

# Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for  
March 8, 2026

*"Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,  
"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ;  
and He will reign forever and ever." – Revelation 11:15*



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“\*” = Please stand if you are able.

## Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

### Call to Worship – John 18:33-37

**Leader:** *Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him,*

**People:** **Are You the King of the Jews?**

**Leader:** *Jesus answered, Are you saying this on your own initiative,*

**People:** **Or did others tell you about Me?**

**Leader:** *Pilate answered, I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?*

**People:** **Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world.**

**Leader:** *If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews;*

**People:** **But as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.**

**Leader:** *Therefore Pilate said to Him,*

**People:** **So You are a king?**

**Leader:** *Jesus answered, You say correctly that I am a king.*

**People:** **For this I have been born,**

**Leader:** *And for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth.*

**People:** **Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.**

## Prayer of Invocation and Confession

### Gospel Absolution Text – Colossians 1:13-14

\***Hymn #2** – “O Worship the King”

## Scripture Reading – Mark 3:7-22

**Ancient Creedal Proclamation** – Apostles Creed (pg#845 in the red hymnal)

## Offerings Presented

[Please put your tithe/offering in the plates before or after the service – Thank you!]

[Gifts labeled “Deacon’s Fund go to aid those in need in the congregation.]

\***Doxology #731** (red hymnal)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

## \*Prayer of Dedication

\*Sung Psalm #78B – “O Come, My People”

### Prayers of the Church & Lord’s Prayer (sins)

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

### Reformation Creedal Reading – Westminster Larger Catechism, 191.

*Leader: What do we pray for in the second petition (in the Lord’s Prayer, which is, Thy kingdom come)?* Matt 6:10

**People: Acknowledging ourselves and all mankind**

*Leader: To be by nature under the dominion of*

**People: Sin and Satan,**

Eph 2:2-3

*Leader: We pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed,*

Ps 68:1,18; Rev 12:10-11

**People: The gospel propagated throughout the world,**

2Thes 3:1

*Leader: The Jews called, the fullness of the Gentiles brought in;*

Rom 10:1; John 17:9,20

Rom 11:25-26; Ps 67

**People: The church furnished with all gospel-officers and ordinances,**

Matt 9:38

2Thes 3:1

*Leader: Purged from corruption,*

Mal 1:11; Zeph 3:9

**People: Countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate:**

1Tim 2:1-2

*Leader: And the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted:*

Acts 4:29-30

Eph 6:18-20

Rom 15:29-32

2Thes 1:11; 2:16-17

**People: That Christ would rule in our hearts here,**

Eph 3:14-20

*Leader: And hasten the time of His second coming,*

Rev 22:20

**People: And our reigning with Him forever:**

*Leader: And that He would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of His power in all the world,*

Is 64:1-2

Rev 4:8-11

**People: As may best conduce to these ends.**

## Ministry of the Word

### Prayer of Illumination

\*Sermon Text – Mark 3:23-27

\*Gloria Patri #735 (red hymnal)

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.*

**Sermon** – “Parables Begin”

A Sermon Series on Parables

# Ministry of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

## Invitation & Warning

TRC practices guarded open communion. All who profess faith in Christ, have been baptized, have a basic understanding of this sacrament, and are in good standing with a biblical local church are welcome to the Lord's Table. If you are uncertain whether you should partake, it is wise to abstain and speak with the pastor afterward.

## Prayer

### Words of Institution – Matthew 26:26-28 + Luke 22:19-20; 1Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:26

“While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.’ . . . Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.”

## Partaking of the Bread and then the Cup

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

\***Hymn #235** – “All Glory, Laud, Honor”

\***Benediction**

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*Everyone is welcome to Coffee Hour Fellowship downstairs after church today*

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## Announcements

- TRC needs help with two **ministries** it would like to create.
  - 1) Is anyone willing to **visit shut-ins** once a month for about an hour or so?
  - 2) Does anyone have any thoughts on how TRC can support **Christian home-schooling**?If you are willing to serve, or have questions, please see Pastor Doug.
- Pastor Doug will be teaching the **children's Sunday School** class on March 15<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> explaining the Gospel and the Lord's Supper. Jon will be teaching the adult class.
- The next TRC social gathering will tentatively be on Friday or Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup>.
- *Regular Studies & Gatherings:*
  - Sunday School** for all ages (9:00 AM) at the Grange.
  - Tuesday Study** (10:30 AM – noon) – Augustine's Sermons, at Pastor Doug's house.
  - Wednesday Study** (6:30 – 8:00 PM) – On 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>: Thessalonians. On other: Free discussion.
  - Gen-Alpha Club** 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays, at Pastor Doug's house.
  - Friday Young Adult Discussion Group** (6:30 PM) meets on 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday, at Pastor Doug's house.
  - Saturday Morning Prayer Group** at the Gabelmann's. (Please call Sheryl to confirm if the group is meeting that day, 860-309-7250.)

