

Miraculous Food

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of nurturing the word of God in our hearts to change our lives and resist Satan's attacks.

Duration: 28:46

Scripture: Luke 8:5

Topics: "Miracles"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the word of God in our lives. He uses the parable of the sower to illustrate how the word can be received and responded to in different ways. The word of God is powerful, but it requires attention and nurturing to bear fruit in our lives. The speaker encourages the audience to embrace the word, hold onto it, and allow it to transform their hearts and minds.

Transcript

You cannot know anything about the route of Israel through the wilderness in the Old Testament and be a very strong Christian and be growing in the Lord. You cannot understand, you should read that, all scriptures inspired by God, but there are more vital truths and less vital truths, but they're all true. Carol and I were talking this week, one of the secrets to, let's say, a song and a choir arranging a song or writing a song is to know what's important.

Like when you play basketball, you know there are guys in the playground, they shoot wrong, they dribble wrong, but they spend hours finding the best sneaker that they can wear. Not knowing that you can wear five pairs of sneakers, but if you don't know how to play, someone's gonna just be balling on you. Knowing what's vital, am I right? I started a series a few weeks ago called Vital Truths, and we talked first about the throne of grace.

That's absolutely vital. Where is it? How do you get there? What's dispensed at the throne of grace? The next week, we talked about joy, that the joy of the Lord is our strength. We should be rejoicing all the time.

That's what I wanna continue on this series of knowing vital truths. Everything is important in the scripture. Everything's inspired, but there's things that are most vital.

I wanna talk about one that is so absolutely vital. So let's look at the scripture to Luke. Luke chapter eight.

While a large crowd was gathering, and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable. A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path.

It was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Notice, there was life from the seed.

Life came up, but it was short-lived because there was no depth, no moisture. Why? Because it was shallow earth with a bed of rock underneath it. Some other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it, and choked the plants.

Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop a hundred times more than was sown. When he said this, he called out.

It was a loud voice. Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear. Notice, there were four cases of seed being sown by the farmer, and in only one case was there lasting fruit.

Three were sabotaged one way or another and did not come to fruition according to the purpose of the sower of the seed. And then he went on. This is the meaning.

He says later of the parable, the seed is the word of God. Everyone say that sentence. The seed is the word of God.

Everyone say it again. The seed is the word of God. Those along the path, notice they're people now.

They represent people, this parable. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word, which is the seed, from their hearts so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root, no depth.

They're shallow. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing, they fall away. The seed that fell among the thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way, they are choked by life's worries, riches, and pleasures, and they do not mature.

But the seed on the good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering, produce a crop. And then, to add to that, we read in 1 Peter chapter two, verse two. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.

Let's all say that one together. One, two, three. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.

By it, the milk, which is this word again. So the word of God here is called a seed. It's called meat in other places.

It's called bread. It's food. You know, the other day, I turned to my wife.

It was late at night, and I, getting late, and I said, you know what? I've been so busy today, I haven't eaten spiritual food like I should, and my soul is telling me I'm hungry. And I had to get away and open the word because that's the only thing that can feed me. So now let's look at this truth, make it succinct and to the point.

The sower goes out to sow a seed, and God says the seed is the word of God. Not so much the 10 commandments or the Levitical offerings, but especially the message of the gospel, but the word of God as a whole. But here he's speaking specifically because you can only get saved by hearing the gospel.

The gospel is the power of God to salvation. The message of the gospel, that message, is the only thing that can save anybody in the world. You can't get saved only by praying for someone.

You only find conversion where someone comes and hears the good news of Jesus. And then when they believe it and receive it, then they're saved. But notice the difficulty of it and some very strange idiosyncrasies about this parable.

The word that is so powerful, it's the word of God, the word of God, and it'll accomplish its purpose and all of that, and that is true in its place. But notice here, in three out of the four, the word does not accomplish its purpose. It does not.

So that's very interesting. Notice also that this word that is so powerful can be choked out by thorns, weeds, and kill it. No, God is greater, his word is greater, but notice here that it's all powerful, and yet in the human situation, it's very fragile.

