

## Parables of Jesus: Parable of the Sower

### Introduction

- We are beginning an 8-week series on the Parable of Jesus. All the parables we will look at will come from the book of Luke. If you are unfamiliar with what a parable is. A parable is a story that Jesus told to communicate truth through a narrative analogy in order to teach a spiritual lesson.
- With Parables, sometimes a certain situation would trigger Jesus to tell a parable. There was one time, Jesus was eating at a Pharisees house and then a “woman of the city” comes in and starts to wipe Jesus’ feet with her tears and anointed him. But then the Pharisee questions who Jesus is and questions His actions for letting this woman draw near to him. So Jesus responds with a story about two people who owed a moneylender. One owed like 5k and the other owed like 50k. They are both forgiven of their debts and Jesus asks the pharisees, who would love the moneylender more. Of course the one who owed 50k. So Jesus uses that story to teach the Pharisees a lesson on how much he actually loved Jesus.
- Another thing we see about Parables, Jesus uses every day knowledge to make a point with his stories. He uses yeast in his parables. In the parable of the hidden treasure, people were known to hide their treasures in fields because there were no banks back then to keep their valuable possessions safe. In another parable, He talks about a shepherd who would leave the flock to go find the lost sheep. Again, sheep and shepherds were something common back then.
- One more characteristic of many parables, Jesus would begin a parable by saying, “The Kingdom of heaven is like this...”
- In our passage today, we see all of these characteristics, Now there are probably other characteristics about the parables of Jesus, but I wanted to point these out since it had to deal with our passage today. And these characteristics gives us more insight to why Jesus tells parables and also the point of today’s parables.
- We see in verse 8:4 there was a large crowd gathering and they came from town after town. This situation is what triggers Jesus to tell this parable.
- Secondly, he tells the parable about the sower. Again, farming is something that was more common back then. They would have pictured this farmer, with a bag of seeds over his shoulder and walking and spreading the seeds. They could visualize the path. They would have known about the rocky ground, how it’s a thin layer of soil on top of rocks. So, Jesus uses something that was common knowledge to his hearers.
- The third thing, while Jesus doesn’t say “The Kingdom of heaven is like this...”, He does say in 8:10 “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the Kingdom of God but for others they are in parables so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.”
- Jesus uses this parable to make a point because there is a crowd there. At the end of his parable He says, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Jesus is saying, not everyone who hears the Word of God will know, understand, and receive the Secrets of the Kingdom. There will be many, like the crowd, who will hear Jesus preach, see his miracles, and walk away clueless about who Jesus is. They won’t know the Secret of the Kingdom of God. They won’t know the rule and reign of Jesus Christ.

- So Jesus begins to teach about the important of listening carefully to the Word of God. He shows us what must happen with the Word of God in our lives in order for us to know the secrets of the Kingdom of God. That's our outline today: Accept, Take Root, be preeminent, and bear fruit. So Jesus is saying is, we must be careful and pay attention to how we hear the Word of God. As I read this week, To the hard-hearted, parables are a warning; to those who are open-hearted, parables illustrate principles of the messianic rule of God.

### **The Word of God must be accepted**

- In the story, the Word of God had no integration, no time to sink in, wasn't even covered by soil, the Word of God does not penetrate the heart whatsoever. And then it gets eaten by the birds of the air.
- Now, I would hope that many of you are here because you want to be, but there might be some of you in here who don't. Maybe some of you youth don't want to be here. And week in and week out, the word of God is preached, and it goes in one ear and out the other. I think this is the picture of what's happening in the story. Or maybe there are some in here that are skeptics, or maybe you have encountered skeptics at school or work. Anything you have to say about the Bible, they just don't want to hear about it. Doesn't matter what you say, they don't really want anything to do with Christianity.
- A second thing happens in this scenario. The seed is not only eaten and taken away by the devil. We also see that the seeds are trampled underfoot. I think this can be a word of caution for many of us here. Maybe the Word of God in our lives does not have the value and worth that we're supposed to give to it. Bible reading is inconsistent to non-existent in your life. Maybe there's no enjoyment when it comes to studying the Bible. Are you able to share about how the Word has been working and transforming in your life? Not trying to guilt people here, but I'm trying to get you to do what Christ wants for his hearers, examine what role does the Word of God have in your life. What value do you give the Word of God in your life?

### **The Word of God must take root**

- As I mentioned earlier, there are some seeds that fell on the rocks. They weren't directly on the rocks, but it was like a rocky soil. There's a layer of soil and then rocks directly underneath this thin layer of soil. So the seed is able to grow but it's not able to build any root.
- When I was in high school, we lived at the end of a cul-de-sac. At the end, it was slightly curved. I mention that because one night, as I was going to sleep, I hear this car racing down the street. All of a sudden, I hear the tired screech and the car ends up hitting a tree. My guess is that he was going down the street so fast, he didn't see that the street ended because of the curve and ended up in the tree. In the morning, the car was still there and I went out to go look at it. The car hit a tree directly in the middle. The whole engine bay was a V and the tree was still standing. The car may have shaved of some of the layers but the tree was still intact. It was still standing.
- I think you know what I'm about to say. It was because of the tree's roots that helped the tree stay up against a car moving at least 30-40mph. If the tree had been a baby or

a younger tree, the car would have ran right over it and into the house. But it didn't. It didn't budge.

