

Sower, Seed, and Soil

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into the parable of the sower from Luke 8, emphasizing the importance of the condition of our hearts in receiving and nurturing the Word of God. It highlights the different types of soil representing various responses to the Word, such as the wayside, rocky ground, thorny soil, and good ground. The sermon stresses the need for a soft, teachable heart to allow the Word to take root, grow, and bear fruit, urging listeners to guard against distractions, cares of the world, and shallow faith that hinder spiritual growth.

Scripture: Luke 8:5, Luke 8:11, Luke 8:13, Luke 8:14, Luke 8:15, Acts 17:11, 1 Corinthians 3:6, Psalm 119:11, James 1:21, Matthew 13:23

Topics: "Heart Condition", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

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Transcript

Please turn with me to the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 8, Luke, chapter 8, and I'm going to skip over some verses this evening and come back to them next week, simply because I can't deal with all of them at the same time, and I felt rather to deal with the parable of the sower this evening, and then to come back to the first four verses, and also verses 9 and 10 next week, and then that ties up with verse 16. So just remember that I'm going to be jumping around a little. So let's read from Luke 8, from verse 1. Now it came to pass afterward that he went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.

And the twelve were with him. And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Johanna, the wife of Cusa, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for him from their substance. And when a great multitude had gathered, they came to him from every city.

He spoke 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. 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 of it is given in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this.

The sower, 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.

And so Jesus tells them a parable at the end of verse 4, which we'll deal with next week. But a parable is a parallel story. You can maybe remember the sound, a parable and a parallel.

So the parable has a parallel story. Parables are very difficult to interpret. They are probably, of all of Scripture, right up there with prophecy, one of the most difficult things to interpret, and an amazing amount of heresy and nonsense comes out of the interpretation of the parables.

So we have to be careful how we interpret them, and we're going to speak about that this evening. This parable is easy, because Jesus gives the interpretation of the parable. He doesn't give it to everyone who is listening.

He only gives it to His disciples. We'll talk about that next week. And so what I'm going to do is I'm going to take each of these, the parable and the interpretation, step by step.

So we're going to jump around. So we're first in verse 5, and then we're going to jump to, I think, verse 11. So you can follow on the screen or follow in your Bible.

So the story of a sower, obviously this is something that they all understood. It was something they saw every day. Many of us here, maybe the young people who grew up in the city here, may have never seen a sower going out to sow.

Today, of course, we sow with machines. Those days they sowed by hand. When I grew up on the farm, my father couldn't afford a machine to sow.

So he sowed just in exactly the same way, with a bucket under your arm, and you scatter the seed. And it's quite a tricky thing because you need to get even distribution, not too much in some places, not too little in other places. It's a skill that a farmer learns.

And so the sower goes out and he sows. But in the process, the seed doesn't all fall in the right place. If you're working with a machine, well, the machine goes straight down the line and everything is put in the right place and you don't get anything on the roadside or in places that are not beneficial.

In fact, these days, the machines are satellite controlled so that there are areas in the field where it is rocky and it will not sow those areas or it will sow less in those areas and more in other areas. But the sower here doesn't have any control over where he's sowing, whether it's good soil or bad soil. And so he 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. Now, he doesn't on purpose sow on the wayside, and again, we have a problem with these pictures because when we speak about a wayside, we think of a paved road like the ones on either side of the property here. No, this was just a footpath.

And it's a footpath that obviously took a shortcut through the field. He's not going to go and sow out there on the road where the carriages and the wagons and so on ride. Now, the purpose or the problem with the footpath is that it is hard, it is compact.

In Africa, we see these all the time. People walk from one village to the other and they very quickly begin to make a path. And the path is compacted, not with a fancy big machine, but just with the weight of traffic, just people walking up and down, compact the soil and nothing grows on it.

And I've seen places where a fence was put up and the path was closed. But for three, four, five years later, still nothing will grow because the soil is too hard. The seed can't penetrate and get into the soil, and so it just lies on the top and the birds come and they snatch it away.

And so verse 11, he says, now the parable is this, the seed is the word of God. The seed is the word of God. Now, you'll see that later on he speaks about the fact that they receive or don't receive the word that they might be saved.