## ONLINE RESOURCES

<i>TRC's Webpage:</i>	TrinityReformedCT.org
<i>TRC's Facebook Page:</i>	facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/
<i>TRC's Youtube Channel:</i>	youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT
<i>Pastor Doug's</i>	youtube.com/simplyreformed
<i>Youtube Channels:</i>	youtube.com/@PilgrimsOfPlunder

## INTERNET PRAYER CHAIN

If you have any prayer requests for our prayer chain, please email them to Donna Ensminger at: [trcnwprayer@gmail.com](mailto:trcnwprayer@gmail.com). (If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, also see Donna.)

## **LEADERSHIP**

**Elders:** Rev. Douglas Aldrich, pastor 860-379-1147 douglas\_aldrich@sbcglobal.net  
Bob Ensminger 860-485-8738 robert.ensminger@arthurgrussell.com  
Rich Gabelmann 860-605-7852 rgabelmann0415@gmail.com  
Rev. Jonathan Haulenbeek 203-709-0784 jhauenbeek@icloud.com

**Deacons:** David Mattson (chair), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell, Mason Goodell, Dean Winters

**Sunday School:** Verna Aldrich

**Music Coordinator:** Cindy Rines

**Clerk:** Sheryl Gabelmann

**Treasurer:** Cindy Rines

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### **Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut**

*Worship Starts At: 10:30 AM (9:30 AM in the summer)*

*Sunday Worship At: Winchester Grange (100 Newfield Rd; Winchester Center, CT 06098)*

*Mailing Address: P.O. Box 343; Riverton, CT 06065 - Phone: (860) 238-7399*

*Webpage: trinityreformedct.org - Email: trinityreformedct@gmail.com*

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## **Sermon Notes**

Mark 3:23-27

“Parables Begin – An Introduction to Gospel Parables”

March 8, 2026

A Sermon Series on the Parables

### **Introduction**

1) Parables are probably some of the most famous parts of Scripture. Think of:

- a) The Good Samaritan. Luke 10:30-37
- b) The Prodigal Son. Luke 15:11-32
- c) The Pharisee and the Publican (Tax Collector). Luke 18:9-14
- d) And probably the most important: Matt 13:3-9; Mark 4:3-9  
The Parable of the Sower. Luke 8:5-8

2) We think they are simple, practical, relevant teachings.

- a) They are actually some of the most misunderstood, poorly preached, and difficult texts to be interpreted in the Bible.
- b) In the Good Samaritan who is the Good Samaritan, the beaten up man, and the priests?
  - i) You are, or should be, the Good Samaritan?
  - ii) Is the beaten up man just some homeless person?
  - iii) Are the priests some fundamentalists that only care about dogma?
  - iv) You sure about that?
- c) Or in the Pharisee and the Publican are you sure you are the Publican?

3) Over the next few weeks, we will be going through some of the most famous parables in Scripture.

- a) Today, we will look at the first reference to parables in the Gospels.
- b) Giving an introduction and definition to what parables are.

4) First thing to note: Parables have a unique place in Scripture.

- a) There are a few parables in the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> Ezek 20:49; 24:3; Hos 12:10

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<sup>1</sup> Nathan's parable of the rich man and the lamb. (2Sam 12:1-7); Jotham's parable of the trees choosing a king. (Judg 9:7-15); The thistle and the cedar. (2Kgs 14:9); The two eagles and the vine. (Ezek 17:1-10); Allegorical parable of two sisters. (Ezek 23)

- b) In the New Testament, however, parables are only found in Matthew, Mark and Luke. (Called the Synoptic Gospels, because they are so similar.)
  - c) They are a favorite method of teaching by our Lord.
    - i) Yet only during a set period of time during His earthly ministry.
    - ii) And for a very particular reason.
- 5) The majority of the parables are clustered in the middle of Jesus' Galilean ministry.<sup>2</sup>
- a) The Lord starts up north of Jerusalem.
  - b) He is from the northern town of Nazareth, a small town in Galilee in northern Israel. Matt 21:11; Mark 1:24  
Luke 4:16; John 18:5
  - c) His early ministry focuses on gathering His apostles and disciples.
  - d) His later ministry is going to His passion.

