

# (Luke) 24 - Chapter 8 & the Sower

by Ed Miller

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*The sermon explores the transition between the Galilean and Judean ministry of Jesus, highlighting the parable of the sower and the miracles in Luke 8, and emphasizing the importance of stewardship and faith.*

**Duration:** 55:06

**Scripture:** Luke 7:36-50, Luke 8:4-56

**Topics:** "Parables"

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## Description

In this sermon, the main message is to be receptive and open to the word of God. The speaker emphasizes the importance of listening carefully and being receptive to the teachings. He also discusses the truth of all ministry, explaining that there will be different types of soil in which the word is received, and not all will be productive. The sermon transitions to Luke chapter eight, where three parables and four miracles are discussed, highlighting the teachings of Jesus. Additionally, the speaker mentions a personal story of a sinner who was forgiven and expressed gratitude towards Jesus.

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## Transcript

Our Father, we thank you again this morning that we can gather in this place and in your name, trusting your Holy Spirit to meet us where we are and focus us in a fresh and living way upon the Lord himself. We thank you for your Bible and for your guidance as we go through it together, guide our meditation and our fellowship together in the Lord. And we just pray that as we look at your Word that we would certainly lay hold of you.

To this end, we give our study unto you in Thanksgiving and we expect that you'll minister to us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Okay, I'll ask you to turn please to chapter 7 again, just as we wrap up chapter 7. In our discussion, we've come to the end of Luke chapter 7. We're discussing this rather large section from 4.19 all the way through chapter 9.50, which we call the Galilean ministry of our Lord. And during this section, we've been emphasizing Christ as the friend of all mankind. The whole book of Luke presents him as the son of all mankind.

But then he sort of breaks it up as the friend of all mankind. And then the next section we'll look at is the teacher of all mankind. In the section where he's the friend, he's a doer.

He's doing miracles and he's helping and he's lifting up the oppressed and so on. And then he moves into teaching and that's where you get your parables and so on. Actually, what we're beginning this morning, we can call the transition between friend of all mankind and teacher of all mankind.

Because now he's winding up his Galilean ministry and he's going to introduce the Judean ministry, which begins in chapter 9. He's still doing, but now he begins to say. And here's where we have the great parable of the sower and so on, that we'll look at this morning. Now before I introduce this transition between the Galilean and the Judean ministry, I want to make one further comment on what we discussed last time.

If you'll glance again at chapter 7, verses 36 to 50, you remember we were discussing the story of this unnamed sinner, this woman who came to the Lord forgiven and was so full of gratitude. Because she had been forgiven much and she just poured out her love in terms of her tears and ointment and so on, on the feet of our Lord Jesus. I won't cover the same ground.

If you missed any of that and are interested, then Lillian will have the tape for you. But I want to make one final point. If you'll glance at the parable Jesus told to Simon, in chapter 7, verse 41, a certain money lender had two debtors, one owed 500 denarii and the other 50.

When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them, therefore, will love him the more? Simon answered and said, I suppose the one, he forgave them all. And he said to him, you've judged correctly.

Now last time we discussed that quite a bit, so I won't go over that ground. But you may get the idea from that parable by itself, you may get the idea that I had and entertained and was badly burned by for years. And that is, whoever is forgiven the most loves the Lord the most and therefore it's a great advantage to be a wicked sinner first.

And then come to the Lord and then you'll have a greater love for the Lord. Because when you finally come to the Lord, then you'll be on fire and you'll be zealous for the Lord and so on. And you'll have a dynamic testimony.

I tell you about that and Lillian could fill you in on all the sad details. But I first came to the Lord, well who knows when someone first comes to the Lord because the Lord comes to you all your life. But I first remember responding in 1958 and that's a lot of years ago now.

And the night that I heard the gospel with understanding for the first time, a man was giving a testimony. And that man was one of these old sinners, you know. And he was a violent man and had been a gang leader and involved in all kinds of crime and addicted to many different things and so on.

I was so moved by his testimony, January 29, 1958, that I stole it. I'm serious. And for seven years I lived a nightmare because I went around telling everybody that God had done these wonderful things for me and that I was a gang leader.

The reality was I grew up with five girls and was rather much a sissy. But anyway, I liked that testimony. And it got so bad.

