

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
3RD-5TH GRADE
TEACHER'S PACKET

SUNDAY MORNING

Study 11

The Parable of the Sower



The Parable of the Sower

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will both demonstrate the importance of responding to the Word of God and explain the use and meaning of parables in Jesus' ministry.

Key Verses

Luke 8:4-21—Main Teaching Passage
James 1:22-25

Memory Verse - James 1:22

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Ask the class if any of them have ever heard the story of the tortoise and the hare (you can substitute this with any other story with a moral). Have someone briefly explain what the story is about. Ask if anyone knows the lesson of the story.

Just like the tortoise and the hare, Jesus' stories often were more than just stories. He told stories with lessons called "parables." Today we are going to study one of His first parables.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Today's story introduces the first of many parables Jesus would tell during his earthly ministry. The story describes a sower who goes out to plant seeds. Some of these seeds fall away by mistake and are taken away by birds. Other seeds fell on rocky soil and, because they could not grow roots, they died. Another group of seeds fell on thorny soil, and as the plants grew, the thorns choked them and they died. Finally, there were some seeds that fell on good soil and produced fruit.

When the disciples asked Jesus to explain this story, He told them that while they were permitted to know what this story meant, others would not be able to understand. He then explained that the seed represents the Word of God. The first soil represents those who hear the Word and Satan immediately takes it away. The second group is those who hear the Word and initially receive it with joy, but have no root and fall away in times of temptations. The thorny soil represents those who allowed the cares of this world to choke out God's Word. The final soil is the people who hear the Word and do it.

Jesus then explained using another parable that all those who have heard the Word have a responsibility to keep it. He says that just as someone with a light will put the light somewhere that it can be visible and effective, we ought also to manifest the truth we have been given. Those who are able to obey the Word will be blessed, but those who fail to keep the Word will face consequences. Later, Jesus' mother and brothers try to come and see Jesus, but they are unable to get to Him because of the crowds. When someone from the crowd tries to tell Jesus that His mother and brothers are looking for Him, Jesus responds by saying that His true mother and brothers are those who both hear His Word and do it.

The interpretation/
exegesis of the passage.
What does this passage
mean? How does this
passage apply to my
life?

LOOK

One of the most common teaching devices Jesus uses in the Gospel of Luke is parables. Therefore, if we are to go through this book, it is key that we understand how they are used and why. Parables are stories with a message. Often, the characters, settings, and objects in the story represent people and things in real life. In this story, for example, the different soils represent groups of people and the seeds represent the Word of God. However, we must be careful not to overanalyze the various elements in the parable. Not every detail of the parable necessarily represents something. Jesus used these parables to conceal His message from unbelievers and reveal it to believers. That is why He privately

LOOK (Continued)

explained the meaning to his disciples only, not the rest of the crowd.

All of the parts of today's story ultimately boil down to one message: we need to obey God's Word and do what it says. The problem with the first three soils is not that they received no seed, but that they did not allow the seed to grow. Whether it is due to Satan, trials and temptations, or the cares of this world, most people do not respond to the Word of God in obedience. As the parable of the light shows, we who have received God's Word have an obligation to follow it. We all will be punished or rewarded for our response to God's Word. For those who do hear the Word and do it, we learn that Jesus calls them His true family. That is certainly a title we should all strive for. In James 1:22-25, Jesus' earthly brother James clearly shows that he took this message to heart when he exhorts us to be doers of the Word and not just hearers.

All of us who have been around a church for any length of time have no excuse. All of us have received the "seed" of the Word of God. None of us can claim that we did not get a chance to be hearers. It is up to us to respond by being doers of God's Word. How can we do that? First, we need to be familiar with the Bible and what it says. That means regularly reading the Bible on our own, with our families, and in church. Second, we should purpose in our heart to be doers of the Word. Finally, we must pray and ask God to give us the power to be doers. Without prayer asking God for help, we don't stand a chance at being doers of God's Word. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to obey what God's Word says. Of course, all of this is only possible if we have asked Christ to be our Lord. If anyone has not done that, now might be a good time to invite them to do so.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize James 1:22.

Ask the students to explain the difference between a hearer of God's Word and a doer. Go through the four soils again and have students explain what each one means.

Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit for help to be doers of the Word. Thank the Lord for giving us His Word so that we know how to live our lives.

Parent Question: How can we be doers of the Word rather than just hearers?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Luke 8:4-21 by David Guzik

2. (4-8) The parable of the soils.

And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

a. **He spoke by a parable:** The word **parable** comes from the idea of "to set along side." As Jesus used parables, it means to set a spiritual truth along side a daily truth of living.

b. **A sower went out to sow his seed:** In this parable, Jesus described something they were all familiar with—a farmer casting seed on the ground, and the seed falling on different types of soil.

i. Why wouldn't the farmer only cast seed on good soil? Some fell on the pathway by accident (**some fell by the wayside**), but most of the seed was sown on ground that was plowed *after* the seed was cast. Therefore, you didn't know where rocks were or where thorns might grow.

c. The seed fell on three areas without lasting success: on the pathway (**the wayside**), on the rocky ground (**on rock**), and on the thorny ground (**among thorns**). But some of the seed fell on **good ground**.

d. Though this is commonly called *the parable of the sower*, it should really be called *the parable of the soils*. The difference is never the *seed*, but on the kind of *soil* it lands on.