It has to be given attention to. You have to nurture it. Is that not what the parable teaches? How many are with me? Say amen.

Notice also that hearing the word or reading the word is an insignificant picture, and yet look at the results. If someone's reading the word and storing it in their heart, which we'll get to, or goes to church and hears it, you go, what's the big thing to the secular mind? What's the big thing? You heard a preacher preach, it's nothing, or you pick up that antiquated book and you read it and it doesn't look like much, just like the seed in Iowa and Kansas. Here's acres and acres, thousands of acres of corn.

You go, where did that all, where'd the big corn come from? Little tiny seeds. So notice that the seed seems so insignificant, but what it produces is huge, even like a seed from one of those big redwood trees in California. It all starts little, but look what it produces, why? Because it has life in itself.

Notice also that you don't have to do anything, but get the seed in the right place and then it has its own power. Just get it in its place and it'll produce apples, fruit, corn, whatever. Just get it there and it has its own power.

Just get it in the ground. The farmer plants it, let's say in Wisconsin where I spent a summer many years ago as a kid working on a farm, oh, that was a wake up call, from Brooklyn to a dairy farm, about 60 cows that Carol's uncle had a farm and they woke me up at 4.30, quarter to five, just when I love to get woken up, I'm about 15 years old, push me into the barn. I was stepping in something other than cement that I was used to on Parkside Avenue.

Once the farmer plants that seed, he doesn't go out every day and go, dig that thing up, come on, let's dig it up, I wanna see if it's working. No, no, no, put it in the ground and just wait. It has its own power.

Just get it where it belongs and be patient. It'll work. Has life in it.

Notice also in summary, it's not only the way we come to faith, the seed gets in our heart. By joining a church or singing in the choir, you do not become a Christian. You become a Christian and you are born

again when the seed of the word of God, the gospel specifically, goes in your heart and you believe it and receive it and get it into the deepest part of you.

And then boom, your life is changed. Who did it? Not you, not me. God did it through his word and by his spirit.

Let's put our hands together and say amen to that. So now let's look at the farmer because this parable, which is the most repeated parable in the Bible, applies not only to everybody here, it applies to this meeting. The result of this meeting in your life will be found in this parable.

That's right. In fact, your family and people you've witnessed to and people you're praying for and everyone you know, they're all in the parable. You're in the parable.

I'm in the parable. Everyone's in the parable. We're one of those soils.

The first seed falls on the ground and the ground is hard. You know, there are some people, they just got a hard heart. They won't open it even to the word of God.

They know. Hey, look, look, I know. You don't have to tell me anything.

I know. I know what I'm doing. I went to college.

Well, it was online, but I still went to college. And it's hard. And notice what else is happening on the road.

Lots of other people are traveling on the road. So these are the people, Jesus said, they hear the word, but they never open their heart. They're not soft.

They're not tender. They know, they're hard, they're proud, they're obstinate. Plus, they got a thousand other things happening.

So by the time some people might hit Fulton Street and make it to the subway, the word's already gone. Everything that happened in this meeting, afuera. It's gone.

It's gone. And notice who took it. The devil.

The devil comes along, Jesus said, and steals it because he knows the power that's in that word. So he has to steal that word from us. So it enters first into the mind because you gotta understand it first.

Then you gotta think about it. Then it's gotta get in the heart. No, no, no, for some people, they're like the path.

It doesn't hardly get in their mind. He's stealing it. Boy, did you go to church today? Yeah, what'd he preach about? I don't remember, but a lot of the girls in the choir wear black on Sundays, I noticed that.

And one of the guys had a nice tie on. I know, but what was the word? I can't remember. Oh, that's the devil.

So the devil's main object with all of us, steal the word before it can get into su corazon, your heart, why? Because once it gets in there, his goose is cooked because that word has power. Let us say amen with our hands. How does he rob it? He robs it and disrupts it and blocks us from it, why? By, yes, stealing it, distracting us.

You know what? I need to read the word. No, no, look, look at your list of things to do today. No, you forgot to text your Uncle Charlie.

