: The set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that characterize an institution or organization.

The story of Impervious is also a parable. In the first book, Lone Wolf, we see *parallels of heaven and earth*--open air versus the underground city of Impervious.

With this thought in mind, let's take a look at the underground city. As the story opens, we see the culture of Impervious. List some of the characteristics you see in this fictional culture.

Impervious Cultural Characteristics

Looking at the above list of characteristics, which would you consider Godly characteristics? Ungodly?

Godly

Ungodly



R E F L E C T

Consider how you feel about the city of Impervious. Do you feel as if you personally connect more with Fran's attitude of a rebel or the general populace of the underground city? Why?

MY
THOUGHTS

Forfeiture: Relinquishment; loss; giving up

One particular cultural norm inside of Impervious is the practice of Esteemed Forfeiture. Fran refers to the forfeitures as 'sellouts.' Another word to describe the word sellout would be unfaithful. Why do you think she feels this way? In other words, who/what does Fran feel the forfeitures are being unfaithful to?

Hopelessness can often lead to depression and even actions that may seem senseless. (As in Esteemed Forfeiture.) In the Old Testament, the book of Job is filled with the laments of a man who had come to the end of his rope.

Job was spoken of by God himself as “blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” He was wealthy. He had a loving wife and many children. Yet, Job came to a season in his life where he lost everything that gave him joy. At one point, he was even ready to throw in the towel and wished he had never been born.

Job 6:2-4 “If only my anguish could be weighed and all my misery be placed on the scales! It would surely outweigh the sand of the seas—no wonder my words have been impetuous. The arrows of the Almighty are in me, my spirit drinks in their poison; God’s terrors are marshaled against me.”

Undoubtedly, Job is one unhappy man. Some would say, rightly. Some would say, not. Do you have, or can you remember in the past, situations that left you feeling hopeless?

*MY
THOUGHTS*

Air vents, tunnels, and the dark

Fran, Pete and all of the rebels spend a lot of time hunkering down and crawling through dark tunnels. It's where they hide from the eyes of The Superiors. These tunnels are dark, completely devoid of light, and might even be considered a little creepy.

What types of things can you think of that feel 'dark' in your own life? Creepy? Hidden?

Do you sometimes use darkness as a way to hide from things? If so, what things might they be?

After Fran visits Chan and finds him missing, what does she find that brings physical light into her previously dark niche?

What unexpected surprise does Fran find inside of the reader?

Psalm 119: 105 *Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my*

When Fran reads the Diary of a First Gen, she is intrigued, surprised; maybe even a little doubtful. However, she holds onto the idea and decides to explore it some more. What do you see being born inside of Fran?

Do you have a similar experience when first reading God's word? If not, is it something you would like to experience?

In our world, the Bible is similar to the Diary of a First Gen in that we are given first-hand accounts of something that is completely foreign to us here on earth. The New Testament is filled with accounts from Jesus (the one who came from heaven) as well of his disciples who verify his authority.

Take some time to ponder the verse below. Does it make sense to you? If not, pray for the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to His truths.

Meditate... John 1:1-5 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word*

was

with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome

GOOD NEWS!

Finding out you're going to have a baby sister or brother, that your family is taking an awesome vacation or maybe that you've just been accepted to your dream college. No matter what the subject, good news is... *good news*!

Share an episode in your own life that was, indeed, good news. What were the circumstances surrounding this event? How did the good news affect you? Did you run off and share it with your friends?



MY GOOD NEWS!

After reading more of *Diary of a First Gen*, Fran reflects back onto two very different cybernetic experiences: Both were holographic representations of the outside world: One experience was a picture of how a healed earth may appear with butterflies and green grass. The other,

Luke 1:1-4 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

We also are given conflicting stories of what lies beyond the grave here on planet earth. Sometimes these conflicting points of view rattle our brains, fill us with fear, or even worse make us ignore the inevitable. So what is the truth? How do we know?

Fran was pointed to the truth of what lay beyond Impervious by the reader she discovered. At first she is skeptical, but throughout the story, we see her skepticism give way to hope and finally true belief.

A key factor Fran's eventual belief was the fact that the story was written by a real man. One who had experienced the outside world as well as the world of Impervious, not to mention the additional words from her very own mentor. That was good news in her world. Did you know the word "Gospel" actually means *good news*?

That is why the story of Christ is often referred to as *The Gospel*. It is the good news that points us to heaven.



GOSPEL
=
GOOD
NEWS

The open air is safe... Heaven is for real

A very poignant moment for Fran is when she realizes there is a portal to the open air.

Yee-ha! A way out! Knowing this revives her spirit of hope and spurs her on to search for more. That is good news, indeed.

Although our biblical Gospel--good news--involves several components, the component that correlates with Fran's story in particular is the truth that the kingdom of heaven is real. It is not a fairytale to dream of and some intangible hope. And not only is it real, it is near.

Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

What do the words 'the kingdom of heaven is near' mean to you? Does it give you hope? Does it fill you with joy? Does it seem far-fetched? Something that you don't need to worry about until you become old?

Be honest with your thoughts and feelings about heaven. Offer your true heart to God as a prayer, asking for His guidance.

My prayer

The Kingdom of Heaven is like...

When Fran is finally able to experience the Open Air--the newly healed earth--she is filled with wonder and awe. Although what Fran experienced is common for us, she is seeing this world through brand new eyes. Are there any particular experiences Fran had that stood out in your mind?

Explain some ideas or images of that come to mind when you think of heaven.

Jesus shares visions of the kingdom of heaven through parables:

Matthew 13:3-32 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

Matthew 13:44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."

Matthew 13:45-46 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Read and reflect on each above parable. Describe in one word what each parable says to you regarding the kingdom of heaven

The King of Kings

When Fran arrives in the open air, she is greeted by a mother she had thought for dead and a father who she never knew. The reunion is one which surpasses every hope she had ever had. It has the power to erase the pain that she had felt within the city.

Likewise, it is biblical truth all believers will be together in heaven. As a matter of fact, in the book of Revelations, Jesus shares the following words with us:

Revelation 3:21-22 To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Not only do we see that we will be reunited with everyone who believed on the truth, but Jesus is alive! He sits on his throne in heaven and invites us all to join him in his kingdom.

Who is victorious? Those who have faith to believe that Jesus, our Messiah, came from Heaven to earth, died for our sins, resurrected and awaits each one of us in His kingdom.

➤ *That is good news indeed* <

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.