3. (9-10) The purpose of parables.

Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is given* in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'"

a. **To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables:** As Jesus used them, parables were more like puzzles or riddles than illustrations. Only those who had the right "key" could understand them. The disciples, who wanted the things of God, were **given to know the mysteries of the kingdom**—they could be spoken to plainly. But often, others were taught **in parables**.

i. **The mysteries of the kingdom of God:** In the Bible, a *mystery* isn't something you can't figure out. It is something that you would never know unless God revealed it to you. In the Biblical sense of the idea, you may know exactly what a mystery is, yet it is still a mystery, because you would not have known unless God

revealed it.

b. **Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand:** By quoting this passage from [Isaiah 6:9](#), Jesus explained that He offered His hearers the opportunity to dig deep and find the truth, or to turn a blind eye to an interesting story. This would avoid a greater condemnation for having rejected a clearly understood truth.

i. "So, that their guilt may not accumulate, the Lord no longer addresses them directly in explicit teachings during the period immediately preceding His crucifixion, but in parables." (Geldenhuys)

c. In light of this, how blessed are those who *do* understand the parables of Jesus. Not only do they gain the benefit of the spiritual truth illustrated they also display some measure of responsiveness to the Holy Spirit.

4. (11-15) Jesus explains the parable.

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock *are those* who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones *that* fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones *that* fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience."

a. **The seed is the word of God:** [1 Peter 1:23](#) says that we have *been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.*

i. The natural tendency is for the audience to critique the preacher. But here, Jesus the preacher is critiquing His audience. How they will hear is the issue.

b. **Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved:** Some people are like the ground on the pathway. They allow no room for the seed of the word in their lives-it never enters.

i. This is Satan's preferred result. His desire is that the word take no place in a person's life, so they do not run the "risk" of being fruitful to God.

c. **But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away:** Some people are like the ground that is rocky, but covered with a thin layer of topsoil. They receive the seed of the word with a flash of enthusiasm that quickly burns out.

d. **Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity:** Some people are like the seed that fell among the thorns. They receive the word but allow the interests and cares of this world choke it out.

e. **The ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience:** Some people are like the good ground, and receive the word with a good and noble heart. They **keep** the word, and thus bear fruit, thus fulfilling the purpose of the seed.

f. These four categories apply to those who hear the gospel of salvation, but they also apply to those who are already saved who continually hear the word of God. How do you hear it?

- Do you let Satan take it right away?
- Do you take it but then immediately ignore it?
- Do you allow the cares of this world to make your hearing of the word of no effect?
- Do you keep the word and see it bear fruit in your life?

B. The responsibility of those who receive the word.

1. (16-17) They are responsible to expose and publish the truth-that is, the word of God.

"No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts *it* under a bed, but sets *it* on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor *anything* hidden that will not be known and come to light."

a. **No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand:** Truth, by its nature was meant to be revealed; and God promises that it will be.

b. **That those who enter may see the light:** If you have the truth of God, you have a solemn responsibility to spread that truth in whatever way God gives you opportunity, even as someone who has the cure for a life-threatening disease has the moral responsibility to spread that cure. God didn't light your lamp so that it would be hidden.

i. One must either spread the word itself, or spread the influence of God's word by bringing others to a place where they will hear it; and you really should be doing both.

2. (18) When we hear the word, we become accountable; so we must take care how we hear.

"Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him *more* will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."

a. **For whoever has, to him more will be given:** Jesus reminds us that spiritual growth follows momentum, positive or negative - when we have the godly habits of receiving the word and living it, more is built on to that. When we lose those godly habits, they are extremely difficult to get back.

b. **Therefore take heed how you hear:** If we want to hear more from God, we must obey what we have already heard.

3. (19-21) We show that we are close to Jesus by hearing and obeying His word.

Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. And it was told Him *by some*, who said, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You." But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

a. **Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd:** We might have expected that Jesus' family would have special privileges before Him; it almost surprises us that they do not.

b. **My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it:** Jesus indicates that His closest family is made up of those who hear and obey God's word. How can I draw close to God? By hearing His word and doing it. You can pray or sing or fast all day long, but if you are not hearing His word and doing

it, you are not really drawing close to God.

c. **Brothers ... brothers ... brothers:** Jesus plainly had many brothers and sisters. The Roman Catholic idea of the perpetual virginity of Mary contradicts the plain meaning of the Bible.

i. The brothers of Jesus never seemed to be supportive of His ministry before His death and resurrection (John 7:5, Mark 3:21).