



Genre-Sensitive Expository Preaching of Parables

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1 Timothy 4:16

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by doing so, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Review

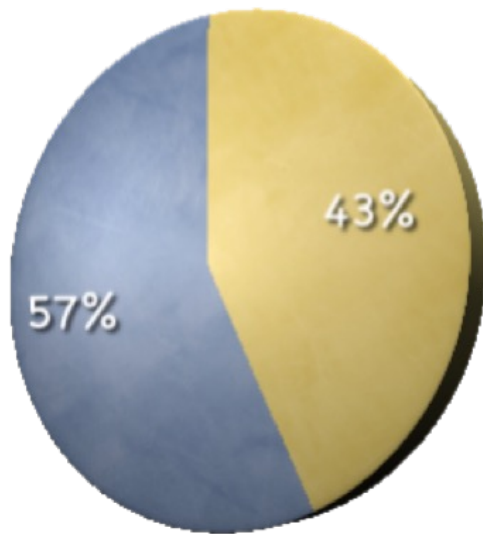
- God has inspired both the content and the genre of biblical texts.
- Every genre has its own literary form, and each form produces a set of rhetorical effects.
 - For example, proverbs are short, thus they lodge in memory and prompt the reader to ponder.
- Expository preaching exegetes both the content and the form of the text, so that . . .
- The sermon says what God said in the text and does what God does through the text.



Genre-Sensitive Expository Preaching of Parables

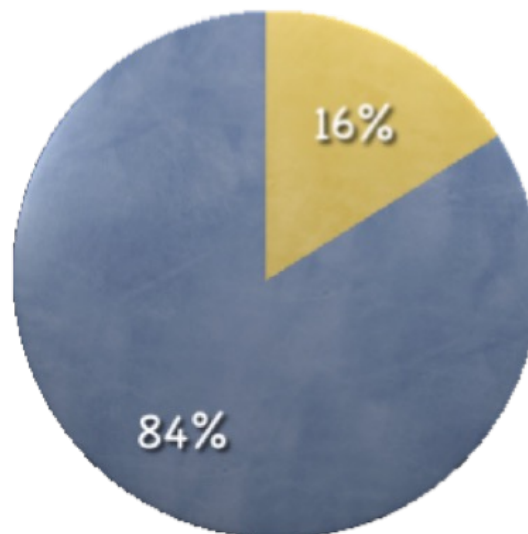
The Heart of Jesus' Teaching

● Parables
● Other Speech



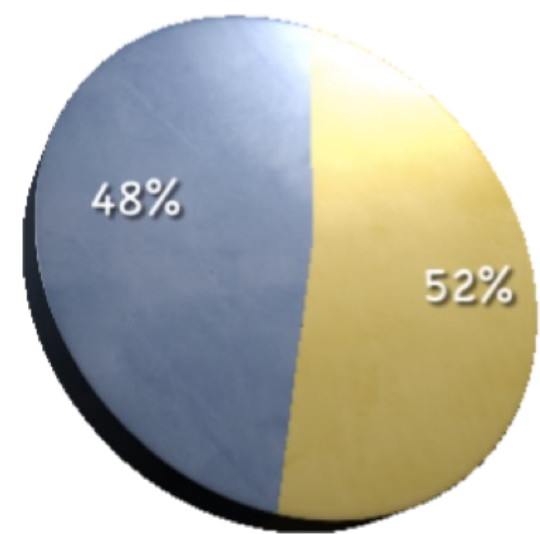
MATTHEW

● Parables
● Other Speech



MARK

● Parables
● Other Speech



LUKE



With these beguiling stories
and analogies, our Lord
inaugurated the kingdom.

Overview:

- Definition of “Parable”
- Literary/rhetorical Characteristics
of Parables
- Preaching Parables

What IS a Parable?

- An “earthly story with heavenly meaning.”
- C.H. Dodd: “At its simplest the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.”

C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, rev. ed. (New York: Scribner's, 1961), 5

What IS a Parable?

- **Leland Ryken: “Realistic stories, simple in construction and didactic in purpose, that convey religious truth and in which the details often have a significance beyond their literal narrative meaning.”**

Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 202.