### **Mark 3:23-26 – 1<sup>st</sup> Mini-Parable**

- 1) In Mark 2:23-3:5 the Lord Jesus claims to be God and then heals on the Sabbath.
  - a) The Pharisees and Herodians seek to destroy Him. Mark 3:6
  - b) Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the Sea of Galilee, and a great multitude from many regions followed Him. Mark 3:7-9
  - c) There Jesus heals many and casts out demons. Mark 3:10-12
  - d) Jesus appoints His Twelve Apostles. Mark 3:13-21
  - e) The scribes who came down from Jerusalem say Jesus *“is possessed by Beelzebul,<sup>3</sup> and He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.”* – Mark 3:22b
- 2) Then we read, in today's sermon text: *“And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables . . .”* – Mark 3:23a
  - a) Remember my top two rules from understanding the Bible:
    - i) #1 – Context, context, context!
    - ii) #2 – Unpack the pronouns.
  - b) Who are the pronouns in Mark 3:23?
    - i) The “He” and “Himself” is clearly referring to Christ.
    - ii) The “them” is *“the scribes who came down from Jerusalem”*. – Mark 3:22a

<sup>2</sup> <b><i>Chronology of the Lord's Earthly Ministry</i></b>	<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Mark</u>	<u>Luke</u>	<u>[John]</u>
Begins His public ministry:	4:12	1:14	4:14	---
Calls first disciples:	4:18	1:16	5:1	1:35
Appoints the Twelve:	10:1	3:13	6:12	---
Begins to teach in Parables:	13:3	3:23	(8:4)*	---
Turning Point – Peter's Confession:	16:13	8:27	9:18	---
Leaves for Jerusalem:	19:1	10:1	9:51	[7:10]
Arrives in Jerusalem (Palm Sunday):	21:1	11:1	19:28	12:12
Dies on the cross (Good Friday):	27:50	15:37	23:46	19:30
Resurrection (Easter):	28:1	16:1	24:1	20:1

\* = Two minor parables are in Luke 5:36; 6:39, with the formal teaching of parables starting in 8:4.

<sup>3</sup> Beelzebul (or Beelzebub) was a name used by the Jews for Satan, the prince of demons. The name likely derives from the Philistine god Baal-zebub (“lord of the flies,” 2Kgs 1:2) and came to be used as a contemptuous title meaning the chief ruler of demons..

- 3) So, the first reference to parables in the Gospel is not the Lord trying to teach His followers in a simple easy way.
- a) But it is a way of rebuking those who oppose Him!
  - b) Though some parables are given to just the saints.<sup>4</sup>
  - c) The norm for biblical parables is that they are spoken to unbelievers or mixed crowds.
  - d) Parables are *NOT* given because they are a simple and effective way to teach basics things.
    - i) In fact, it is the exact opposite.
    - ii) Parables are frequently given to unbelievers as a sign of judgment. Matt 13:11
    - iii) More about that next week.
    - iv) When the Lord directly explains why He spoke in parables. Matt 13:10ff
- 4) Here in Mark 3:23-27 our Lord gives two mini-parables against the scribes:
- a) The parable of the Divided Kingdom (Mark 3:24) and the Divided House (Mark 3:25,27).
  - b) They are both answering the charge that the Lord is demon possessed. Mark 3:22
  - c) As we see with Jesus' rhetorical question: "*How can Satan cast out Satan?*" – Mark 3:23b
- 5) Thus, the first parable is very simple and direct.
- a) "*If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.*" – Mark 3:24
  - b) Jesus cannot be of the devil, because Satan would not intentionally destroy his own kingdom.
    - i) A kingdom overtly warring on itself will not stand.
    - ii) Satan would not cast out his own demons.
    - iii) Thus, if Christ casts out demons, He cannot come from Satan.
  - c) This establishes some very important patterns that are found in this first parable that are common throughout the biblical parables.
  - d) But first, let us define our terms.
- 6) *Definition:* Parables are a brief fictional analogy (i.e., comparing two things, such as "the kingdom is like...") drawn from ordinary life that usually conveys a single central universal truth.
- a) Maybe, the most famous non-biblical parable is Aesop's "*The Tortoise and the Hare.*"
    - i) A rabbit mocks a turtle for being slow and they have a race.
    - ii) The arrogant and overconfident rabbit takes a nap.
    - iii) The consistent, determined, and diligent turtle focuses on the race and wins, because "slow and steady wins the race."
    - iv) It is an analogy that compares the turtle and the rabbit which teaches the real-world truth that perseverance succeeds over careless confidence and laziness.
  - b) So, parables are not to be taken literally.
    - i) Rabbits and turtles don't literally have races.
    - ii) Just like the two kingdoms in Mark 3:24 do not literally exist.
      - Yes, there is the Kingdom of God 2Sam 7:12-16; Ps 2:6-9; Dan 7:13-14  
with Christ as its King. Matt 6:10; Luke 1:32-33; Rev 11:15

