

Parable Of The Sower

Luke 8:4-18

MEMORY VERSE

LUKE 8:18

"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."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

As many Styrofoam cups with good soil and seeds, Saran Wrap and rubber-bands, as the number of children in your class.

Four pans illustrating the different types of soil from Luke 8:5-8a; one with hard soil, one with rocky soil, one with weedy soil, and one with good, rich soil.

A flashlight or small lamp and a bucket or box.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Sowing Seeds

Fill as many Styrofoam cups as the number of children in your class with good soil. Give a few seeds to each child in your class and show them how to plant and water them.

Tell each student that they will take their cup home, and if they water it and give it plenty of sunlight, the seed will sprout and grow into a beautiful plant.

Be sure to cover each cup with Saran Wrap and a rubber-band for clean transportation.

LESSON TIME!

Today we will be learning the Parable of the Sower. It is an interesting story that Jesus told to a multitude of people who were following Him. In it we are going to learn a lot of things about listening to and receiving God's Word. It is very important that we not only hear God's Word but also let it sink deep into our hearts. **We need to prepare our hearts to receive God's Word.**

LUKE 8:4

And when a great multitude had gathered, and others had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable:

A parable is a story that uses an everyday experience to teach a spiritual truth. Jesus tells the crowd of people the parable of the sower. Jesus had a huge crowd following Him, but they were following Him for all the wrong reasons. They were following Him for the benefits He could provide for them, not for His message of forgiveness and salvation.

We are going to learn, as important as it is for us to follow Jesus, we need to make sure that we are following Him for the right reasons. There are different things in this world that will try to distract us from a close relationship with Jesus. We need to be careful to keep our focus on Him. **We need to prepare our hearts to receive God's Word.**

The Soils

Before class, prepare four pans with four different kinds of soil illustrating verses 5-8a. Make one pan a solid hard soil (this can be done by letting mud harden), make another pan full of rocks, make another full of weeds and finally make the last full of good, rich soil.

Show your class each pan as it corresponds with the verse you read below as an illustration.

LUKE 8:5-8a

"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!"

We are first introduced in our story to the sower, and we are told that he went out to sow (or plant) his seed. We see that he sowed his seed in many different places. When farmers would plant their seeds they would scatter the seed. Sometimes the seed would fall on bad soil and not grow. We see that some seed fell by the wayside, or a busy road, and some fell on rocky soil. Other seed fell among thorns. Finally, we see that some fell on good ground.

The sower and the seed remain the same throughout the story; nothing changes. The only difference in the story is the type of ground that the seed falls on. This is important and will be explained as we go along. **We need to prepare our hearts to receive God's Word.**

G. Campbell Morgan explains, "The expression concerning the sower implies that the sower did not sow near his own house, or in a garden fenced or walled, for such a field does not furnish all the

basis of the parable. There are neither roads, nor thorns, nor stony places in such lots. He must go forth into the open country as these have done where there are no fences; where the path passes through cultivated land; where thorns grow in clumps all around; where the rocks peep out in places through the scanty soil and where also, hard by, are patches extremely fertile."

Who is the sower? We are not told here in Luke, but in Matthew 13:37 Jesus said, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man..." From this we know He is talking about Himself. The seed is the Word of God. So we know God's Word is being sown all over the world. But what kinds of soils are receiving His it? **We need to prepare our hearts to receive God's Word.**

LUKE 8:8b-10

When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

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.'

We see here that Jesus cried out. This is the same Greek word, "phoneo," which Luke uses to describe the cry of the Lord at the close of His sufferings on the cross. Jesus wanted the people to hear His words of life; He cried out for the people to hear Him with listening hearts.

The disciples questioned Him on the meaning of the parable. In Matthew 13:14-16, Jesus said, "Therefore I speak to them in parable, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do to hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah

is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the heart of this people has grown dull.' Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their heart and turn, so that I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear."

We see that a parable both conceals and reveals. To the one who is seeking the truth, it reveals great truth, but to the one who is not seeking, it keeps that truth hidden. Jesus was sifting through the multitude that had come to Him only to satisfy their selfish needs. Jesus was reaching out to those who truly wanted to follow Him. The disciples sought the truth, and they were given the understanding of the parable.