I don't believe that this applies only to the gospel. It does apply to the gospel and the preaching of the gospel. But he is not saying the seed is the gospel, he's saying the seed is the word of God.

In other words, every time the word of God is preached, like tonight, it is going to fall on different kinds of soil. And each one of us represents those different kinds of soil. There may be those tonight here who are like the wayside.

And so in verse 12 he says, those who by the wayside are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. So the problem is, how does the bird get to the seed? Because the seed didn't penetrate. The seed didn't get into the heart.

The seed was just lying on the surface. The hardness of the road is a result, as I said, of traffic, of foot traffic. People's hearts are hard because of traffic upon their hearts.

The things they're listening to, the things they're watching, the things they're concerned about, the things that they involve their lives with, the things they think about when they wake up at night. These are the things that compact the soil of our hearts, make our hearts hard and resistant to the penetration of the word of God. So the seed cannot fall in and get into the soil where it can be protected and germinate and begin to grow.

And so I believe that there is a warning, and we say, well, you know, I'm not this one. Well, there's a sense in which every one of us could be this one. And sometimes we may be one, and then another time we may be a different one.

And so it's important for us that, and particularly when we come together on Saturday night now and not Sunday, it's one of the problems of Saturday, is because we're all doing whatever we're doing all day Saturday. We're working in the yard, or we're working, Simon's working at his job. We're doing all of our stuff, and then we come out of that, and hopefully we have a shower and we spend a little, and we come.

But our minds are still going with all the stuff that we've been doing today, the projects that we didn't quite finish, and so on. And so we're not ready to receive the word. And I've spoken to you, I've mentioned to you before that when I was growing up, as I grew up in church, I would see people come into the service, and they would sit down and they would pray.

And I asked my mother, what are they praying about? And she said they're praying that their hearts may be ready to receive the word of God. And so they spend a few minutes, maybe longer, just stilling their hearts so that their hearts are ready, and not compact and hard by the stuff that they have to deal with out there. And so it's important that we come to the word of God, whether it's coming to the preaching of the word of God, or whether it's to reading the word of God in your private devotions, that you come with a heart that is ready to receive the word, that is still, that is quiet, that there's not this traffic of thoughts and ideas and worries and cares and concerns and things flowing through our minds, so that the word cannot get into our hearts.

And then the next thing that happens is the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. Well, the devil is very good at this, because he knows the power of the word of God. Now, one of the things that's important for us before we speak about the devil is that the seed is super powerful.

It is the word of God. The word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. And it is able to penetrate into the very depths of our beings.

And so the word of God is able to transform lives. It is incredibly powerful. Seed is the same thing.

Seed is incredibly powerful. And I think when we dealt with this passage in Matthew, probably 10, 15 years ago, I spoke about a rock which I used to visit in the mountains in South Africa when I would hike. And this rock was as high as this building, 70 feet high and probably as wide as this building.

But it was split right down the middle. And what had happened is that a seed had grown, had fallen into a little crack. And the seed began to grow.

And the seed began to split that rock. And now that tree grows out of the rock and the rock is split about that far wide as the tree grew in and just pushed that. That is the power of the seed.

That is the power of the word of God. But if the seed does not get a chance to germinate, it will remain dormant. It will not be able to do anything.

It will not grow at all. When you hike up in the mountains here in early spring, the native bushes here, some of them shed thousands and thousands and thousands of seed. And it wasn't this year, but last year I remember sitting down on the side of the pass and I was just watching and it was just covered with thousands of seeds.

Every one of those are powerful, but very few of them will actually germinate. Because the conditions are not right. The soil is too hard.

The birds will eat them up before they're able to grow. But if they do grow, they will be able to withstand our droughts. They will be able to survive through, because they start growing at the beginning of summer, they'll start germinating and they'll go right through the hot summer and they'll grow in the winter and they go from one year to the other.

Folks, the word of God is incredibly powerful, but it is ineffectual when it falls in the wrong place. The same word that can transform the life of the person next to you will do nothing for you if you don't allow it to get into your life, to get into your heart. And the devil knows this.