Literary/Rhetorical Characteristics of Parables

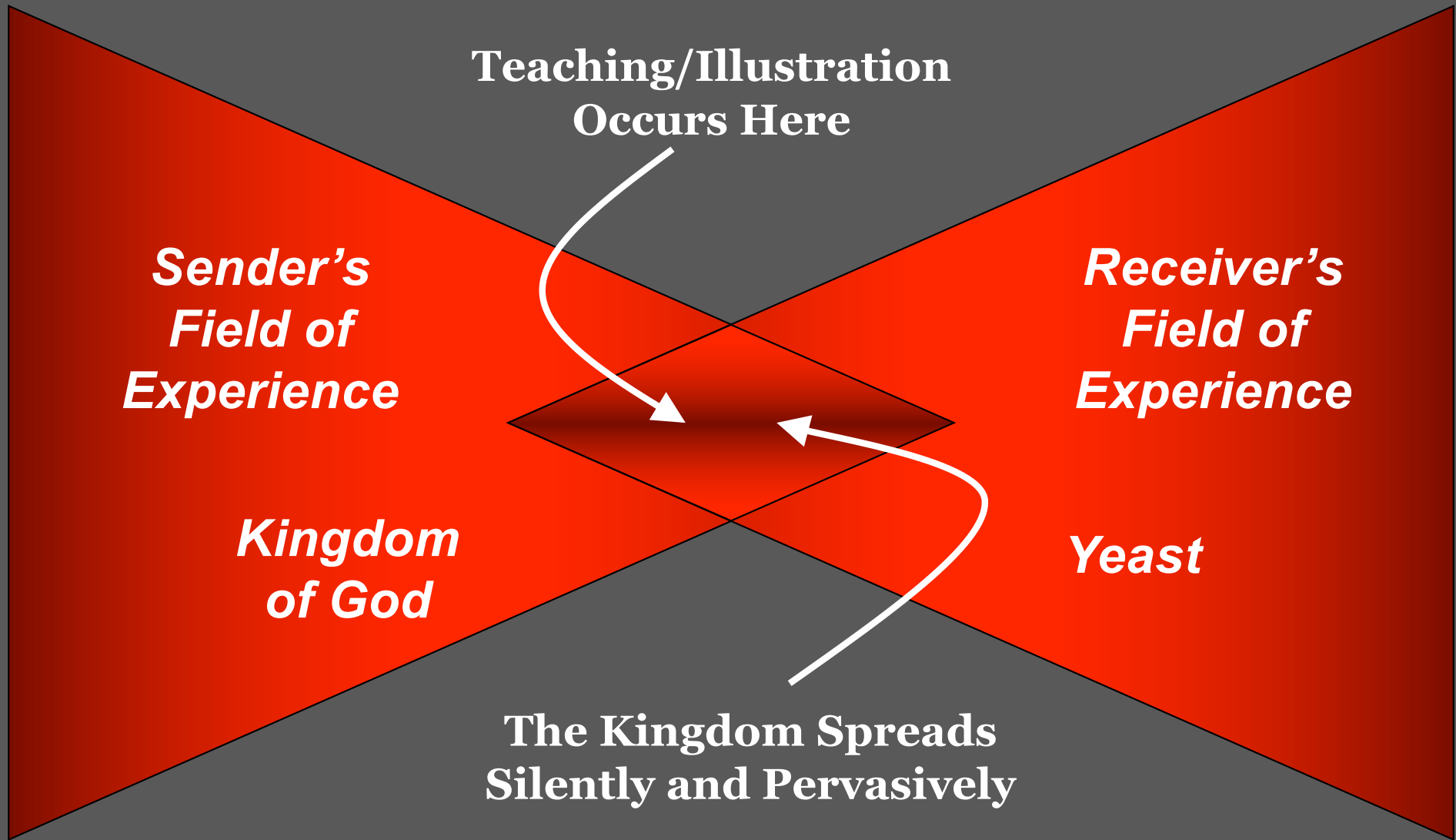


● Analogy

- Parables “throw one thing beside another”; that is, they compare two things which are unlike.
 - Seed = word of God
 - Sower = Jesus/preacher
 - Soils = human hearts
- Thus, parables use “code language” which must be “cracked.”

Parables as Analogy

(the kingdom of heaven is like . . .)



The Rhetoric of Analogy

- Analogy demands that the audience *collaborate* to construct the speaker's meaning.
- As a “code” to be cracked, parables *unify* insiders.
- Example: “The Black Hole.”
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5_Msrdg3Hk



Discussion:

- what is being compared to what?
- What is the film's big idea?

Literary/Rhetorical Characteristics of Parables

- Analogy
- Realism



The Rhetoric of Realism

- **Identification**: listeners put themselves into the story and are caught up in it.
- **Imagination**: listeners use the whole brain including affect.
- **Infiltration**: Listeners are disarmed and then they find they are standing on a landmine.



Literary/Rhetorical Characteristics of Parables

- **Analogy**
- **Realism**
- **Folk Stories.**
 - **Short**
 - **Formulaic plots**
 - **Stock characters**



The Rhetoric of Short Folk Stories

- Parables (once again) *disarm* resistance.
- Parables lodge in *memory*.
- Parables *polarize* responses.



Genre-Sensitive Expository Preaching of Parables

- **Exegesis:**
 - Be careful of too much imagination—the excesses of allegorical interpretation.

Augustine's Allegorical Interpretation of the Good Samaritan

<u>Text</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
• A "certain man"...	Adam
• Thieves...	the devil and demons
• Stripped him...	took his immortality
• Beat him...	tempted him to sin
• The priest and the Levite...	the ministry of the OT which does nothing for Adam
• The Good Samaritan...	Christ
• Binds wounds with oil and wine...	restrains sin with hope and an exhortation to work with a fervent spirit
• The inn...	the Church
• The innkeeper...	the Apostle Paul

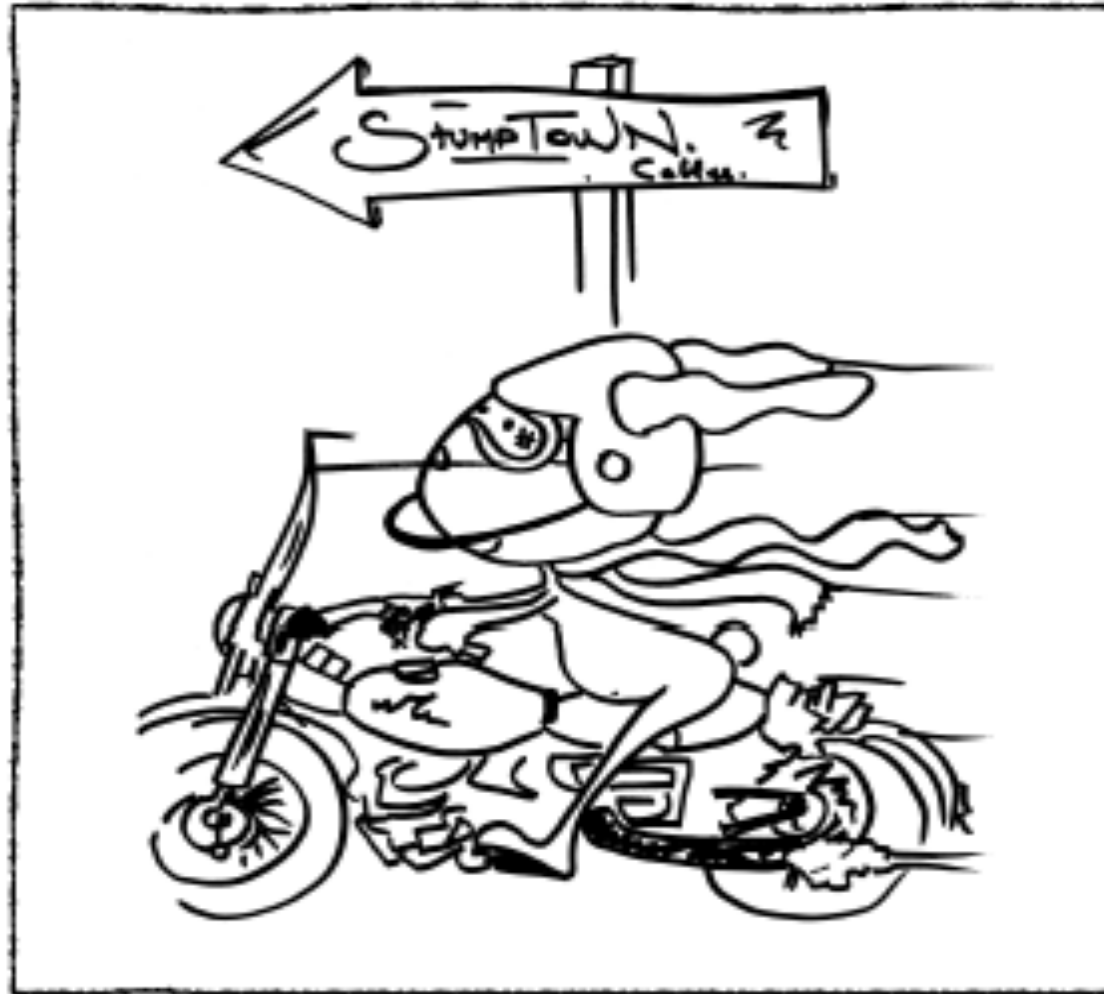
How to Preach Parables with Genre Sensitivity