You gotta text him. 1,000 things he'll try to put in our mind. How many have ever tried to read the word or pray and your mind is attacked by distractions? Well, of course, why? Because he knows, don't you get it? He doesn't like you coming to church, but that's not as bad as getting the word in your heart.

No, you won't understand it. You know, I don't understand it. Don't read it then.

It's a very hard book. It's not even true. I read somewhere where someone on Oprah Winfrey said, it's not true, so I'm not gonna even read that.

It's who knows that John really wrote that? Who knows that Luke even lived? In fact, who knows if Jesus even lived? It's not worth the time. Just anything, any lie, any subterfuge, any diversion. Too busy, I'm too tired.

No, I'm too energetic, I gotta go and work out. After I work out, then I'm gonna come home and read. Then you come home, you read a verse, the Lord, what happened? The word was stolen.

Don't you get it? Listen, the seed is the word of God. It has power. You get it in the right place, your life, my life will change.

Not only will we become Christians, wait, as we hear the gospel, but notice, treasure and crave the pure milk of the word so that you can grow. How do you grow? Just let a child be born. Is it alive? Yeah, don't feed it.

See how things work out. Don't give it any milk. Don't give it anything.

Just say, praise God, the child's alive. No, we don't do that, do we? I wonder how many, if there was a picture taken of everybody behind me and in front of me, and we saw how much spiritual vitamins you have in your system. That is so the root of so many of our problems.

We don't have the word working inside of us. It's not in a deep place. Remember what David said? Thy word have I hid in that I might not sin against thee.

This is what will give me power against bad habits. This is what will give me strength against fear. This will take away my grouchy attitude.

But if you don't read the word, then it won't work. If it's not in your heart, how can it work? And then you can shout glory and say, God's word is sharper than any two-edged sword. I got that, but is it in your heart? Is it in my heart? Otherwise, you get into Christian sloganeering, just shouting things that have no application in reality in your life.

You're just shouting stuff. Satan wants to steal the word. Why? Because he knows better than us how powerful it is.

Notice that when he tempted Jesus, Jesus used in the wilderness three times the word of God. It is written, it is written, it is written. How can you quote the word of God against Satan? How can you and I resist Satan? Doesn't he ever attack you like he does me? Hello? What are you all, angelic beings here? You're not like me? How many get attacked by the enemy in your walk with the Lord? How are you gonna

resist him if you don't know what it says? It's not in your heart.

Now notice, we have the case of the shallow ground. Jesus said, these are people, rocky ground. These are people who receive it with joy.

They're like, oh yeah, Jesus, the word of God, yeah. Do the bump, everything, we're celebrating. But then, it doesn't get into a deep place.

Notice here, position. Listen, listen, listen. In the temple, there was the outer court, and then there was the inner court.

So when we hear the word and we read the word, fine, I get it in my mind. All of us have a certain IQ, we can understand it. And by the way, if you can't understand it, ask God to help you to understand it.

The Holy Spirit inspired it. He's the best teacher. Better than me, better than Robbie Zacharias, better than anybody.

Ask the Holy Spirit. You wrote it, teach me it. But anyway, it goes in the mind.

And now it has to be meditated on. You can't read it like you read the Daily News or the New York Post. You gotta meditate on it.

It's better to read one verse 10 times than it is to read 10 verses and not focus on one truth. I'll go further. It's better to read one verse 50 times and just meditate and chew on it and get it in your heart than it is to be reading a whole chapter and really you don't grasp any one single thing that will help you.

So now it enters here. Now, by faith, you have to open your heart and you have to talk to God and to yourself. I believe that promise.

Unto him that is able to keep us from falling. Let me just think of that. He is able to keep me from falling.

He doesn't say keep yourself. He says he's able to keep us from falling. Let me meditate on that.

Teach me more about that. Oh God, I believe that I receive it. Now it's going in your heart.

Now it's gonna begin to work. Oh, it'll work in your life. If you get it in your heart, it'll work.

I'll fail you. Every minister will fail you. The Brooklyn Tabernacle will fail you.

But the word of God will never fail you. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words, one more time, let's clap. You can sing in the choir and become a weak Christian if you don't feed on the word.