And so he's going to do absolutely everything he can to snatch that word away. Sometimes he even does it right in the middle of the meeting. And it's particularly hard here where we're outside and there's all the noise and stuff going on.

And in this respect, I am a conspiracy theorist. I believe that the devil can cause the fire engine to come by at a particularly critical moment in the service. Children begin to create a scene at critical junctures.

Now I'm not saying the devil's... Sometimes I think he is, but I'm not saying the devil's inside the children. But he knows how to distract them. And the parent's focus is on the child, and the seed has been snatched away, and it's achieved absolutely nothing.

We must guard the seed. We go out of here, and we go home, and particularly on a Saturday evening, and we turn on the television, and we watch whatever it is, some scary movie. The seed is gone.

That whole night, you wake up in the middle of the night, and even if you don't wake up, these thoughts go through your mind. Folks, we must guard the seed. We must guard the Word of God, and allow it to penetrate, and allow it to germinate, and to begin to grow in our hearts and in our lives.

All right, so the next one in verse 6, "...some fell on rock, and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture." Matthew says that it withered because it had no depth of soil, which is really the same thing. If you go and scratch in the soil here, if you dig deep enough, I'm sure Jason will confirm this, you'll find damp soil. But right on the top, it's dry.

But if you go deep enough, there's still dampness left from rain three months, four months ago, whenever it last rained. And so the problem with a rocky soil is that the seed can't get down to where the water is. It's shallow.

And because it is shallow, it burns up when the heat comes. In fact, the book of Matthew, of the same parable, speaks about the heat of the sun. When Inna and I, at one of the places we lived in Pretoria, in South Africa, we had a big lawn in the backyard.

And I very soon discovered that when it rains, and we don't use sprinklers much there like here, that when it starts getting hot, big patches of the lawn would just die. And I couldn't understand what was going on, and so I began to dig. And I discovered that the soil was only a few inches deep, and there were these massive dolomite rocks underneath the soil.

And so I made huge fires with coal and wood to crack these rocks. I'd burn the fire all night and then pour water on the next morning and get a few more inches of soil to be able to get the lawn to grow. But, folks, the same thing is true of us.

The seed can fall, the word can fall into your heart, and it can germinate. Notice the first seed doesn't germinate. It can germinate, and it can begin to grow.

But because there's no depths, the moment there's a problem, and let me get to the interpretation of verse 13, 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 the time of temptation they fall away. The word temptation here is the same word for trial. The intention here is not so much temptation in the sense of being tempted to sin, but it's really a trial, a difficulty, a hard time.

And so when the hard times come, the seed withers up, and it doesn't continue to grow. And that's very true. And that's very true of the time in which we're living, because we're going through difficult times.

People are going through all sorts of trials in their jobs, in their finances, and in their health, and in their families. If the seed is rooted deep, it will endure the trials. Remember the psalm speaks about the man who's planted by the waters, whose leaf doesn't fade and wither.

And so many Christians receive the word with joy. Oh, that's great, brother. That's wonderful.

But there's no depth to it, because they are shallow. Their walk with God is shallow. Their understanding of the scripture is shallow.

And so it's unable to really grab hold in their lives and to really produce fruit. And so it's no good saying, well, what we need to do is plough up the fallow ground. We need to dig around in our hearts and get our hearts ready when we come to the meeting and we receive the word.

But if we don't guard our hearts from these things that will kill the word, the word will achieve nothing. And we know, we see this happening oftentimes. We see this with unbelievers who come, and they'll hear the gospel, and they're all excited, and it's all great and wonderful, and they want to get saved, they want to get baptized, they want to get all of these things, and then a few months later, it's all gone.

It's all disappeared. The same with believers who hear the word of God on a particular issue in their lives, and they're all going out to fix the problem, to do whatever the word calls them to do. And they say, yeah, I'm going to pray more faithfully.

But come Monday morning, and the pressures of the job and the pressures of life begin to mount, and nothing happens. It's easy to make resolutions. I've spoken about this many times, to make resolutions under the pressure of the preacher.

But when we get out there in the real world, it doesn't really stick, because there's no depth. It's a shallow experience, it's a shallow walk with God. Now, the next group is interesting.