- **Exegesis:**
 - Be careful of too much imagination—the excesses of allegorical interpretation.
 - Take special note of cultural context.
 - Take special note of literary context (end stress, lead-in statements, and placement of the parable in the flow of the gospel story.)
- **Homiletics:**
 - “Translate” with Recent Culture.
 - Don’t be Afraid to Make a Point.

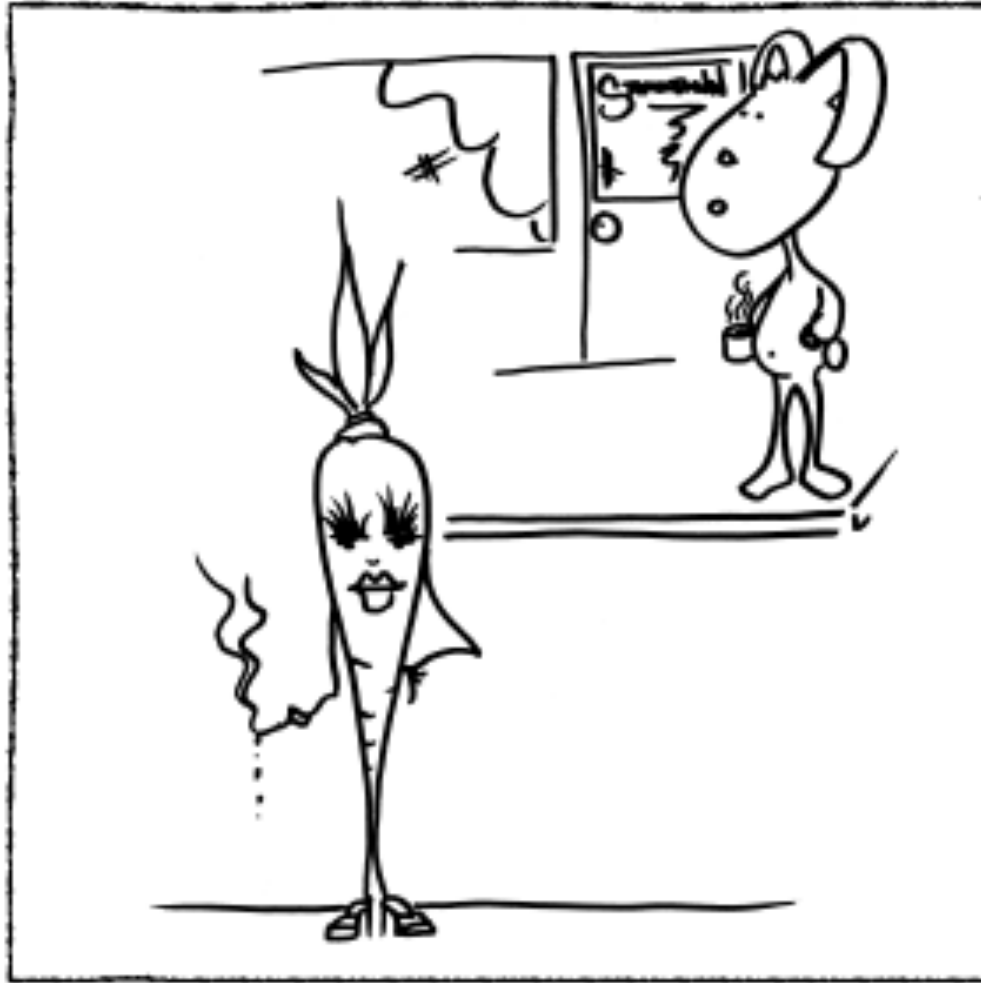
How explicitly do these parables from Luke explain their point?

- **Wise and foolish builders (6:46-49)**
- **Friend at midnight (11:5-10)**
- **Barren tree (13:6-9)**
- **Shrewd steward (16:1-9)**
- **Persistent widow (18:1-8)**
- **Tax collector and Pharisee (18:9-14)**
- **Ten minas (19:11-26)**