The puzzle in my heart was that I was having opportunities to share everywhere because my testimony was so unique. And I don't know if you've ever heard this program, Unshackled. They called me up.

They wanted my testimony because it got out. I actually wrote it down as a lie in order to be accepted to Moody Bible Institute. I wrote my testimony out.

And the Lord had an awful lot of dealing to do with me. And finally in 1965, that's when my life really changed and I came clean of all this. Even Lillian didn't know we were married, didn't know the truth of it until this thing was all over and everything.

And the reason I call attention to that is God engineered in an amazing way. Years later, this guy, Larry Doyle was the man's name who had given that testimony. And he had heard through the years that his testimony was being given.

And I got a call from a hospital in Boston. And I went down there and this man was dying. And he confessed to me that he made it up to me.

It wasn't even his own testimony. And the only reason I share that painful part of my life with you is that God does not teach that if you're a wicked sinner and if you were a wife beater or a child abuser, certain things that when you come to the Lord, you're going to love the Lord more than somebody who was brought up in a Christian home and in Sunday school. The Bible does not teach that.

The truth is that in this parable, Jesus was calling attention to the fact that that's how Simon was looking at it. He said, in effect, I'm a \$50 sinner and this woman is a \$500 sinner and so she is a greater sinner than I am. But the point Jesus made is verse 42.

When they were both unable to pay, He graciously forgave them both. They were not one great sinner and one little sinner. They were both on level ground.

They were both insolvent. They were both bankrupt as far as paying their debt was concerned. And the point was, she realized how bankrupt she was.

And Simon didn't realize how bankrupt he was. He was comparing person with person and he didn't look so bad next to her. But the point was, before the Lord, he could not pay.

He was as bankrupt as she was bankrupt. Let me give you three little suggestions how to help you love the Lord. If it's true, and it is, that he that's forgiven much, loves much, the way to love the Lord, of course, is to see how much you've been forgiven.

Let me give you three little suggestions on how to know how much you've been forgiven. Meditate much on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The price He paid, that's why we sang that little chorus.

He paid a debt He did not owe. I owed a debt I could not pay. I needed someone to wash my sins away.

And so, if you meditate on the cross, you'll see how much you owe. And then, you'll love the Lord. The more you enter into that.

And then the second suggestion is, now and then, I wouldn't do this too often. I take the same proportions the Bible gives on it, which it's not that much. But meditate sometimes on the wages against sin.

When you think about eternity, and you think about those who won't know the Lord, and separated forever, that'll help you see how much you've been forgiven. When you meditate on the cross, when you meditate on the wages of sin. And then the third way is meditate on your own heart, now and then.

And I never got involved in those things I said I got involved in. But I was forgiven from them because the potential was there. Even though I didn't get involved in that, praise God by His grace.

He kept me from some of those things that some people get involved in. But that doesn't mean the potential's not there. And so God has forgiven me the possibility, at any moment in my life, even now.

I've known the Lord now since 58, with understanding since 65. And even now, if I take my eyes off the Lord, there is no limit to what I can do. There's nothing any sinner who doesn't know the Lord can get involved in that I can't get involved in, if I'm not looking to the Lord.

And so we need to keep our eyes on the Lord, and remember that God has forgiven us a great debt. And the more we meditate on the cross and the wages of sin and the potential in our own heart, the more we'll see how much we're forgiven. And when we see how much we're forgiven, we'll dissolve in love and gratitude and worship and thanksgiving to Him.

But I want to just make that comment because I had that idea, Larry Doyle had that idea, and I wonder how many other people think, Oh, I feel bad, I was brought up in a Christian home, and I don't have the advantage that some of these people who live out in the world have. They don't have an advantage. I didn't miss a thing by not being involved in that junk.

Restoration is a wonderful thing, but it's not as good as walking with God. And you always miss something when you sin and come back. Remember those three guys, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Meshach, your shack, and a bungalow, or however you want to say it.

They could have bowed down to that golden image, and God could have forgiven them if they repented. But what would they have missed? And the answer is they would have missed that walk in the furnace with the Son of God. And you always miss something when you sin, and I always miss something when I sin.