- In the same way, The Word of God must take root in our lives and not how we feel, or some sort of excitement we get from Christianity, like the passage says, received in Joy.
- I see this happen a lot in Youth Ministry. Especially with camp...which is right around the corner. Through the years at camp, we have begun to move away from the BIG last night of camp. We began to move away from having 15 response songs on the last night, and then have the speaker go up afterwards to ask if anyone to receive Jesus. Few of the years recently, instead of an altar call, or at least an immediate altar call after the message and music, We ask students to go out by themselves around the meeting hall and just listen. Listen to the Spirit. Listen for the voice of God, by yourself. Alone. In the quietness of the woods. After ten minutes or so, we call them back in and then proceed with an altar call.
- Our hope is that students don't rest on emotion. Don't feed on their feelings.
- Another way I try to challenge our students is to not form your convictions and beliefs on your feelings or experience, but on the Word of God. One of the harder doctrines students have a hard time figuring out is free-will and predestination. Many times, if a student says they believe in free-will, they will say that it's because predestination is just unfair, and they don't like it. It doesn't feel good. To which, I say, I agree. But I will then follow up and say, "Sure, you can believe in free will. But can you tell me what the Bible teaches me about it? Or can you tell me what the Bible teaches about predestination? I can agree to disagree with you if you can come to me with biblical arguments." My hope for the student is not to believe in free will or predestination, my hope for the student is to know and have convictions built from The Word of God, not on some feeling.

### **The Word of God must be preeminent**

- It was difficult to find a word to use for my outline, but you can take preeminent to mean that the Word of God must be the only thing in your life, it must be the greatest thing. Because we see in this third soil that Jesus talks about the seed lands among thorns. The important thing we need to see here is in 8:14, The ones who hear the word of God gets choked. In the context of the farmer, the seed grows but then it needs to fight for nutrients. It doesn't receive what it needs to grow because the weeds have taken all the nutrients away and kills what the farmer is trying to grow. So in the same way, Jesus says, the one who hears the Word of God, they are choked by the cares, riches, and pleasures of life.
- Last week I spoke to the students about the parable of the hidden treasure. The parable reads: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." To explain the passage, I used this example. This parable applies to the poor and especially the rich. Because as a young couple, there's not much that we have accumulated in life. And if God were to say, hey go and sell all you have, that's somewhat easy to do. Probably even easier for a college kid. All you have is a box of ramen.

- But I was thinking, What if I were as rich as the owner of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, and had just as much as he has in life. In the parable of the Kingdom of God, it doesn't discriminate between the poor and rich. To the poor, the Kingdom of God's value is more than all you have. To the Rich, the Kingdom of God's value is way more than what you have. That's what the parable is saying. The Kingdom's value is more than ALL your possessions you have in your life.
- I told the students, it's not wrong to be rich. There a lot of rich people in here. It's not a bad thing to have money. But it becomes dangerous when you begin to see more value in the things in life that you have. It's dangerous when you don't see the value of the Kingdom of God. Why? Because if you value the things that you have, the things in this world...like in the parable...CARES, RICHES, and PLEASURES, then you wouldn't give it up for the Kingdom of God. If you won't give it up for the Kingdom of that, that means you're giving your time, your energy, your focus, your pursuits to the cares, riches, and pleasures of the world. It will choke the time that you give to your pursuit of the Kingdom of God and the Word of God. The Word of God cannot be one of the many pursuits in life. You can't have the Word of God in one hand and the Cares, riches, and pleasure of the Word in the other. If you do, you're going to drop the Word of God. The Word of God must be the only thing. It must be the greatest thing. The Word of God must be preeminent.

### **The Word of God must bear fruit**

- The Word goes out and lands in the good soil and in the parable, it grew and yielded a hundredfold. In Jesus' explanation, the seed grows because something happened. It says, they are those who hold fast in an honest and good heart.
- When is the last time you were convicted of something from either your own personal study of the Word, preaching of the word, or maybe in Sunday School class? We have to be honest about where we are. We have to be honest about our struggles. We need to be honest about our sin when we encounter the Word of God. When God points to certain area in your life he wants to deal with, you can't hide it and ignore God's work. When our hearts hold onto the word of God, it should expose our hearts. When our hearts are exposed to the Word of God, the Word of God exposes our sins and convicts us.
- We cannot be dodging the Word of God, letting it go in one year and out the other, or dismiss the Word if starts to do the hard work in our life, or valuing the things of the world so much that we don't want to deal with the sin in our life. We have to be honest when we hear the word of God. The Word of God can only bear fruit in your life if it is allowed to do work in your life.
- To help us understand a little more, I'll ask the question: What is this fruit in your life? If we read on, the next parable, I believe they are connected, Jesus says, no one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light." Jesus is saying, you have the Gospel, now you can't do anything but to live it, breath it, share it, proclaim it. If you don't, you aren't living out your purpose. Like the parable, you don't light a candle and cover it up. That defeats the purpose. If you aren't proclaiming and living for the Gospel, that defeats the purpose of the work of God's word in your life. Defeats the purpose of

your salvation. Our fruit is being able to proclaim the Gospel, to proclaim the secrets of the Kingdom of God, in order to drive back the darkness and dark areas of sin. The same exact thing that happens in our life when we encounter the Word of God, the sin gets exposed and pushed back.

#### Conclusion

- As Jesus says in 8:18: Take care then how you hear. We must be careful with how we listen to the Word of God. We cannot be like the crowds to follow Jesus because we want the good stuff from Jesus, we must pursue Christ Himself. He is challenging all who follow after Him to listen intently to all that He has to say so that you don't miss the secrets of the Kingdom of God.