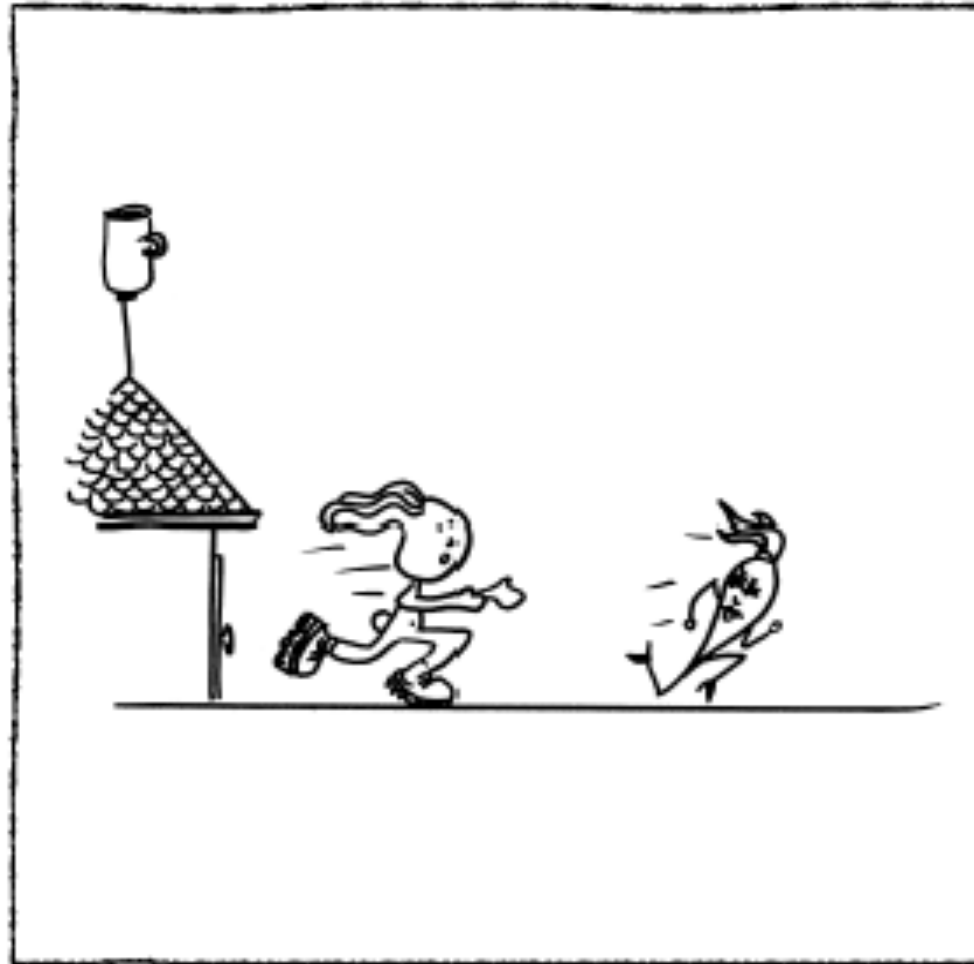
The Parable of Don Rabbit
(Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz*)



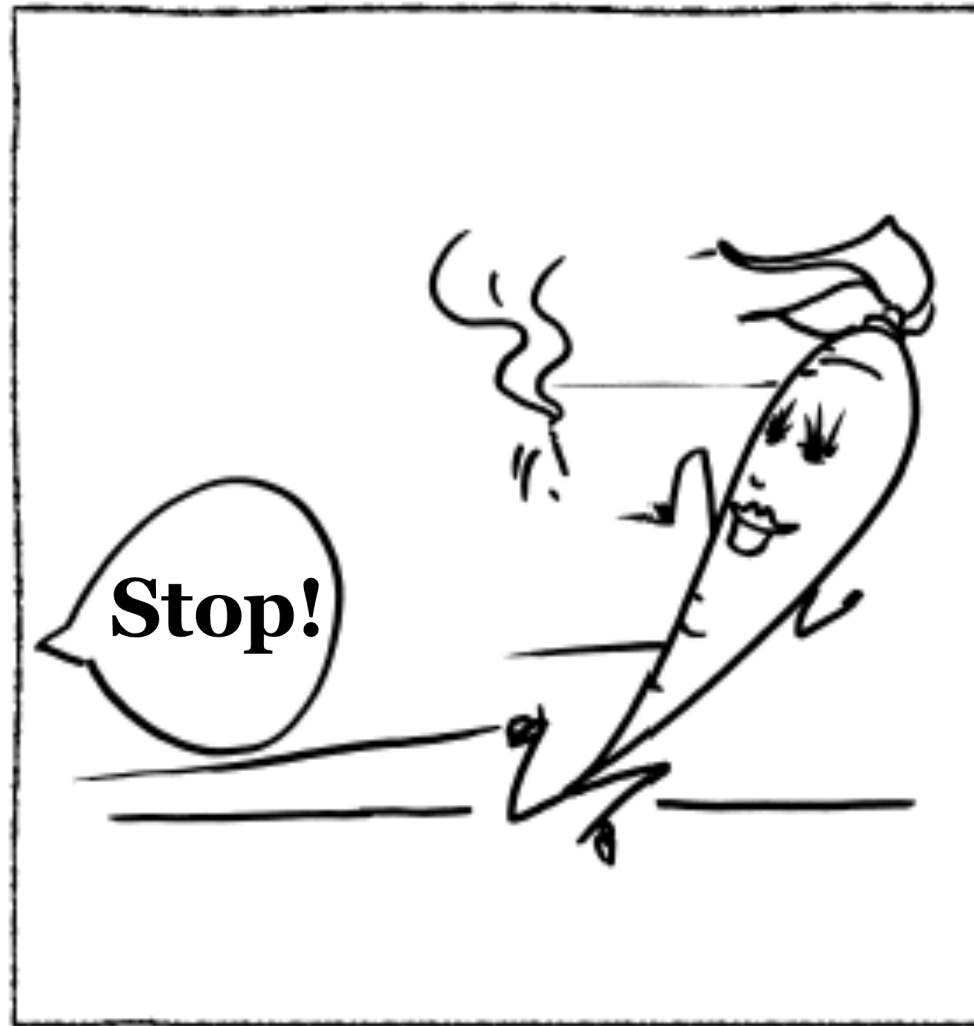
**Don Rabbit went to Stumpton
Coffee every morning**