So we're forgiven as much as the hardest criminal is forgiven, and it's realizing how much we're forgiven that will bring the love. We all have the same debt, we're on the same level ground. Alright, if you'll turn then to chapter 8, please.

That brings us to Luke chapter 8. Now this is really the transition between the Galilean ministry and the Judean ministry. In this section, our Lord through Luke is going to clinch what has taken place for seven chapters and introduce what's going to come now. You'll remember this chapter because it contains three parables and four miracles.

After a short introduction. Let me give you just sort of an outline of the whole chapter. The three parables.

Chapter 8, 4-15, the parable of the sower. And then verse 16-18, the parable of light. And then 19-21, sort of a living parable of family.

Those are the three parables. The sower, light, and family. And then there are four miracles.

The miracle of the stormy sea in verses 22-25. The miracle of that demon possessed man. Remember when the demons went into the swine in 26-29.

The miracle of that woman who had an issue of blood and touched the hem of his garment. Remember that? 40-48. And then the chapter closes with the story of Jairus' daughter and her resurrection from the

dead.

49-56. Now how do the parables and the miracles in Luke chapter 8 serve as a transition between the Galilean and the Judean ministry? First of all, because the parable of the sower, in a real sense, introduces a whole new teaching method of the Lord. Now he's going to begin to teach in miracles.

It's a definite change in style from what we've seen throughout the whole Galilean ministry. Now Luke doesn't give us all the facts. He doesn't tell us, for example, that this parable was spoken as Jesus went out a little bit from the shore.

And he stood on a boat. And he also doesn't tell us that after the parable of the sower, he gave 12 more parables right in a row. Not just one.

13 all together. And right in a row. Luke only gives you the one.

But in the context, there were 13 all together. And it's definitely a change in the ministry of Christ. He's now going to begin to teach in parables.

Now let me suggest why he may have begun with this parable of the sower. You see, in a general way, we said chapter 4-9 presents Jesus as the friend of all mankind. That's generally true.

But here's the question. Is it all mankind? Now he's going to get specific. He's going to nail it down.

Yes, he's the friend of all mankind. But Luke now is going to say, yes, all mankind, if they're receptive. He's the friend of all receptive mankind.

And he begins with the parable of the sower in order that we might see what kind of soil is receptive to receive the seed. And so he begins to say, Jesus is the son of all mankind. He's the friend of all mankind, all receptive mankind.

And so he gives the parable of the sower. The same thing is true in the miracles. I mean, in the miracles.

These are not just miracles. Luke is writing a Bible. Luke is putting these things in logical, redemptive order.

Now listen to the miracles. First he gives the storm where he emphasizes faith. Then he gives the story of a man who's been demon-possessed and delivered.

Then of a woman who reaches out and touches him by faith. Then of a little girl that has been raised from the dead. Why did Luke put those four miracles together? I can't prove it, but I think he's saying, the storm, receptive mankind, that is, now he's going to define receptive.

Those who come in faith. Men, women, and children. And so he puts those four miracles together to say, who is the receptive? See, the parable said, he's the friend of those who receive.

Who receive? Those who come by faith. Men, women, and children. And so this whole chapter sort of serves as a transition between his Galilean and his Judean ministry.

Now before we look at the parables and the miracles, let's look at this little introduction that he gives about the women who supported him financially during his ministry. Now glance please at chapter 8 verse 1. It came about soon afterwards, he began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and

preaching the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and also some women, who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses.

Mary, who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means. Let me make a couple of observations about the facts as a whole, and then give you a couple of principles. The first is this, we don't know an awful lot about these three women that are mentioned.

We know a little bit about Mary Magdalene. We know that she had seven demons cast out of her. We know she became a faithful follower and lover of the Lord Jesus.

We see her last at the cross and first at the tomb. The first one of his eleven post-resurrection miracles. He appears first to Mary and so on.

And so we know her. We know her last name was not Magdalene. That's Mary Magdalene.

That describes where she's from. Magdala was a town, and it's Mary of Magdala, just on the western shore of Galilee. There was this town called Magdala.

And it was just to identify her from the other Mary. That's why we have that identification. We also mentioned that there is no proof that she was the fallen woman we discussed last week.