<sup>4</sup> Hidden Treasure (Matt 13:44); Pearl of Great Price (Matt 13:45-46); Dragnet (Matt 13:47-50); Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1-13); Talents (Matt 25:14-30).

- Yes, Satan has a false kingdom, of this world, that is at war with Christ and His saints. Matt 4:8-10; 12:24-28; 13:38-39  
John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11  
2Cor 4:4; 11:14-15; Eph 2:1-2
- And yes, Satan, demons, and hell, really do exist. Matt 25:41; Mark 5:1-13; Luke 8:27-33  
John 8:44; 1Pet 5:8; Rev 20:10

iii) However, our Lord is not giving detail information about the City of God or this fallen earthly city. He is using examples to make a larger point.

c) To think parables are systematic, comprehensive teachings, however, is to completely miss the point.

i) It would be like saying to Aesop:

- “Wow, animals hold races in the woods! Where can I go see these races?”
- “But sea turtles swim at 21 mph and a rabbit can only swim at 3 mph, so your story is invalid.”

ii) Or to say to our Lord in responding to Mark 3:24:

- But really evil, stupid, or insane rulers might try to destroy their kingdom.
- Therefore, you actually might be Satan!

iii) To look beyond the one simple point that is being made is to misread the parable.

d) Probably the most notorious example of this is the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man, from Luke 16:19-31.

i) Trying to hear a systematic understanding of how heaven and hell work, is to completely misread the text.

ii) Such as to ask: So, in heaven we get to see the wicked down in hell?

iii) As opposed to the main teaching: About who Christ is, the sovereignty of God in salvation, and how dangerous sin is.

7) The clear focus of this first mini-parable is about Christ.

a) That He is not of Satan.

b) But has power over Satan and his minions.

c) As our Lord comments on: *“If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!”* – Mark 3:25-26

8) From this parable in Mark 3:24, we also see the Lord Jesus’ favorite theme He liked to teach on.

a) The majority of the parables are about the Kingdom of God.

Matt 13:24,31,33,44-45,47; Mark 4:26-32  
Luke 8:10; 12:35-40; 13:18-21; 14:15-24

b) The Lord Jesus’ favorite topic to talk about, during His earthly ministry, was the Kingdom of God.

Matt 4:17,23; 6:33; Mark 1:14-15  
Luke 4:43; Acts 1:3

c) This shouldn’t be surprising since He is the King of Kings.

1Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14; 19:16

d) Through His earthly ministry Christ inaugurated and manifested the Kingdom of God that had always existed under God’s sovereign rule.

Ps 103:19; 145:11-13; Dan 2:44  
Matt 4:17; 12:28; Luke 17:20-21  
Mark 1:14-15; 4:11,26,30

i) *Inaugurate*: To formally begin, especially marking the start of a new era.

ii) *Manifest*: To make clear, disclose, to make obvious and evident.