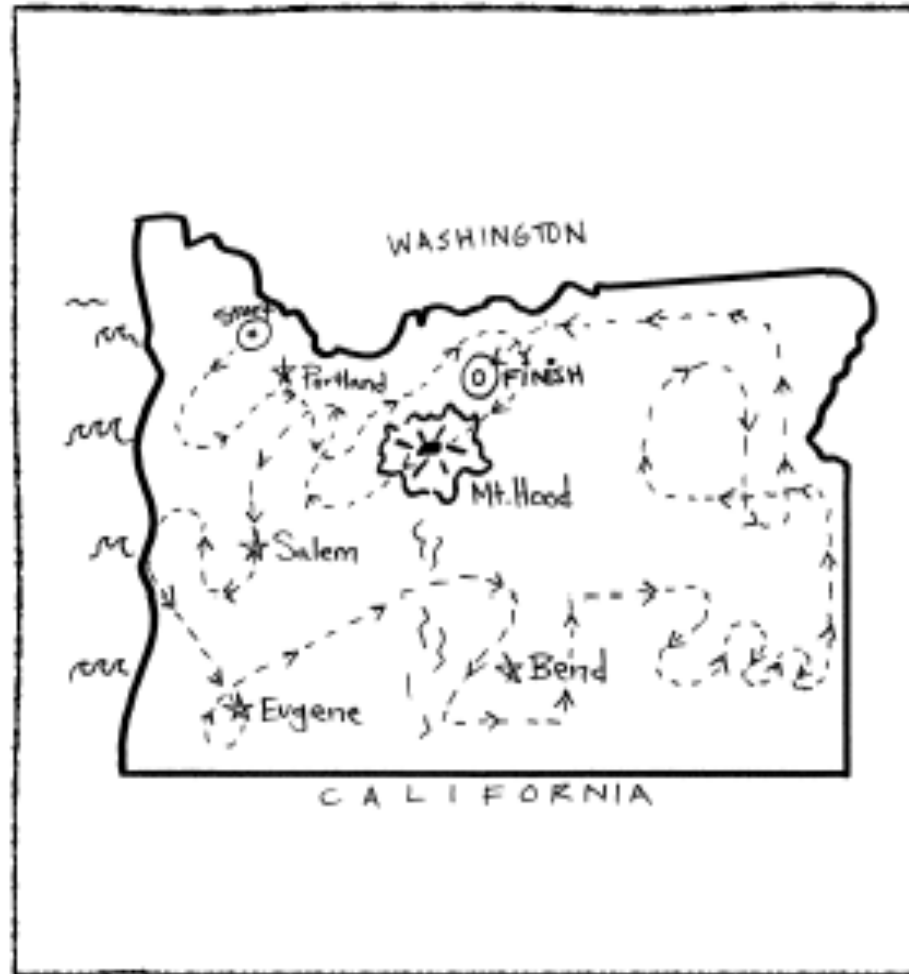
**One morning at Stumpton,
Don Rabbit saw Sexy Carrot**



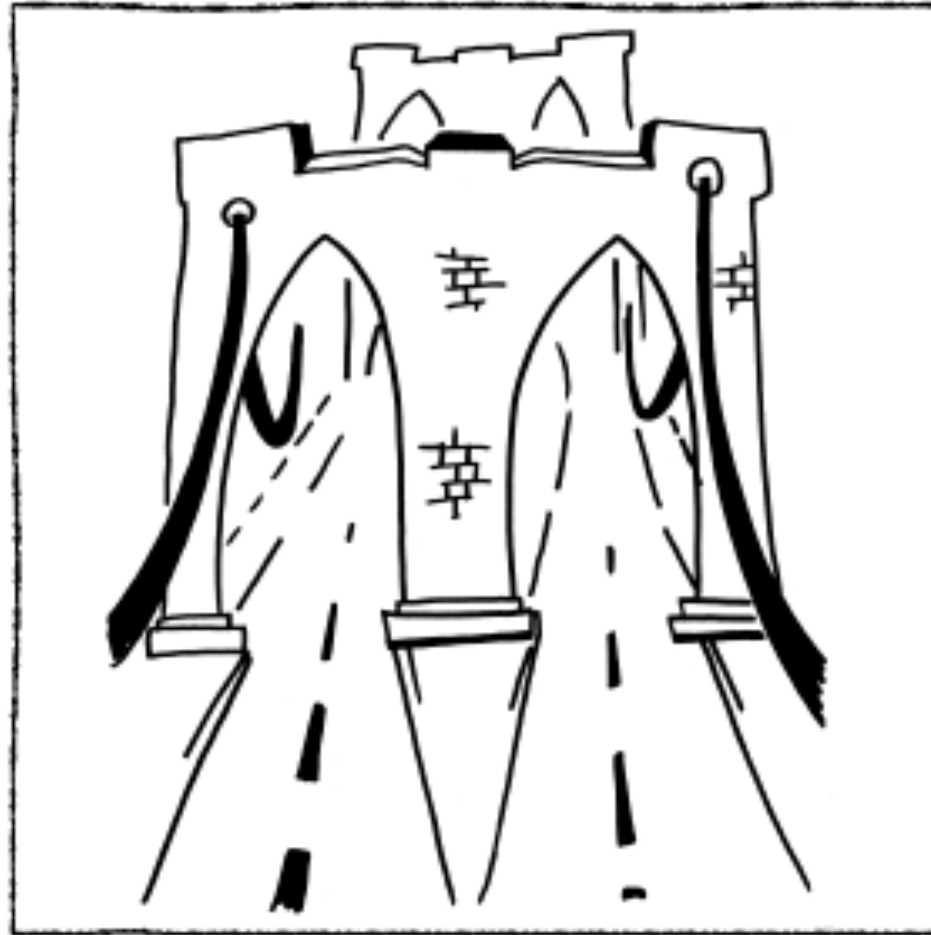
**And Don Rabbit decided to
chase Sexy Carrot**



But Sexy Carrot was very fast.



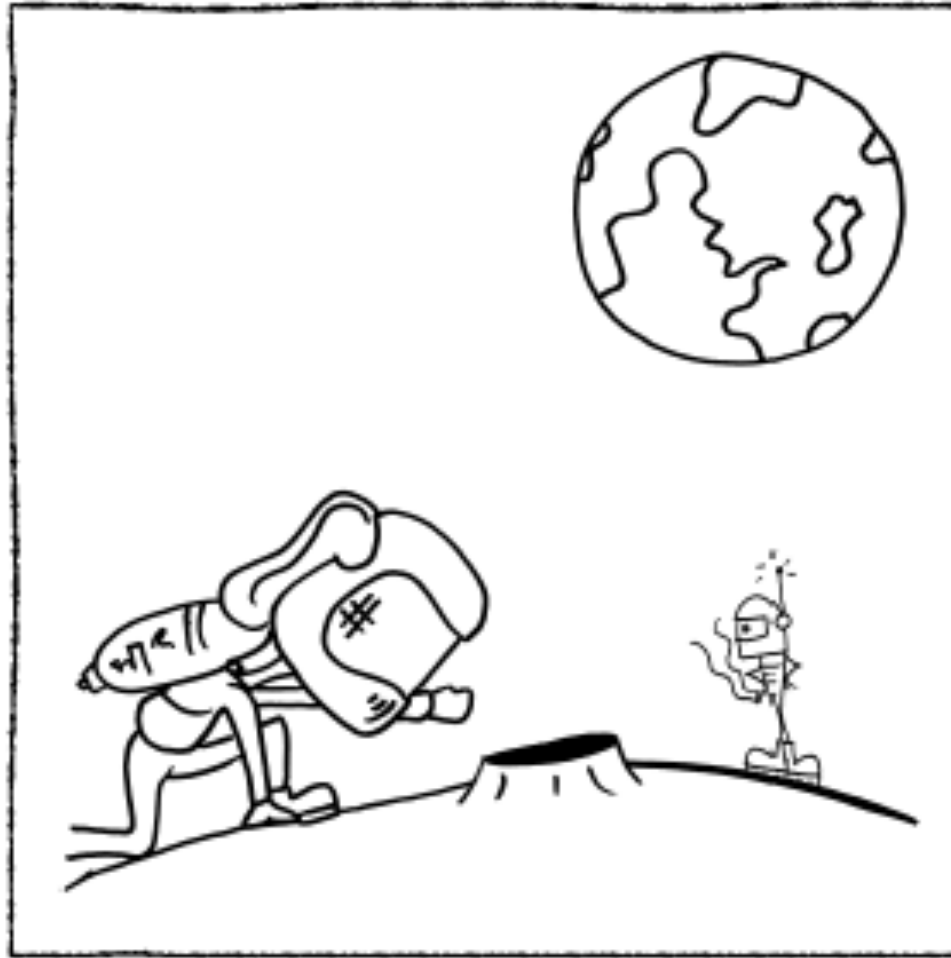
**And Don Rabbit chased
Sexy Carrot all over
Oregon.**