Some fell among thorns, and the thorn sprang up with it and choked it. So this one is interesting because of two things. The first is because the soil is good.

There's nothing wrong with the soil, but the problem is that there are weeds, thorns, and briars that choke the word. Sorry. So if we go to the interpretation, verse 14.

Now, the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and the pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. Now, here's an aspect which is both in Matthew and in Luke, and I've never heard a preacher speak on this. I don't know why not.

But this seed does not die. The first seed doesn't even germinate. The second one germinates, begins to grow, and dies.

This seed continues to grow. But what's the problem? It is fruitless. It is all leaves.

It is all show. But there is no fruit to the life. And it's because of these things that choke it.

At one time, we had an office in town in South Africa, and someone had given us a whole bunch of dahlia bulbs. I don't know if you know what dahlias are, but they're beautiful flowers, and they grow from tubers or from bulbs, and they multiply. And so when people dig them up and replant them the next year, they cut them all off, and they give you some.

And so I put them out there. I planted them near the – and our office building was between two – it was an old vintage house between two very tall buildings. And I planted them, and I watered them, and they did wonderfully.

I took some home, and I planted some at home also. The ones at home didn't do so good. They grew to about like that.

The ones in the office, they grew taller than me, six foot, seven foot. And then the ones at home began to flower, beautiful flowers. But the ones at the office didn't flower.

And they never flowered. End of the season came, and they died. Why? Because they didn't get enough sunlight.

They were choked. And that's what the weeds do that Jesus is talking about here. The weeds choke the seed so the seed doesn't get sunlight, and it becomes unfruitful.

And so I think that this is probably where many Christians fall into this category. We receive the Word. The Word springs up and begins to bear fruit in our lives.

Or begins to grow in our lives. And we may do a good show of growing, but there's never fruit. It's all just leaves.

You remember the fig tree that Jesus came to, and He cursed it because it was just leaves. There was no fruit. And the purpose of a tree is to bear fruit, not just to have a show.

And what are the things that choke the Word? They are cares, riches, and the pleasures of life. And folks, in the Western world today, the biggest enemy of the Word of God is these things. Cares, riches, and the pleasures of life.

Now the first one is legitimate. The next two are not legitimate, and I'll explain. The cares have to do with paying the bills, putting food on the table, doing the dishes, doing our work, doing our job.

These are things that are legitimate. They are proper things. But if we don't keep them in their right place, they will choke the Word.

So even those legitimate stuff in our lives, our friends, our family, our jobs, these things can choke the Word. Now I'm going to speak about the answer to this in a moment. The next thing is riches.

And the New Testament speaks about the problem with riches from two perspectives. The one perspective, the one angle is those who are rich, and they trust in their riches rather than trusting in God. Now I don't think there are many of us here today that fall into that category.

But the other category which we all fall into is those who desire to be rich, who want a better car, a better house, a better whatever. More, more, more, never satisfied. And so what we're thinking about all the time is, what can we buy next? How can I get that thing? And some people even have the problem of now trying to buy bigger houses because they can't accommodate all the stuff that they bought.

And then the pleasures of life, whatever those may be, television, dizzy world, whatever you enjoy doing. There's a place for these things. There's a place for times of recreation and rest.

But when it begins to encroach on the Word, when it begins to choke the Word, it is a problem. So what is the answer? The answer is that a line needs to be drawn. And if you go and watch farmers when they farm, whatever they're farming, strawberries up here, or whatever it is, there's weeds all around.

But there's a line where the weeds need to stop, where the grass and the weeds grow, and then where the crop grows. When you allow the weeds to get into the crop, you have serious problems. Every farmer can tell you the need to draw that line around his field.

And, folk, we need to draw lines in our lives around the Word of God. We need to put up a hedge, as it were. And, yeah, we have our cares, we have our pleasures, we have the things that we do in the life.

But when it comes to the Word of God, those things need to be blocked out. And I need to say, this is where my cares fit in. This is where the Word of God fits in.

Because if we don't do that, we'll find that the weeds will choke the Word. As you know, for a long time, I was bivocational. I had my own business, and I would preach.