She's taken the rap for that. They have Magdalene homes and all kinds of things all over the world for fallen women. But there's no evidence that she was like that.

We don't know. I mean, it could have been, but don't tie her in with that woman in chapter 7. And then in verse 3, this Joanna, wife of Chusa, Herod's steward. We know she's probably well off.

We know that Chusa was the steward, probably managing all of Herod's estate. Some people think that he was actually the noble man in chapter 4 of John, whose son was healed. But we don't know that.

We don't know much about Joanna and old Susanna. Everything in the Bible that we know about Susanna is right in that verse, right there. And so we don't know much.

We know her name means Lily, the flower Lily. We know, like the others, she was probably healed of something. She had been blessed, according to this record.

And she was a financial supporter of the Lord Jesus. It's also implied in verses 1 and 2. You know, when you think about Jesus and His ministry, you picture Jesus traveling with the twelve. You don't picture women being women.

And yet, if you read these two verses, it looked like they were. That He was traveling and they were traveling with Him. And though they're not mentioned, I have an idea that these women were also there traveling as Jesus' minister.

Now, I never even realized that Jesus' ministry was supported by these women. Until one day, I heard the Statler brothers. You know who they are? The Statler brothers were singing a song.

They've got a tape called, Through the Bible. And they were singing a song, and one of the lyrics on the song was, And He brought along some women who brought along some wealth. And I said, where in the world did the Statler brothers get that? Brought along some women who brought along some wealth.

Well, now I know. In Luke chapter 8, verses 1 to 4. As long as we're in this passage, let me give you a couple of principles that touch on stewardship as long as we're on this particular path. The first principle is this.

That God will provide. And the general rule is that He will provide those ministries that He's using for blessing. And He will provide through those who are being blessed.

These women had been blessed. And so as a response, they wanted to do their part and their share. I think it's interesting that never once in all the records of the Bible do we ever have anything that even begins to smack of fundraising in the ministry of our Lord Jesus.

He was so far removed from that kind of thing. No high pressure. No reminders.

No pledges. No faith promise plans. No deputation.

No sales. No pleas. No asking for annuities.

No having people sign wills over. And all that kind of thing. The reason I'm even touching on that is because as you know today, everybody's hand is in your pocketbook.

And everybody's hand is in your wallet. And it gives such a black eye to the gospel. If we could just see the way the Lord Jesus did it.

There was no fanfare here. They weren't trying to be public. In fact, if it weren't for the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't even have known that these women contributed.

He's the one that put it in the Bible. I don't think they said, hey, let's try to do that. Maybe we'll make the Bible.

They weren't trying to get in the Bible. They weren't trying to let everybody know about it. God was working.

They were being blessed. And they responded because they were being blessed. The second principle is this.

When you minister unto the Lord in a ministry that He's blessed, you will share in the blessing of that ministry. And I don't only mean in time. I mean in eternity.

One of my favorite verses in this connection is in Matthew 10, 41. Our Lord Jesus said, he who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet receives a prophet's reward. Now let me tell you what I think that means.

Let me illustrate it. In 2 Kings 4, remember that Shunammite woman and her husband? She kept looking out the window. And she finally said to her husband, I perceive that that's a man of God that passes by us every day.

Elisha did nothing but walk by. But she could tell that's a man of God. She said to her husband, do you think it's possible that in the upper chamber we could make a little room for him? And you remember that's

what happened.

And they made a little chamber and he would go up there. He had a table and he had a... And so Elisha used to go to that upper chamber. Now listen to the verse.

The verse says, he that receives a prophet. Did she receive the prophet? He that received the prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. In other words, he had a ministry.

He went out. In one case he raised the leper up. In another case an axe had floated.

He fed supernaturally a hundred men. He delivered an army. He raised the dead.

If... I don't know what it's going to be like in the judgment. But I just picture God saying, Elisha, come forward. Receive your reward for raising up the dead.

And then all of a sudden he says, Shunammite lady, come forward for raising up the dead. She said, when did I ever raise up the dead? You received the prophet. And so you receive a prophet's reward.

Everything that prophet will be rewarded for, that person who's involved in that ministry will share in the reward. And that's a tremendous principle. These three women, Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Susanna.