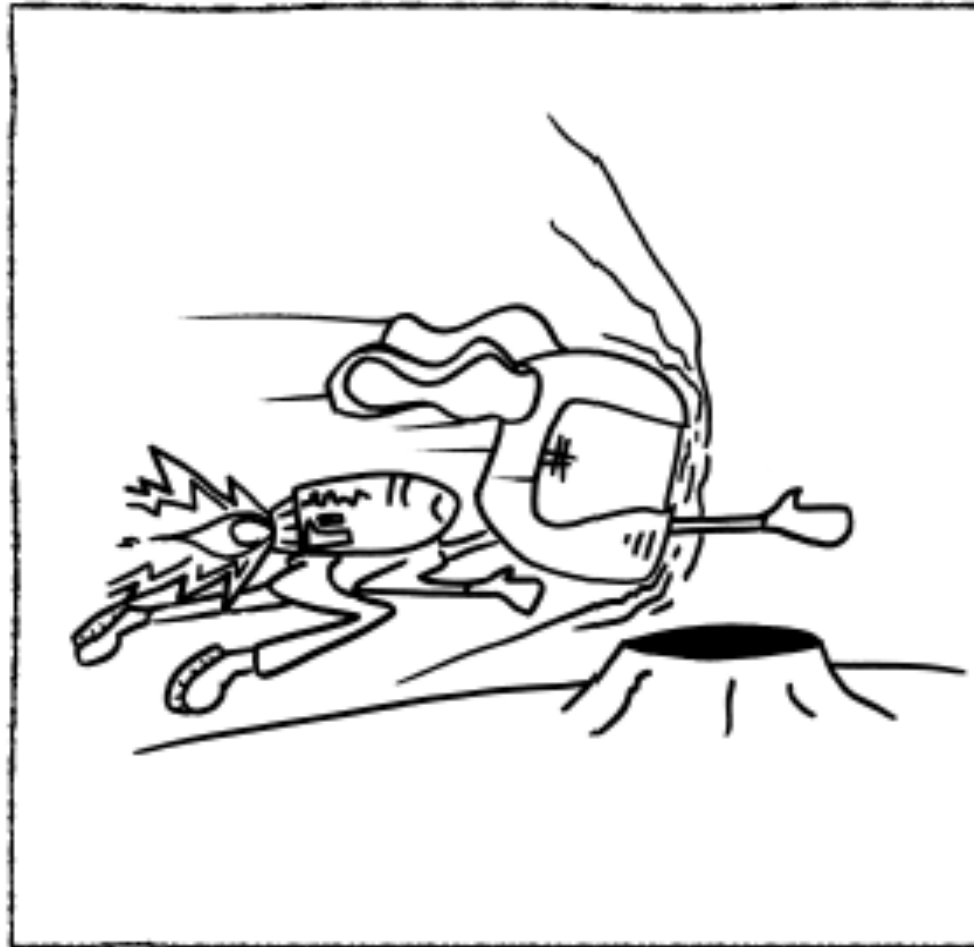
**And all over America, all
the way to New York City.**



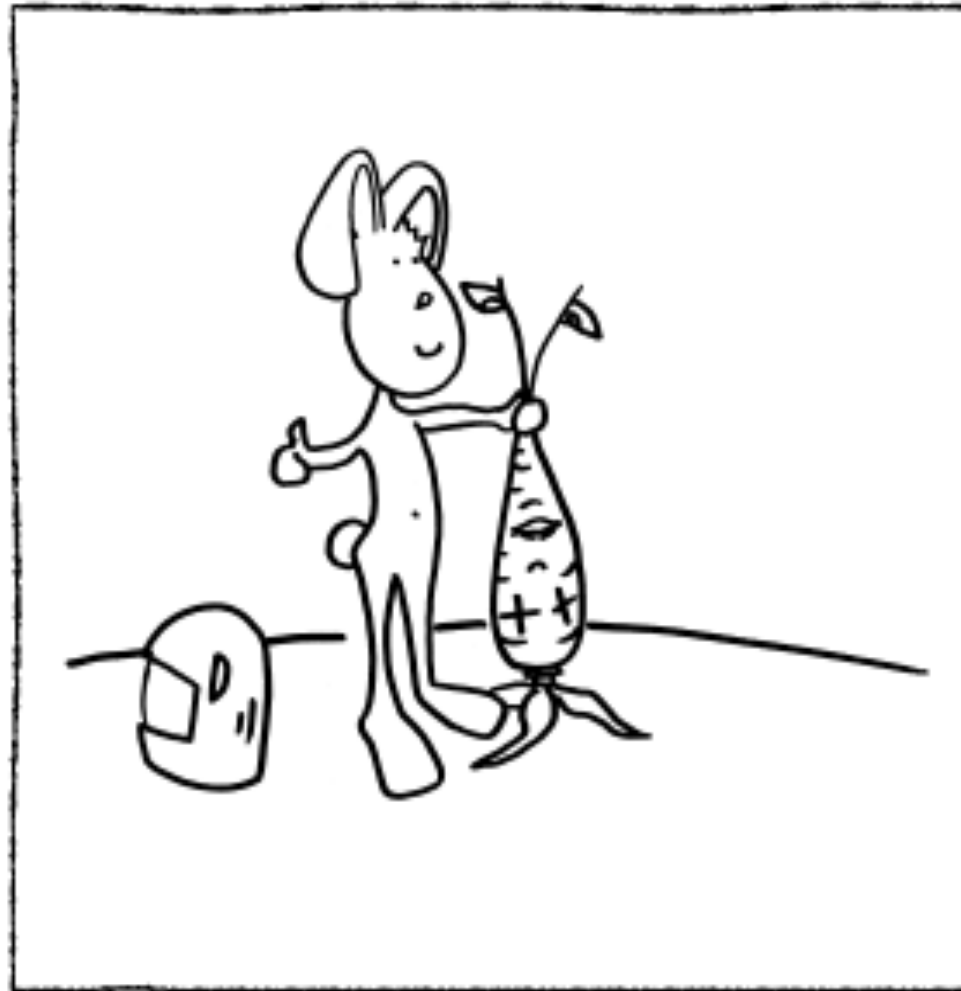
**And Don Rabbit chased
Sexy Carrot all the way to
the Moon.**



