

Ministers:
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley
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Sunday:
8:00 AM: WGCY
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:
7:00 PM: Bible Study

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Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofChrist.com)

This Past Week:
Worship—30
Wednesday—15
Contribution—\$1890

For meditation:
Proverbs 25.1–5
Why wasn't there
electricity in the
Garden of Eden?
What does this
passage have to
say about
“scientific re-
search”? What is
the difference
between science
and scientism?

Radio program:
WGCY FM, 106.3
Sundays at 8 AM

became good, Henry was finally able to say,
“Some day I will go to London, and spend a
day or two amid the dear old horrors.” *The
dear old horrors*. If not now, in glory we'll
be able to look back and see how the worst
times of our life, full of tears and heartbreak,
all worked together for good. There are no
accidents in life (Gen. 50.20). Romans 8.28
is a soft pillow for a tired heart.

And this is why once a week, we can bear
to remember the single most horrible tragedy
the world has ever known. We can handle
the crucifixion on Friday because of the
empty tomb on Sunday. Because of Sunday,
the horror of Friday becomes *dear*.

Oh cross that liftest up my head
I dare not ask to fly from thee
I lay in dust's life's glory dead
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

kenny

Undoing your circumcision

Daniel 8 and 1 Maccabees 1 should be read
together, for both passages deal with
Antiochus Epiphanes' persecution of the
Jews. To mollify Antiochus, some Jews
“made themselves uncircumcised” (1 Macc.
1.15; they also built a gymnasium—I'll let
you research that one).

How do you undo a circumcision? Not
physically, of course, but you can undo it by
denying your Lord (Matt. 26.69–75) and by
turning from the holy commandment to
return to the pollutions of the world (2 Pet.
3.20–22). You can even undo it by being
physically circumcised to escape persecution
for your spiritual circumcision (Gal. 6.12,
Col. 3.11–12).

Yes, circumcision can be undone.

kenny

Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

The Widower

Luke Fildes



SEE PAGE THREE

Sermon: 2 Kings 5

The not-so-big muddy

12 March 2023

Do you see how this story works?

Do you not understand this parable?

How then will you understand all the parables?

Though the Parable of the Sower is only one example of the parables of Jesus (Mk. 4.2), it is the key example (v 13). Misunderstanding here means misunderstanding all of Jesus' parables. It's importance is indicated by several elements in Mark's telling. The parable is bookended the command to pay attention (vv 3,9; "Listen; are you listening?"); two sections explain it (vv 11–12, 13–20); two illustrations follow it (vv 21–25), and two additional parables elucidate it (vv 26–32).

So what is it that makes this parable the key to every other parable; what is the *mystery* being revealed (v 11)? Of the three main features in the parable—the sower: Christ called His story “the parable of the *sower*” (Matt. 13.18).

The seed and soils are important, but in a subordinate way. It seems, however, that most commentaries and sermons on this parable (at least the ones I've read or heard) emphasize the soils, which misses, I think the main point. The parables relate, first and foremost, to Christ and His work. Whether on the lines or between the lines, Christ is the leading figure in His parables; their meaning is somehow or other related to Him. Jesus must be kept at the center of the kingdom, for He is the One through whom God works. Without this perspective we'll miss the significance of the events surrounding Him—as the scribes and Christ's family illustrate in Mark 3.20–35. To accept Jesus as the tip of God's spear is key to understanding why demons are cast out and Christ would rather speak to strangers than meet with His family. If people accept Jesus for who He is, they'll understand what's going on; if they reject Him, they'll find what He does confusing and objectionable. It was not by accident that Mark puts 3.20–35 before 4.1–20.

The Parable of the Sower is the key parable because Christ is the sower. But there are other aspects of the parables worthy of note. Often, for instance, Christ interprets the parable in the parable (e.g., Matt. 20.16, 22.14, 25.13; Lk. 16.9–13). Sometimes, the key to a parable's interpretation is the situation in which it's set. And as Bales warns, “A parable which our Lord did not interpret should not be made the source of a doctrine

which we cannot find in other Scriptures” (*The Sower Went Forth to Sow*, 14).

Keep Christ at the center of the parables and you'll not go wrong. “He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*” (Ps. 126.6).

kenny

“The dear old horrors”

It's a picture over which you could cry your eyes out. *The Widower*, by Luke Fildes, depicts crushing sorrow—a heartbroken father holding a sick, dying child, kissing his child's hand, helpless to help. It's a picture I find hard to look at.

But I do look at it; in fact, many do. The painting hangs in the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia. But why would anyone want to view something so sad? Isn't there enough sorrow in this world without having the scab over our heart picked off by a picture like this? I'm sure I don't know all the answers to my question, but there are two things I do know.

All of us could have posed for the picture. If not as the father, then as the child on the father's lap, or as the children playing on the floor; and if not us, then someone we know. Fildes has painted *our* sufferings (Rom. 8.18), and that makes this picture very familiar to us. It is a picture of our humanity.

We're able to look at the sadness of the picture because of the coming glory. If heartbreak had the last word, I doubt that Fildes' picture would hang anywhere. But believers know there's more than the picture depicts. Glory is coming and that puts our present suffering in a whole different light.

In George Gissing's, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, Henry remembers the misery and grinding poverty of his early days in London. For many years, that time in his life was too painful for him to bear. But as time worked its magic and life

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News about us

- Mike's surgery is scheduled for this Thursday in Bloomington. Donna got a good report from her checkup at Mayo. Leroy has been diagnosed with compression fractures in his spine. Lisa continues to mend. As always, pray for all of us.