Imagine the disciples when they stand before the Lord and get their reward. Here comes Peter. Peter, I understand at the gate called Beautiful you went up to somebody and said, silver and gold have I none but what I have I give in the name of Jesus.

Get up and walk. And you gave... you were a channel of redemption. And my power flowed through you.

And you're going to get rewarded for that. And then he says, Susanna, come on up here. Because one day at the gate called Beautiful, you reached out and raised up someone.

Susanna said, I don't remember doing that. Oh, but you supported the ministry. And so whoever receives a prophet receives a prophet's reward.

Our Lord Jesus could have, as you know, used his supernatural power and provided his own ministry. He didn't need financial support. Praise the Lord for these ladies.

But he didn't need that. I mean he could have multiplied loaves. Remember one time to pay taxes he told Peter to go fishing.

And look inside the gill. There was a coin lodged in the fish's gill. He could have done it.

But he wanted these women to have a share in the ministry and in the reward. And so he did it this way. And so those two principles of stewardship God will provide.

All this emphasis on having to raise money and high pressure people, that's not in the Bible. If God raises up a ministry and he's using it to bless, then it's going to be provided for. And then the second is those who are ministering financially or in any other way are also going to share ultimately in the everlasting rewards of that particular ministry.

That's true on the level of earth and for all eternity. That brings us then to this wonderful transition, this parable of the soul. Now because it's a new method of teaching, he explains it before in this very chapter.

He tells the story and then he tells why he used it. Now notice if you would, chapter 8 verses 4 to 8 give the parable. 11 to 15 explain the parable.

Let's look at 9 and 10. And his disciples began questioning him as to what this parable might be. And he said, to you it's been granted to know and to see and hearing they may not understand.

Why did Jesus change his method? And why a parable? There's a double answer. He began to teach in parables first to reveal, second to conceal. That's why he changed his method.

In order that people would understand and in order that people would not understand. Remember John the baptizer said that when he comes his fan will be in his hand and he'll thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor. And the idea of the fan or the winnowing fork is to separate the wheat from the chaff.

That's what the parables did. The parables were his winnowing fork. And it separated those who were receptive from those who were not.

Look at verse 10 again. To you it's been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom. Now if you'll jump down to verse 16.

No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a container or puts it under a bed. He puts it on a lamp stand in order that those who come in may see the light. Nothing's hidden that shall not become evident nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to the light.

Therefore take care how you listen. For whoever has to him shall more be given. And whoever does not have even what he thinks he has shall be taken away.

Now when Matthew used that idea of a light under a bushel he was illustrating something else. Matthew was illustrating, remember that little Sunday school song? This little light of mine I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine I'm, in other words testimony.

And that we're a light and we shouldn't be under a bushel because we have a testimony. But Luke's not saying that. Luke's not talking about testimony.

His point is why does God give light? And the answer is to reveal. That's what light's all about. To show, to expose, to manifest.

He doesn't give light to put it under a bushel or to hide it. Jesus is saying my parables are light. I give my parables to teach, to instruct, to illuminate so people can understand.

If only we could begin to enter into how much God wants us to understand. It would really blow our minds. He wants us to know far more than we want to know.

He delights to show us. So that's one purpose of the parables. To give light, to reveal, to show you the mysteries of the kingdom.

And so verse 18 says therefore take care how you listen. But there's another purpose in verse 10. It says to you it's been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom.

But to the rest it's in parables in order that seeing they may not see. And they may not, hearing they may not hear and may not understand. You say is that a contradiction? God says I've given you the miracle so you can understand.

I've given the miracle so people don't understand. So hearing they won't hear. Seeing they won't see.

Hearing they will not understand. No it's not a contradiction. Look at the context.

All the people heard the parables the same way. In other words you say well parables are to give the secrets to Christians. But to hide it from non-Christians.

That's not what he's saying. The non-Christians could not understand it. He gave the parable.

Those who were not believers did not understand. Those who were believers did not understand. Why do you think the disciples came to Jesus and said what are you talking about? Tell them.

Because they didn't understand either. The parable nobody understands. Not the unbeliever, not the believer.

Well then who does understand? Those who come to Jesus for an explanation. Whether they're believers or unbelievers. Anyone who comes to the Lord for an explanation.