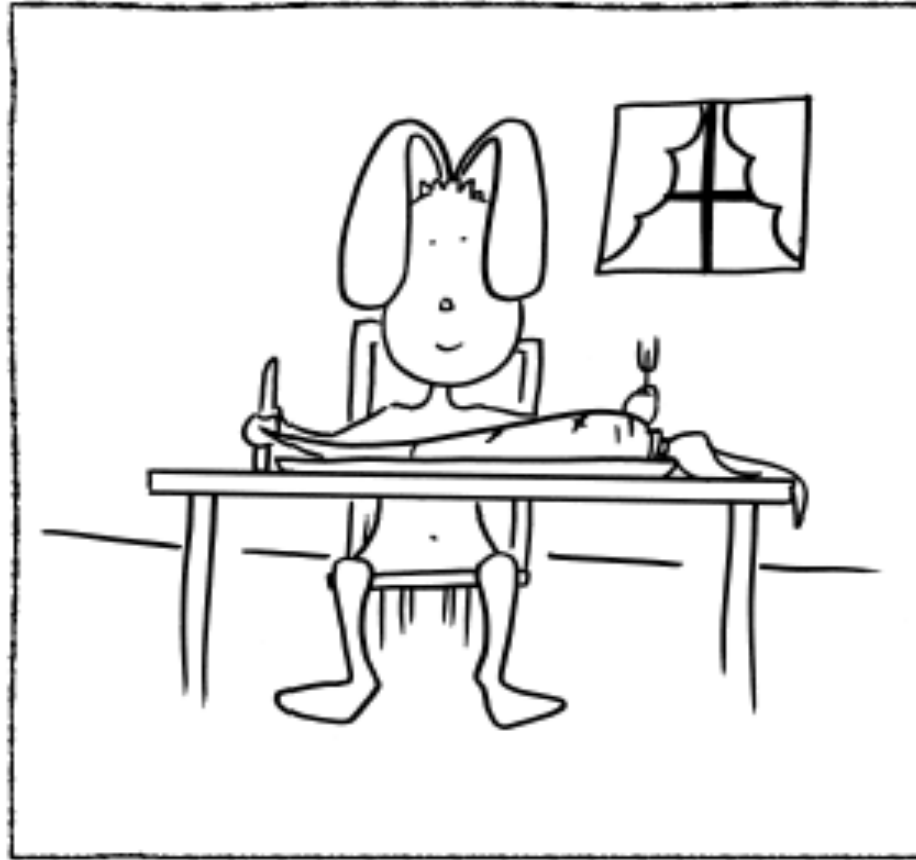
**And Don Rabbit was very,
very, tired.**



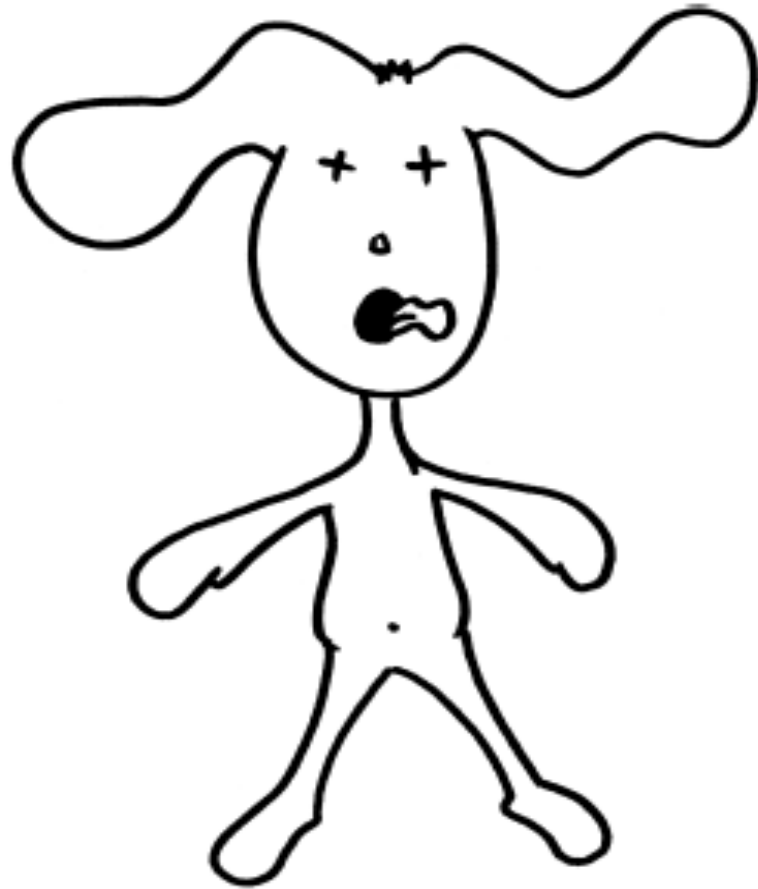
But with one last burst of strength, Don Rabbit lunged at Sexy Carrot.



**And Don Rabbit caught
Sexy Carrot.**



**And the moral of the story
is that if you work hard,
stay focused, and never
give up, you will eventually
get what you want in life.**



Unfortunately, shortly after the story was told, Don Rabbit choked on the carrot and died. So the second moral of the story is:

Sometimes the things we want most in life are the things that will kill us.

