

 ALABASTER

Visual Liturgies

on the Parables of Jesus





01 / Introduction

Throughout his ministry, Jesus continually shared a vision of life defined by love, grace, and peace. This vision reflects the Kingdom of God, creation as the Creator intends, and Jesus illustrates how this Kingdom transforms our lives through parables. In fact, parables make up approximately one-third of all of Jesus' recorded teachings in Scripture. Commonly defined as an earthly story with a heavenly meaning, a parable is a story about a simple subject, used to illustrate a deeper message.

Parables invite us to explore the wonder of the Gospel in an approachable way. Rooted in an aspect of daily life or commonality (a farmer planting seeds, a woman searching for a lost possession, etc.), these stories are intended to feel relatable and familiar. When people asked Jesus broad spiritual questions, such as, "What is the greatest commandment?" or "How many times must I forgive someone?", Jesus answered in a simpler place, illuminating how the Kingdom of God is at work in our daily lives.

To fully understand a parable, one is prompted to lean in, to look closely, to reflect. By leaning in and fully immersing ourselves in God's Word, we can glimpse the mysteries of the Kingdom that Jesus proclaims. This book invites us to unpack the stories Jesus shared, considering where our preconceptions diverge from God's wisdom, and encouraging us to experience the beauty and the freedom of the Kingdom of God here and now. In church history, liturgy is a practice meant to draw us communally closer to God. To that end, we begin each chapter ruminating on a specific parable Jesus told, presented alongside a reflective reading and imagery designed to encourage and inspire. Finally, we conclude with a prayer, lifting up our hearts and minds to God.

Let us lean into the parables of Jesus and enter the wondrous and redemptive vision God has for us all. Amen.