To them it will be revealed. And that's what happened in verse 9. His disciples began questioning him as to what the parable might be. To whom does God reveal it? Not to those who know Hebrew and Greek.

Not to those who've been to seminaries. Not to those who are smart or think they're smart. But to those who come for an explanation.

Those who come are always rewarded. Things have not changed. We come to this Bible.

We read the Bible. The unbeliever reads it. He says I don't understand.

The believer reads it. He doesn't understand it either. When I read the Bible I don't understand it.

You read this and say what is this all about? Who understands it? Those who come to the Lord for an explanation. It is so simple. And when you come to the Lord and say Lord teach me this.

Show me this. Then God opens it up. The same way he gave parables is how he gave the Bible.

There are seals over this Bible. That no amount of natural human genius and fire can ever dissolve. And there are treasures in this book.

That no amount of mere scholarship and academics can ever discover or lay out. But the one who comes in simple childlike faith and prayer. And says Lord I've come to your parable.

I don't understand it. You show me. Treasures will drop spontaneously into the bosom of that person.

And God delights to give it to those who come for an explanation. And so the parables now introduce this whole new method of teaching. In a sense it is a great mercy.

Because you know the Bible teaches that you are going to be judged by the light you have. I am going to be judged by the light I have. Whoever has the greatest light gets the greatest judgment.

And so what God is doing is he saw some people did not want the truth. They were unreceptive. And so rather than giving them light and making them more responsible.

He hid the light from them until they wanted it. It was a mercy thing. He is not just saying I don't want you to know.

He is saying I want you to know when you are ready. And when you are receptive and when you are open. But until then it is going to be veiled.

And so that is why he started to preach then in parables. Now glance at verse 5. A sower went out to sow a seed and as he sowed some fell beside the road. It was trampled underfoot and the birds of the air came and ate it up.

Other seed fell on rock he sowed. And as soon as it grew up it withered away because it had no moisture. Other seed fell among the thorns and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out.

Other seed fell into the good soil and grew up and produced a crop a hundred times as great. And as he said these things he would call out he who has ears to hear let him hear. As you know there are four soils mentioned.

There is the wayside soil that is the path that is trodden down. People have walked on it and animals have gone on it. The wayside soil and then verse 6 the rocky soil.

And then in verse 7 the thorny soil. And then finally in verse 8 the good soil. On the place where it was pat down the seed fell on the top and the birds came and took it all away.

In the place where it was on the rock and just a little bit of soil not enough to take root. The sun came up and it couldn't take root and it sapped away the moisture and then the thing wilted and died. Where the soil was a little deeper but it was with the thorns.

The thorns came up and choked it all and smothered it and it wasn't able to produce. And then there was the good fruit. And so you've got the hard ground, the shallow ground and the ground that shares the soil with the weeds.

The cluttered ground. In Matthew's account when he gave the good ground he's the one that divided it up and said. Here Luke just says then the good ground brought forth a hundredfold.

But Matthew remember divided it up hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. And that was all in the good ground. I'm glad we're not doing Matthew because I wouldn't want to tackle why he divided it up that way.

In the explanation that the Lord gives in the main part of the parable. Glance at 11 to 15. I'm just going to identify things here.

I'm not going to read the whole section. In verse 11 the seed is the word of God. That's clear.

In verse 12 the birds. Is that verse 12? Are the devil. Yeah I think it's 12.

Yeah it's 12. The birds are the devil that comes and snatches it away. In verse 13 though Luke doesn't mention the son Mark does.

It's in Mark 4.6. And to talk about the son coming up and wilting that. So we'll just call it the son. The time of temptation comes and the shallow can't produce.

And then in verse 14 the thorns are identified as the worries, the riches, and the pleasures of this life. Now so we don't get lost in this wonderful parable. And let me give you the main point of the parable.

The main point is this. Reception. How do you receive the word of God? How do I receive the word of God? What kind of soil is my heart? What kind of soil is your heart? The wayside soil is described as cold and hard and indifferent.

The stony soil is described as shallow and impulsive. The thorny soil is worldly and preoccupied with many things. And then the good soil is soft and deep and clean.

That's the good soil. In every case the point is the same. How does the soil receive? The message seems to be this.

