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Preaching Parables HOM 6/805
Spring, 2026
Course Description

PURPOSE: Parables can be challenging for preachers and yet they comprise about 1/3 of Jesus' teaching. How does one bring a fresh word that maintains continuity to this difficult and well-trod territory? This course explores biblical parables and their use in the preaching of Jesus with a focus on contemporary homiletical application. This is an upper-level preaching course which may fulfill denominational requirements or serve as an elective. Biblical preaching is an event that unfolds at the intersections of biblical text and context. It requires self-awareness and leadership on the part of the preacher to make creative and studied choices that lead from text to sermon and empower God's people to wise, caring, and bold discipleship in our world.

PREREQUISITES: HOM500 and NT500

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:

Students will

- Demonstrate knowledge of biblical texts, specifically parables
- Sharpen communication and contextual reflection skills.
- Link preaching with broader ministry and discipleship practices.
- Demonstrate deepening spiritual growth and mature self-awareness, to grow in seeing self and others as beloved of God.
- Critically reflect on their own sermons and growth as preachers.

FORMAT AND CONTENT:

This course meets on Tuesday afternoons from 2-5pm. This course limited to synchronous students.

TEXTS:

Amy Jill Levine. *Short Stories by Jesus* (Harper one, 2014)

Kline Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent* (Eerdmans, 2018)

Thomas G. Long, *Proclaiming the Parables: Preaching and Teaching the Kingdom of God*. (WJK, 2024).

EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

Full details for all assignments will be provided in the syllabus evaluation will include the following:

Analysis of Artistic Interpretation of Parable

4-5 page written analysis of an artistic or creative interpretation of one of Jesus' parables created after the biblical era. (video, song, visual art piece, etc.) A guide will be provided.

Exegesis Reports

Two 3-4 page informal exegetical reports, one for each parable corresponding to class sermons. Students will consult at least 5 resources. A guide will be distributed for the format and content of these reports.

Sermons on Parables

Students will create two 10-12 minute sermons on parables of Jesus. Students will be able to choose from a group of designated parables. Students are encouraged to be imaginative and take some risks with these sermons. Parables are not boring and sermons shouldn't be boring either.

Participation and Sermon Feedback conversations

Participate in class activities and discussions. Offer thoughtful, caring, and frank sermon feedback that offers accountability for interpretive moves made in the sermons.

Sermon reflection papers

For each class sermon, taking feedback into account, reflect on how the sermon interacts with course readings and activities related to parables, what worked well, and what might be changed in future preaching.

700 Level Students will have an additional assignment related to teaching.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Encountering the Parables in Contexts Old and New, eds. Goud, Cousland, Harrison, and Keith, Library of New Testament Studies, (T&T Clark, 2024.) (pending publication date.)

Howard Thurman. *Sermons on the Parables*. Edited by David B Gowler and Kipton E Jensen. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2018.

Willian Herzog II, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue* (WJK, 1994).

Clarance Jordan and Bill Lane Doulos, *Cotton Patch Parables of Liberation* 25th anniversary edition (Wipf and Stock, 2009.)

Richard Lischer, *Reading the Parables* (WJK, 2014)

Alyce McKenzie, *The Parables for Today* (WJK, 2007).

Glenna S. Jackson "Rebel Soliders as Good Samaritans: New Testament Parables in an African Context *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* [Online], Volume 60 Number 1/2 (20 October 2004.)

Selected Biblical Resources for Sermon Prep:

Joseph Fitzmeyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Anchor Bible, 1981)

Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John* Anchor Bible, 1996)

Jeannine Brown and Kyle Roberts, *Matthew* (Eerdmans, 2018)

Adela Yarbo Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* Hermenia, (Fortress, 2007)

The Jewish Annotated New Testament, eds. Levine and Brettler, 2nd ed. (Oxford UP, 2017)