How to Preach Parables with Genre Sensitivity

■ **Exegesis:**

- Be careful of too much imagination—the excesses of allegorical interpretation.
- Take special note of cultural context.
- Take special note of literary context.

■ **Homiletics:**

- “Translate” with Recent Culture.
- Don’t be Afraid to Make a Point.
- Don’t be Afraid to NOT make your point explicit.

**“When everything gets answered,
it’s fake. The mystery is the truth.”**

Actor Sean Penn



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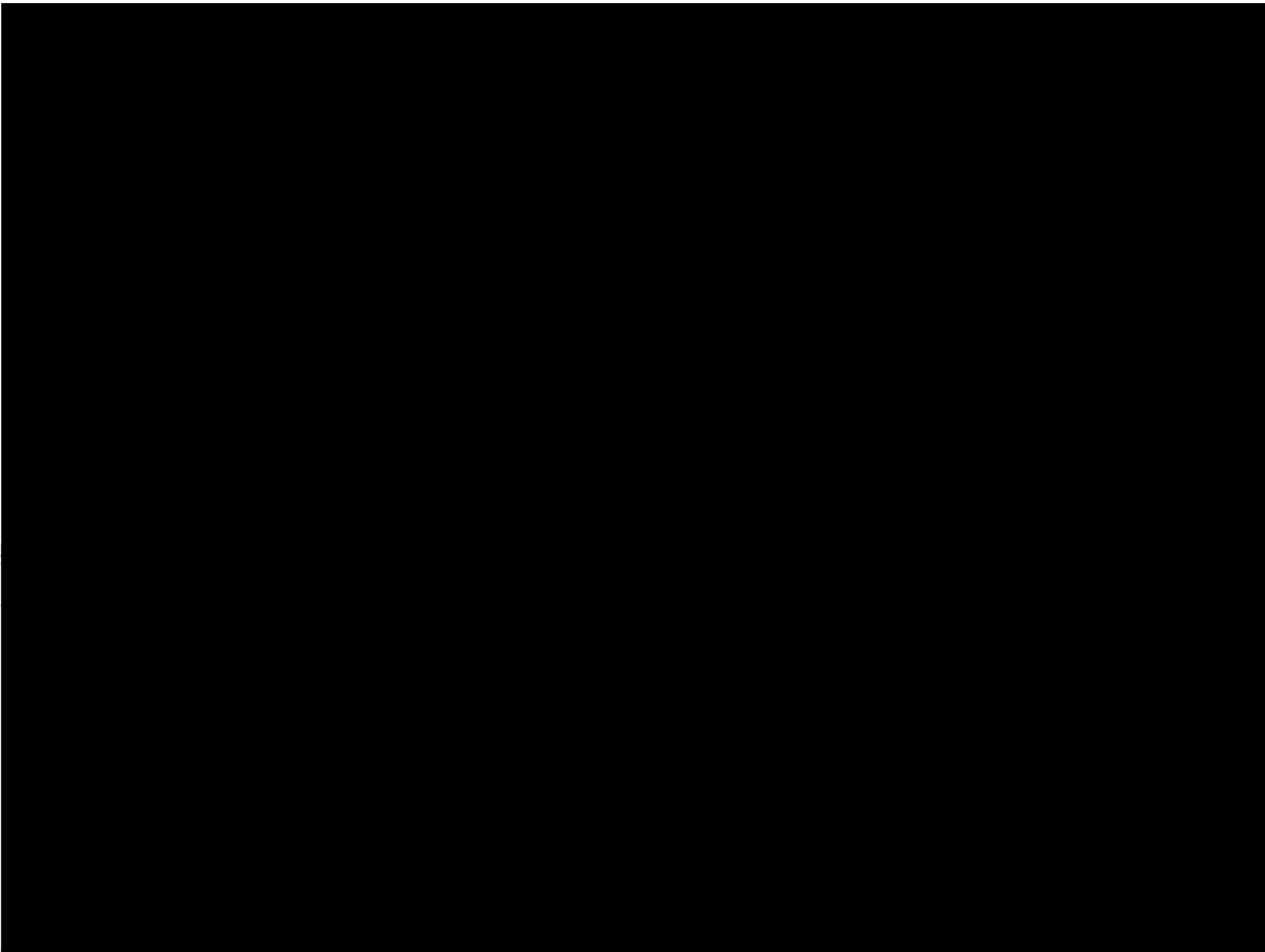
- “Translate” with Recent Culture.
- Don’t be Afraid to Make a Point.
- Don’t be Afraid to NOT make your point explicit.
- Tell narratives narratively.

Sample Parables

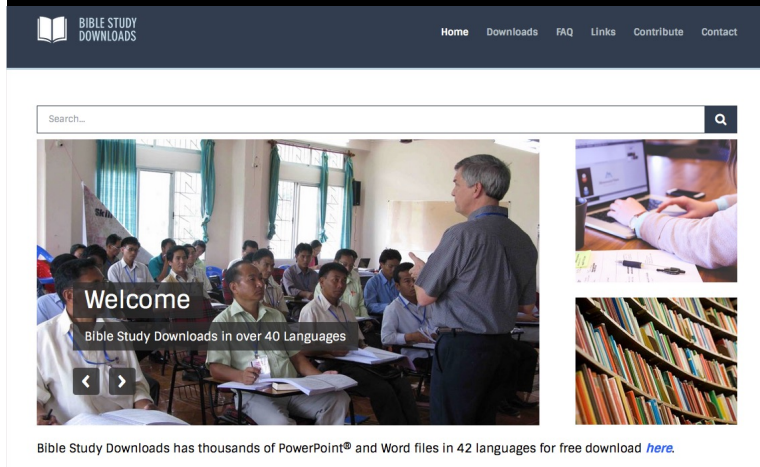
- Short film: "The Black Hole."
- Tolstoy: "How Much Land Does a Man Need?"
- Barton: "The Doughnut."
- Barton: "The Crossing Tender."
- Arthurs: Chicken Chef.
- Arthurs: Falling Into a Pit.
- Arthurs: The Monk and the Bird
- Short film: "Dog."
- Robinson: "The Church of Christ in God Chicken Restaurant."

1 Timothy 4:16

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