



Tales of the Unexpected: The Subversive Stories of Jesus

Melvin Tinker, Nathan Buttery

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At Christmas time whilst singing carols about 'gentle Jesus, meek and mild' we can miss that this time-dividing man had an edge about what he had to say. His parables are sometimes not 'nice spiritual stories'. They capture the imagination, they paint timeless pictures, but they are also more than that. When you read, you get the unnerving sense that through them Jesus can see right through you. They can be unsettling, challenging, able to change you - that the sense of shame and lost-ness that we often feel, may be provided with answers in what he has to say. The Parable was an unusual form of teaching to Jesus' hearers, the Old Testament has only one main example, yet one third of Jesus' recorded words in the New Testament are parables. If these stories were so important to him, they should also be important to us. Jesus was a communications genius, his parables convey important spiritual truths - appealing to young and old, rich and poor, educated and non-educated - because they are not just a story to be understood, they are a spiritual temperature gauge. Deceptively simple, often taken from everyday Palestinian life; the parables are not just aimed to inform, don't even stop at transforming peoples' lives, but go further; to become part of the means Jesus uses to secure faith in men and women's hearts - they put us in touch with his mind.

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