And I would work all day, and I would preach every night of the week, traveling to remote areas, preaching the whole week, and also on Sunday, obviously. The problem was that I would get involved in a project, or in a job that I'm doing, and then I discover, oh, I have to leave. Because I have to travel an hour, sometimes two hours, to the next place.

It's time, I have to leave. I haven't spent time in the Word. I haven't spent time in prayer.

And so I learned that one of the things I had to do was that there was a time I had to draw the line, and I would not work beyond that moment. If the job's done, or the job's not done, or if I've got some great ideas, and I'm really on a roll, it doesn't matter. I'm drawing the line.

I need to close my work. I need to open the Word of God. I need to get into prayer, so that I'm ready to minister the Word of God.

That's just a practical illustration, but that's something that every one of us needs to learn and needs to do. I trust you do read your Bible at home. But I know that many people read their Bibles with a television on.

You need to draw that line, because the television is going to encroach on the Word, and the Word will become unfruitful. It will not bring fruit to maturity. Now, this is interesting, and I need to move on, because we need to get done.

But if you look at the last line, and bring no fruit to maturity, why does it say bring no fruit to maturity? Why does it say it doesn't bring any fruit? No, it does bring up fruit, but the fruit doesn't come to fruition. The fruit doesn't swell up and get ripe, and become useful. In fact, the olive trees right here, if you go and look at these olive trees, you'll see that this one particularly has fruit.

But those fruit, most of them will not come to fruition, because we poisoned the trees, so that the fruit will not mature. Otherwise, we have a mess, and we have an insurance risk, and all of those things. Many Christians begin to show evidence for fruit, and the vine dresser comes, and he says, this is good.

This brother, this sister, I can see fruit coming. But unfortunately, the fruit never amounts to anything. The fruit we call, the farmers use the word abort.

The fruit is aborted. The fruit is shed, before it can come to maturity. Focus no good having the flowers, and the blossoms, and the buds, and the little fruit.

Those fruit need to come to maturity, so that those who have ministered to you, may be blessed by it, but that the Lord may be blessed. But above all, that those around us, may be able to come to our lives, and be able to eat of the fruit of our lives. Alright, let's go to verse 8. And this is the good news.

Other 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. I'm going to deal with that part of the verse next week.

So the interpretation, verse 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. So they hear the word, with a noble heart, with the right heart.

I'm not going to analyze that word too much. But if you remember in Acts, there was, it speaks about the Bereans. Paul had gone from Thessalonica, and he goes to Berea.

And it says that they were more noble. Doesn't mean they were noble of birth. It doesn't mean they were royalty.

But they had a more, they had a better approach to the word of God, with their minds. The way that they dealt with the word of God. And so we need to have the right kind of mind, to receive the word of God.

And we've spoken about some of those things. And a good heart. So he's talking about good soil and good heart.

So what makes a good heart? Well what makes good soil? Good soil, is soft soil. Right Jason? It's soft soil. It's plowed up.

It has the nutrients, and it has all the fertilizer, and everything else you need. But essentially it is soft, and the seed can fall in, and the roots can go down deep, and able to grow. And folk, we need soft hearts, when it comes to the word of God.

Because we've been online more, people write all sorts of comments. And I read those comments, because I learn from them, and some of them are interesting. But one of the things that I have discovered, more and more, is that, and it's not because it's new, it's always been there, is that people hear the word, but in fact they have come to the word with a prejudiced mind.

They've made up their mind before they even hear the word. And so that's not a good heart. They may want the word, but it's not a good heart, because they are hard-hearted.

They have preconceived ideas. You'll be amazed about the things that do. One guy wrote yesterday about my goatee, that it's the sign of the devil.

And so he was turned off. He didn't hear the word of God, because he had the wrong heart. He wasn't ready to hear and to receive the word of God.

Just my goatee put him off. And so it's easy for us to have those preconceived ideas that have nothing to do with God or the Scriptures, about the preacher, about the church, about the passage, about whatever it is. And then we don't receive it.

So they come with a good heart. They keep it. They keep it.

Your word have I hidden in my heart, lest I sin against you. The word needs to be received and it needs to be kept. It needs to be cherished so that it can produce fruit.

And it bears fruit. And then the last word was patience. The word patience in the New Testament generally doesn't mean the kind of patience that you need when you're sitting waiting at the traffic light or when you're waiting for your tax refund.