If the seed is not received. It's the soil's fault. I think that's what he's trying to say.

If the seed of the word of God is not received. It's the soil's fault. I'm so glad he used these other illustrations.

The birds, the sun, and the thorn. I'll tell you why. Because my natural heart does not want to believe it's the soil's fault.

I don't want to believe if I don't receive the Bible, if I don't produce, it's my fault. I want to say it's the bird's fault. The devil's fault.

It's not my fault. The seed was there and then the devil came and took it away. How could that be my fault? Let's blame the devil on that.

Verse 5. The birds. The devil cannot touch the seed that's on good ground. He can only touch the seed that's been trampled underfoot.

That's on the hard ground. And that talks about those who have the word, the seed, on them, but not in them. It just sort of falls on them.

And because they're hard and it's trampled down, God says don't blame the seed. Don't blame the birds. My natural heart wants to blame the sun.

In verse 13. They received the word with joy. They believed for a while.

But there's no moisture. There's no root. There's no depth.

But a time of temptation comes. Matthew adds affliction. Persecution.

Mark says the sun rises and trials beat upon them. And so someone can say it's not my fault. It's the sun.

And all the troubles. If life were easy, but all these troubles came and these hard times came and people started laughing and mocking because I was a Christian. God says don't blame the birds.

Don't blame the sun. And so my heart said, all right, it's the thorns. Not my fault.

It's the thorns. Verse 14. The worries, the riches, the cares, pleasures of this life.

I'd be more grounded in the world if I didn't have so many troubles, so many cares, so many worries. Worried about my family. I'm worried about my future.

I'm worried about my finances, my securities, and so on. Then we get involved in stuff. The world is full of stuff and materialism and riches, and we get occupied and preoccupied.

Jesus said, those who receive my word in the good soil. I'm the friend of receptive mankind. I can't blame the birds.

I can't blame the sun. I can't blame the thorns. I think it's sad that so many get choked out with the thorns, the cares of this life.

I remember one time reading this, and I even blamed the sower. It's not my fault. He's a sloppy sower.

He threw the seeds all over the rocks and all over the wayside. It's God's fault. And God comes back and says, no, no.

I told you this parable to remind you that it's the soil's fault. Isn't it wonderful that God throws the seed everywhere? Praise the Lord that he gives. I'm sure that there was a lot of thorny areas in my life, and the word of God came into those areas.

And God just gives it everywhere. Satan can't do a thing if the soil is deep and if it's clean and if it's good soil. Verse 18, take care how you listen.

The main point is receive. Be receptive. Be open.

Be soft. Be deep. Be clean.

That's the main message. In addition to that, I think he was teaching two other things. Number one, he was presenting the truth of all ministry.

And what he's saying is, in ministry expect four kinds of soil. In other words, he's warning us not to be deluded by the reception we're going to give. Three quarters of the word of God is going to be unproductive.

When it's given out, three quarters of it is going to be on some of these particular kinds of soil. Those that are hard, outright rejecters, the wayside soil. I really got burned in my early ministry on this rocky soil.

Because it says, they received the word with joy. But there was no death. And I used to get all excited when they received the word with joy.

I'd come back to Luther and say, what a conference we had. They received the word with joy. And then a couple of months later, they're out running in sin.

I thought God touched their hearts and so on. I don't put too much stock anymore in how it's received. Because you can be deluded there.

They received the word with joy. The years tell the story. When someone comes up to me now and says, boy, thank you, I've been blessed by that.

Give me a call in ten years. I want to hear how you do it. In twenty years.

That's where you're going to see the story. And so he's warning them. When you go out and minister, he's telling his disciples.

This is what you can expect in your ministry. You can expect hard soil. People that don't want to hear it.

You can expect an emotional response. And everybody will look like they're with you, but they're not with you. And after a while, when the sun comes up and troubles come up, they're going to just say goodbye and go the other way.

They're going to be those who are compromising. And they want weeds as well as seeds. They want both.

And they want both to grow together. And you know the problem in the spiritual life when two lives grow together. It can't happen.

One's going to choke out the other one. And it's a terrible thing to see Christians smothered and choked. The good soil is in verse 15.