LUKE 8:11

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God."

Since Jesus is the sower, we can rest assured that the seed is always good seed. The Word of God is always good. It is the soil, the condition of our hearts, that makes the difference. We either keep the Word of God or we do not.

God's Word is continually going forth. There are many ways that God's Word is communicated: by reading the Bible, going to church, talking about Jesus with your family and friends, etc. The Bible says that His Word is powerful; it has the message of salvation and can help us to become more like Jesus. But what is most important is the condition of our hearts as we receive God's Word. **We need to prepare our hearts to receive God's Word.**

The Soils

Use the soil pans that you prepared for verses 5-8a again.

LUKE 8:12

"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."

Here we see a heart with hard soil, which is unresponsive. The seed cannot even begin to take root in such a hard soil. The devil is a subtle enemy; he makes it his business to try to hinder the work of God in our lives. He takes the Word out of the hearts of careless hearers, lest they should believe and be saved. We cannot be saved unless we believe, and the devil does all he can to keep us from believing.

LUKE 8:13

"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."

Here we see a heart that receives the Word, but only for a short time. This person is one with a shallow or emotional heart. He endures only for a short time, and when the trials come along he gives up. This is the person who has never submitted their will to God or rooted himself or herself in His Word, making their soil unproductive, too shallow and thin to support the growth of a Christian life.

LUKE 8:14

"And 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."

This heart has heard the Word but allows the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches to choke it out. This is a heart that is too full of things to leave room for God. Material riches can be dangerous to our life with the Lord and our ability to hear and obey Him. The seed began to grow in this heart, but the soil was not worked properly. It was full of thorns making it destructive. We need to be careful that our heart is not too full for God to fit inside of us. Remember, He deserves to be first in our hearts.

LUKE 8:15

"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."

This is an honest heart, ready to receive instruction and obey. Fruit comes from perseverance and patience in our lives. This heart hears the Word, understands it, receives it, and keeps it, just as the good soil receives and keeps the seed. The good soil is the heart that wants to hear and grow in the Lord. It wants only His way. **We need to prepare our hearts to receive God's Word.**

LUKE 8:16

"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."

When we are actively preparing our hearts to hear from God and receiving His Word, we too can shine Christ's light for everyone to see. We are called to be lights in a dark world; that stewardship is a privilege and a responsibility. We have been entrusted with the Word of life so that our lives might shine before men. Jesus wants us to be lights to those who stumble in the darkness that they may find the truth of His love, mercy and grace.

“Hide It Under A Bushel? NO!”

Bring a flashlight or a small lamp and a bucket or box. Light the flashlight or lamp, and cover it with the bucket or box. Turn off the lights in the class, and tell the children to move around the class.

Remove the bucket or box from the light, and have them move around the class again. Ask the children to describe the difference of walking in the dark vs. walking in the light. Which did they feel safer and more comfortable with?

Explain that our lives are to be lights to a dark world. The light of Jesus in our lives should be noticeable to those around us.

LUKE 8:17

"For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light."

In the end, the truth about every heart will be known. Nothing is hidden from God. May it be our prayer that we are good keepers of His Word, proclaiming the good news of the gospel to the whole world.

LUKE 8:18

"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."

Jesus gave them many truths and urged them to listen. We must be careful how we hear the Word of God. The majority of these people were not coming to Jesus with an honest heart. Did you know that you can hear something and not really be listening? That is what happened to these people.

Telephone

Lead the children in a game of telephone. Write a message on a piece of paper, and whisper it into the ear of the first child. Have each child whisper the message to the next until the last child recites it to the class.

This message will inevitably be different. Explain to the class how easy it is to not hear things properly or completely.

You could listen to all the words of Jesus but not hear them if you do not open your heart to what He is saying and obey Him. Those who really hear are the ones who desire to find truth because Jesus is truth. The heart that is made of good soil is the heart that tells the Lord it wants to not only listen to His word but obey it, a heart that wants to be made more like Jesus. **We need to prepare our hearts to receive God's Word.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer asking the Lord to make them careful hearers of His Word, allowing Jesus to change them according to His will. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.