It's not that kind of patience. It's endurance, patiently enduring. And so Peter speaks about this, about the need for us to be like a farmer who patiently waits for the harvest.

Sometimes we get frustrated with ourselves and we say, well I'm not seeing things happen in my life like I want them to happen. I'm not seeing the kind of growth and fruit that I would like to see. And I think it happens to all of us.

But if we have received the word with a noble and good heart, if we have kept it, then let's be patient and allow the word of God to have its impact upon our hearts. When I was at school, I don't know if they do these things at school anymore, I don't know what they learn at school anymore these days, but one of the things you did was you learned about seed. And so you would take a jar and you would put cotton wool, is that what you call it here, cotton wool inside, and you would put beans generally on the side.

And then you would put water in it. And you would be able to see the seed beginning to grow and the root goes down and the leaves come up. But if you're going to pull, and I remember doing this, nothing was happening.

The seed was still absorbing the water, it hadn't begun to shoot, so I pulled it out. And I had a look at it, and I said, no, nothing's happening. Well, maybe, I saw that there were others that, so I scratched the thing.

And obviously, it just died. It didn't grow, because I didn't have patience. If the farmer is going to go to the field and pull up the seed all the time to see what's happening, why is it not growing, why is it not growing, nothing's going to happen.

He needs to allow the seed to grow, and God, by His Spirit, waters the seed, and in due season, at the right time, the seed begins to produce fruit. And so, this is a simple parable, and there is nothing new here tonight. But can we examine ourselves again? How do we receive the Word of God? How do we read the

Word of God? Do we read it just to get through a chapter or whatever you've set yourself, whatever goal you've set for yourself, and let me get through this, let me get it done? Or are you reading with intent to be able to hear what God is saying, treasuring His Word, so that it would begin to grow and produce fruit? Folks, I think that there are a few things that we've spoken about this evening that all of us can do to adjust our lives, so that when we come to hear the Word of God preached, or when we come down to reading the Word of God, we have created the right environment so that the Word can produce fruit in our lives.

You see, the seed is powerful. There's nothing wrong with a seed. Sometimes I plant seeds, and I'm not very good.

I don't have a good track record of planting seeds, especially not here. And I say, well, the seed's bad. And sometimes the seed may be bad.

But when it comes to the Word of God, the seed is perfect. There is nothing wrong with the seed. So if it is not producing fruit in your life, there's only one problem, and that is the soil of your heart.

The seed is good. The water is good, because remember in Corinthians, Paul speaks about the fact that I have planted, and Apollos has watered. God's given the increase.

So God sends the water of His Spirit to cause the seed to grow. But at the end of the day, the quality of the soil determines the crop that comes out. Every one of you here this evening are hearing exactly the same word.

In some lives, it will produce much fruit. In other lives, it will produce absolutely nothing. And as preachers, we say, well, you know, I'm not a very good preacher, because it seems like the Word's not producing what it should do.

No, there's one thing I can't control. I can make sure I prepare, I can make sure I prayed, I can make sure I've done everything the right way, but I can't control the soil into which the Word falls. That's the part you have to play.

But if it's in the right place, it will grow and produce fruit. Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You, Lord, that it is powerful, it is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword.

Lord, that it is able to grow into our lives and spring up to eternal life. Lord, it is able to change us through the power of Your Word and through the power of the Gospel. But Lord, I pray that You'd help us to have good hearts, noble hearts, ready to receive Your Word, teachable.

Lord, so oftentimes we're not teachable. We have our own ideas, and we've made up our minds about things. Help us, Lord, to be open to hear and to understand what You are saying through Your Word, through Your Spirit.

And Lord, that we may guard Your Word, that it might be able to grow and produce fruit. And so, Lord, I pray that You would help us to be good hearers, good soil, into which You are sowing Your Word that produces fruit that will be a blessing to You. I pray this in Jesus' name.

I pray, Lord, that You would be with us as we continue in the baptism now. And, Lord, for those who may be leaving us, I pray that You'd go with them, keep them and bless them, protect them. I ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/a7jZGmfgoY.mp4>
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