So these are those people who are shallow. They do great until there's a testing. And then because the word isn't deep in their heart, they throw Jesus under the bus and they just walk on and forget the whole thing.

You haven't met people like that? I've met, have we not? Have we not met? Have we not counseled people like that? They were on fire, en fuego, just six months ago. And now, where are they? Now I don't believe any of that. Wait, wait a minute.

You just told me he changed your life. What happened? Shallow. Shallow, superficial, just emotional.

Some people only feel good emotions when the choir is swaying. I thank God the choir sways. But I want the word of God in my heart.

How many say amen? I want that in my heart. When Satan comes against us to discourage us, if you do this, it will not make him go away. I trust you.

Or you could do like, no, I won't do that again. But did you see my wife leading again today? She was like doing her whole little thing there. You could do that, it don't change anything.

But if that word of God is in your heart, in su corazon, you can say, no, no, Satan. No, God is gonna see me through this because I know what his word says. I'll never leave you nor forsake you.

Don't say I'm alone. Don't say no one loves me. Don't say the enemy's gonna conquer me.

No, God's word says different. And I'm hanging on to God's word. But if you don't have that in your heart, you're gonna believe whatever.

So lastly, then other seed, and this is people here, there, who knows, all of us. We're threatened by this. The seed gets in and there's life.

But then the cares of life, desire for pleasures, choke the seed. These are people who know much more about the entertainment industry than they do the Book of Romans. Oh yeah, they know everything about every TV program, everything, tweet, toot, whatever they're doing.

They're going all around. They know everything, fashion, shoes. They know everything.

Girls know the shoes with the red thing on the bottom and all of that. Those are expensive, right? Those are expensive, right? Aren't they? I know somebody who got his girlfriend to marry him by giving her one of those pair of shoes. And she loved shoes and then the rest was history.

They know everything about everything. But if you ask them like, what do you feel about walking in the flesh, walking in the spirit in Galatians? What do you feel about seeing that? What are you talking about? I don't know. I know how the Knicks are doing.

I know TV programs. I know hip hop culture. I know everything.

And that'll choke the word of God. The word of God have no power in your life, in my life. Am I right or wrong here? Is that what Jesus said? The cares of life.

So worried I'm gonna work my fourth job. I gotta make ends meet. Instead of going to God, standing on his word.

See, that'll kill your prayer life. You can't even pray effectively unless the word is in your heart because the only prayers God answers are the prayer of faith. And faith comes by? And hearing by what? The word.

So I could try to pray, but it'll just be emotion. But oh, when the word of God is in there. In fact, some great spiritual leaders have said of other centuries that many days they couldn't pray.

They found they started the day, their hearts were cold. So they said before I try to pray, I read something from the word. So that, ooh, see God, the spirit works with the word that he wrote.

So now I feel something churning in there. Praise God. God is faithful.

I just saw that four times in the same psalm. God is faithful, God is faithful. Next thing you know, faith is starting to arise.

Now you can pray. Now your heart is warm. The word of God.

Not choked out, not on shallow ground, not on the pathway where the devil can steal it, but in our hearts. And notice, when it gets in the heart, it produces like hundredfold. Like all that corn, where did that come from? Must be huge that made all that field.

No, little tiny seeds, you can't believe it. Just get it in the dirt. Just get this in the heart.

Embrace it, hold on to it. No, I'm not gonna think about that. No, I'm not gonna watch that.

That won't help me in the battles of life. The word of God will help me in the battles of life. I should get more amens for that last sentence.

I thought it was absolutely profound. The word of God will help you in the battles of life. How many say amen? But a lot of other stuff we're occupied by, it's not gonna help us with the real struggles of life.

They become escapism. And there's an old saying about the word of God along these lines. The Bible will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from the Bible.

Listen, the Bible will keep you from sin. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you. God's word is pure, God's word is clean.

When that gets in there, the power of God starts working in us. But when we start indulging ourselves, getting involved in bad things, the word of God loses, we lose our appetite for it. I've had times in my life, and I've talked to other preachers, didn't wanna pick it up because I knew it was zero in on the bad attitude I had or selfishness.