## Mark 9:27 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Mini-Parable

- 1) The second mini-parable is about a strong man's house.
  - a) More difficult parable.
  - b) Emphasizing the spiritual war going on.
  - c) And the authority and power of Christ.
  - d) Mark 3:27 – *“But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.”*
- 2) The analogy is that a plunderer has to first bind a strong man before he can plunder his house.
  - a) So, the strong man here is Satan.
  - b) Satan's house is all those under his dominion, especially those demon possessed, as well as those who are challenging Christ who say that He is casting out demons by the power of the devil. Mark 1:32-34,39; 3:15,22
  - c) The plunderer is Christ.
  - d) For Christ to plunder Satan's dominion He must first bind him.
  - e) So, the purpose of this mini-parable, like the first one, is to teach:
    - i) Christ's works of power are not from Satan.
    - ii) Christ and Satan are at war.
    - iii) And with His incarnation the invasion has begun.
- 3) Notice how easy it is to get distracted with parables.
  - a) How many moderns don't understand the parable because they don't like the idea that Christ is made out to be a thief.
    - i) It's a parable!
    - ii) Don't major in the minors.
    - iii) It's not teaching Christ is a thief!
    - iv) Its purpose is to show how powerful Christ is!
  - b) Though it does challenge our effeminate view of Christ.
  - c) We read throughout Scripture that:
    - i) With Christ's 1<sup>st</sup> Advent a New Covenant has been established. Jer 31:31-34; Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20  
1Cor 11:25; Heb 8:6-13; 9:15
    - ii) With the cross, Satan has suffered a major defeat & is bound. Matt 12:28-29; Luke 10:17-18; John 12:31; 16:11;  
Col 2:14-15; Heb 2:14; 1John 3:8; Rev 12:9-11; 20:1ff
    - iii) The Holy Spirit is now going to all the nations. Joel 2:28-32; Matt 28:19-20  
Luke 24:47-49; Acts 1:8; 2:17-21
    - iv) And with Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent, His return at the end of the age, all evil will be destroyed. Matt 13:40-43; 25:31-34,41  
1Cor 15:24-26; 2Thes 1:7-10  
2Pet 3:10-13; Rev 20:10-15
    - v) This war, this invasion, going on right now, however, is not of the ways of this world. John 18:36; Rom 12:2; 2Cor 10:3-5  
Eph 6:12; Phil 3:20; 2Tim 2:3-4
      - It is not about worldly power, violence, politics, etc. Matt 5:38-45; 20:25-28; John 18:36  
Rom 14:17; 2Cor 10:3-4; Eph 6:12

- It is about Christ's Kingdom which is not of this world.

John 18:36; Luke 17:20-21; Rom 14:17  
Phil 3:20; Col 1:13; Heb 12:28

- It is about conversion, faith, hope, and love, in Christ.

Matt 4:17; Rom 14:17; 1Cor 13:13  
Gal 5:6; Eph 4:22-24; Col 1:13-14

vi) As we learned about when we went through Revelation 4-7.

## **Conclusion**

1) As we work through some of the most famous parables in the Synoptic Gospels, remember:

- a) Never try to first read yourself into the parables, or any part of Scripture.
- b) Do not over-read the parables.
  - i) True liberalism incorrectly hears everything in the Bible as parabolic.
    - As a way to avoid the clear teaching of Scripture.
    - On such things as a literal creation, the existence of hell and Satan, or such sins as homosexuality.
  - ii) Yes, you can ask questions.  
But look for answers in the clear parts of Scripture
  - iii) However, don't get distracted by a figure of speech!  
Don't major in the minors.
  - iv) Focus on what our Lord is teaching in His parables.
- c) Remember, they were spoken during a particular time in redemption history.
  - i) There is a reason that after the cross we get epistles and not parables from Christ's Apostles when they write to the churches.
  - ii) Because the parables were used to show God's judgment against the spiritually deaf and blind.  
More about that, next week.
  - iii) First, in the parables, and all Scripture, hear Christ, and His Kingdom.
  - iv) And then, by all means, do make application.

2) From these mini-parables we learn:

- a) The world will call Christ evil and Satanic.
- b) We above all learn this is not true.
- c) That we need liberation from Satan, as we pray in the Lord's Prayer.
  - i) The spiritual plundering of the world began 2,000 years ago.
  - ii) You have been taken from Satan's house because a Stronger Man has bound Satan.
  - iii) And that binding happened at the cross.
- d) We taste that victory in the Lord's Supper.