

usage is broader, and three of these are explicitly called "parable": (48) in Luke 12:16, (51) in 14:7, and (63) in 18:9. Jülicher calls them "illustrative instances."¹¹ Boucher suggests that they are cases of extended synecdoche rather than simile or metaphor.¹²

Same Location. As in the case of analogue, we can distinguish between cases involving no change of direction and those which shift. An example of the former is (51), where the guests at a banquet are advised not to pick the most prestigious places at the table lest they be embarrassed when the host arrives. This, we are told, is a sample of the more general lesson "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled...." It applies directly to the banquet guests without change of direction. It also comes home powerfully to us by demonstrating that our selfishness and greed really contradict our claim to believe in a God who abases the proud and exalts the humble. Parable (52) also falls in this category.

New Location. The other four example-parables -- (46, 48, 60) and (63) -- give a shift in location. They invite us to step back and look at our own lives from outside. Do we pass by those in trouble without getting involved? Are we concerned about our own security and pleasure more than about those who are poor? Do we look down on others from our spiritual superiority? These are powerful pictures to shatter our complacent self-images, yet each provides an alternative lifestyle for us to imitate.

Criticism of Audience Perspective

Usually Jesus' parables are more than just illustrations: they provide an alternative perspective to that held by some or in most of his audience. In fact, most of Jesus' parables are at least an implicit criticism of the audience's perspective. Many others are explicit in their criticism, and some reduce the audience perspective to absurdity.

Explicit Audience Criticism

We may define explicit audience criticism in a parable as the case in which the audience's perspective actually shows up in the parable to be set in contrast to Jesus' perspective. An example of explicit criticism is the Prodigal Son (58), where the elder brother is present to espouse the Pharisaic position while the father gives Jesus' view. As G. V. Jones observes:

... no Pharisee with any perception could miss the point. The elder son is not identified with any particular group ... he is merely a character in the story; yet he was not included for a literary purpose, but in order that the listeners might be brought to pass judgment upon themselves through perceiving the correspondence between the situation in the story and that of real life.¹³

By contrast, the criticism in the Lost Sheep (56) and Lost Coin (57) is implicit, as only God's perspective is given.

Not only Jesus' opponents, but also the crowd and Jesus' disciples receive explicit criticism as well. In the Tower Builder (54), the multitudes