But oh, praise God, when we open this, it has such power. This book has such power. How many believe this book has power? Say aloud amen if you believe this, the word of God.

So Satan's gonna try to block us from it. And let's not go in denial. Don't go in denial, don't make up stories.

If we're gonna tell stories, we'll go to the library and we'll read them. Let's not tell stories to each other. Let's face it today.

God, I need more of your word in my life. I need more of your word in my life. God willing, next week, I'm gonna speak about another vital truth and we're gonna get to the truth of the Holy Spirit.

But if you don't know the word, you won't even know the spirit because you could be deluded by a false spirit. How many people are paying these swindlers on TV ministers, these con artists, or are going into manifestations that are totally nuts because they don't know the word. So anything that seems ecstatic, they go, oh, look what the Holy Ghost is doing.

It's not the Holy Spirit at all. You would know it if you knew your Bible. It's not edifying, it's nothing Jesus would ever do.

But see, if you don't know the Bible, you don't know. Now, before we pray, crave the milk. Crave this so that you can grow.

We're Christians. How many are Christians? Lift one hand up if you're a Christian. Now, how many wanna grow? Lift up both hands if you wanna grow.

All right. Among other things, prayer, coming to church. But see, we come to church, we hear the word.

It's the main reason why we come to church, whether it's sung or preached. Crave it so that you can grow. This is the answer.

Last sentence, everyone hold. This is why you meet people who have been saved 40 years and they ain't nowhere. And then you meet another Christians who saved 10 months and they're like, they're off to the races.

Why? Because one is getting to drink the milk and the other one is, I wanna grow. I've seen the power of God in my life through his word. Now, the old saying is true.

If you only emphasize the word, you dry up. But if you only emphasize the spirit, you blow up. But if you emphasize the word and the spirit, you grow up.

I wanna grow up. I wanna be more like Jesus. Anybody here like me see in your life that you could be a lot more like Jesus? Let me say, a lot of these political battles that are being fought because, and anger even among Christians and stuff going on.

You know, you hear Christians because they're of one party or another defending what? Defending abortion, defending same-sex marriage, defending things that the Bible says are an abomination, are horrible. Why? Because you see, the word is not as strong as your political affiliation. Your culture has beat the word.

The culture has beat my word, right? Harsh things being said, racist ideas. I'm talking about both parties. I have confidence in neither one of them.

I have confidence in Jesus. Come on, and the word of God. How many say amen? I've said this privately, I'll say it here.

Sometimes I get, I have to battle with discouragement as because I travel and talk to people. I wonder if 5% of all Christians are Bible-based, depending on the Holy Spirit, or it's all just culture. Liberal Democrats, conservative Republicans, black, white, Hispanic, hola, que tal, and all of that.

How many just wanna live by the word of God and make this their necessary food? How many are with me here say amen? And we judge everything else by the word of God. If the word of God says it's wrong, I ain't defending it, even if my mother says it. No, you gotta hear what she said.

I went to visit her. For those of you visiting, she's 102. She'll be 103 in November.

So she's really fading away, and she's in the bed. And she's, I'm hugging her, and she's just, you know, you gotta yell, she can't hear, and she's fading. And I said, Mom, wow.

You look beautiful, I love you. And she goes, huh, huh, what? I go, Mom, I love you, it's Jim, your second favorite son. It's not Bob, it's Jim.

She makes a little smile. And then her eyes perk open, and she goes, listen, in November, when I turn 103, don't spend a lot of money, just a little piece of cake, and I'll be happy. But you know what's beautiful about it? Up until recently, now she has it read to her, she was reading the Bible more when she was in her 90s and 100 than she did when she was in her 40s.

It's the truth, she told me that. Join hands with the person next to you. Let's pray.

God, we ask you to give us a new relationship with your word, that it'll be our necessary food every day. Teach it to us, enlighten our hearts and our minds. Make us more like Jesus every day.

For we pray it in Jesus' name. And everyone said. Amen.

Everybody stand up. I now pronounce you man and wife. Amen.

Hug about five or six people. Come on, God bless you. Hug somebody, come on, that's in the Bible.

Greet them with a holy kiss.

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