They heard in an honest and good heart and held it fast. It's unreasonable to expect that everybody's going to receive what you have to share. Someone says, oh, you've got such a great message.

Everybody wants to hear it. I just smile in my heart and say, yeah, sure they do. They don't want to hear it.

There's the hard soil and there's the shallow soil and there's the thorny soil and so on. What's true in every community is true in every church. What's true in every church is true in every heart.

I used to read this. Have you ever heard of Tim LaHaye? There's a book he wrote, The Spirit Controlled Temperaments. You know, they have these temperaments.

They describe the choleric and the sanguine and melancholy and I forgot the other one. Phlegmatic or something like that. Then you go through the Bible and say, well, now, was he choleric and you try to find that.

Well, I used to go through the soil and I used to say, all right, Lord, which one am I? I felt embarrassed to pretend I was the good soil, so I would always pick one of those other soils. But I wanted to be the good soil. So I thought everybody's something.

Everybody's one soil. No, everybody's not one soil. At any moment in your life, you can be any soil.

These soils are not saying this one's hard and this one is thorny. Every time you hear the word of God, this morning, as we share the word of God, you're one of the four soils. Tomorrow, you might be a different soil.

Sunday, you might be a different soil. Wednesday, you might be a different soil. Every time you hear the word of God, God says, be careful how you listen.

Because sometimes you could just be trodden down and say, I don't want to hear it. You're still a believer. You love the Lord.

But that seed at that time will not take root. And there's other times you're going to be so moved in your heart, you're going to embrace it with enthusiasm and it's all emotion. And that's going to wither away as soon as the sun comes up.

And other times, you're going to say, I want it, but I can't let go of this. And then this chokes this out and you're going to die. And other times, you're going to be receptive.

And the point is that we're all, all the soils at different times. Let's pray that we'll most often be the good soil to receive the word and produce, to be clean and deep and so on. My last point I want to make, and then we'll close.

I've already made it, but I want to emphasize it. And that is, you know, our hearts, especially we have loved ones. And maybe we're judging, but we look and say, he's this soil and she's that soil.

They're hard or they're this or they're that. And we judge those kinds of things. And we wonder how come one receives and one doesn't? It doesn't make sense.

How come somebody could be such good soil and somebody else so hard? I don't know the full answer. There's a lot of mystery in that. But I know this parable teaches it's not the sower's fault.

It's not the sower's fault. He scatters that seed everywhere. And that seed is on the wayside soil.

And that seed is on the rocky soil. And that seed is on the thorny soil. And that seed's in the good ground.

We can't blame God. He said, be careful how you hear. If you want it, you'll get it.

And the sower is just like why he gives parables. To reveal and conceal. To those who don't want it, it will be hidden.

To those who want it, they will have it. You say, how do I know I want it? Here's how you know. You go to Jesus for an explanation.

That's what the disciples did. If you really want it, you'll come to the Lord and say, I want it. And He will.

He will never deny the one that comes and says they want it. He'll only honor that. He cannot resist the desire of a heart.

And so anybody who comes, finds, anyone who knocks, it's open. He who seeks finds. Whoever asks, it shall be given.

He has never turned down anyone an explanation for those who come and sought it. Of course, we're not always, I've come for an explanation for Timothy. I said, Lord, teach me Timothy.

He hasn't done it yet. I don't have it, honestly. I read everything on Timothy.

To me, that is the darkest book on the planet earth. I can't get Timothy. One time, Lillian, how the Lord uses that woman in my life.

I praise God for her. But after seven years of studying every psalm, of studying Timothy, getting nothing. She finally said to me, she saw I was discouraged.

She said, what do you know for sure? And I said, I know it's the last thing Paul wrote, he was probably senile. That's what I said. Here's what she said.

If it's the last thing he wrote, he wrote in his maturity, you're not ready yet. That's what she said. And so someday he'll open that.

But he never denies those who call for an explanation. Well, we'll close there. Any comments or questions? We need each other.

Our Father, we thank you. You are ever the wonderful, sore friend of all receptive men. Your patience in our lives.

We just pray, Lord, that increasingly we'd learn the simple lesson of coming to you for an explanation. We work this in our hearts. Bring us back again, we pray.

My fellowship around. And draw close to each other.

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