

is much broader than this. The Hebrew and Greek words which are translated by it simply mean, "a likeness." It is an analogy-- a lesson drawn from a comparison of some sort or another. Often it is a brief story, as in the parable of the sower, or of the wheat and the tares. In other cases, however, it simply points out some natural phenomenon, and draws an illustration from it.

Jesus usually took His figures of speech from daily life. Often He would point to something that was visible to His listeners, and then draw a lesson from it. This presents an excellent suggestion for the teacher. It is easy to find analogies for spiritual lessons in all the things around us if we but look for them. The lesson that can be drawn from some little incident or some fact of daily life, perhaps even something that is visible before us as we talk to our Sunday School class, will often be much more impressive than something from a far-away-land or from another person's experience. Learn to illustrate your lessons and your talks and they will be far more effective. This suggestion is not only of value for the teacher, but is also worth passing on to the pupils for their help as they present Christian truth to others.

Jesus was a master illustrator. As He stood on the Mount of Olives, He pointed to one of the fig trees, of which there were many in the vicinity, and used its condition as a means of bringing out an important truth. During the winter, the fig tree looks as if it would never change. There is nothing about it to suggest that it would ever take on new life and bear fruit. However, as spring begins to approach, something happens. Little leaves begin to shoot out, and we know that soon the tree will be covered with new leaves and buds, and before long summer will be here. In this parable Jesus is stressing a common feature of daily life. Things do not continue as they are. Great changes