

Parable of the Sower

by Ken Baird

Ken Baird's sermon on the Parable of the Sower explores the varying responses to God's Word and the importance of having a receptive heart for spiritual growth.

Duration: 43:42

Scripture: Matthew 13:1

Topics: "Parable Studies", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the parable of the sower as found in Mark chapter 4 and Matthew chapter 13. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding this parable, as it serves as an introduction to other parables. The parable of the sower represents four conditions of the heart in relation to receiving the word of God. The speaker shares personal anecdotes and highlights the need to guard against the devil's attempts to keep the word of God from taking root in our hearts.

Transcript

On the parables of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the first parable that they have referred us to is the 13th chapter of Matthew's Gospel. Matthew chapter 13 and beginning of verse 1. The same day went Jesus out of the house and sat by the seaside, and great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship and sat, and the whole multitude stood on his shore.

And he spake many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow, and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowl came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, but they had not much earth, and forthwith they spun up, because they had no deepness of earth. And when the sun was up, they were scorched, and because they had no root, they withered away.

And some fell among thorns, and the thorns spun up and choked them. But others fell unto good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold, who hath ears to hear what is near. And the disciples came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance. But whosoever hath not from him shall be taken away, even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables, because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed growth, and their ears are dull hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should yield them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. Now we will get to the Lord's explanation of the parable in a few moments. I want to say now that this shows us some very, very important principles in connection with our Lord Jesus.

He spoke in parables. He spoke in parables for two reasons. The Lord told stories.

He spoke in parables. He used illustrations. And illustrations are good.

I think we can emulate, I think we can imitate the method of our Lord Jesus in trying to explain, to expound the scriptures. Use illustrations. I've heard it said, and I think it's true, illustrations are like windows.

They let in the light. And the Lord in the parables, these stories that he tells, and a parable has been defined, parables have been defined as earthly stories with heavenly meaning. And the Lord used the parables that they might go from that which they could understand to that which they cannot understand.

But it would help them bridge the gap. We do it all the time. We say, for instance, it's like this.

And then we tell something that is parallel, roughly parallel to what the truth is, what the truth is that we wish to explain, make plain. And we do the same thing. We use illustrations.

And so the Lord did it. And he did it for a purpose. Now, part of the people to whom he addressed his parables understood them.

And part of them didn't. And the disciples were a little concerned about this. Why are you speaking in parables? And the Lord said, all right, this is in fulfillment of the scripture in Isaiah's pulpit.

These people, God is going to speak to them in parables so they won't understand. Somebody says, this I can hardly understand. Why would God want anybody not to understand his will, not to understand the truth? Well, these people, in Isaiah's pulpit, these people have heard the truth and turned from it.

Now, this is a very serious thing. Because I think it's possible today. Now, here we have God hardening the hearts.

This has been called, in theological terms, the judicial hardening of the hearts. But let us remember, please, that God never hardens the heart until the heart has first been hardened against God. God is going to have the last word in this controversy.

And when people will not accept the truth of God, he'll even go so far as to send them a lie, those that wouldn't believe the truth. And we read that in the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians. That's going to take place.

All right, you won't believe the truth. I'm going to send you a lie. Do you believe that? He deliberately hardens the heart.

Now, this is a serious thing. For a person to get so far along, and these people were that far along, God said, you are not going to share the good things that I have. Now, this leads us to consider the problem of the unpardonable sin.

It's a sin against the Holy Spirit. It's not a sin against the Lord Jesus. We need to talk about the unpardonable sin because there are a lot of people that give them trouble.

Now, as far as our Lord Jesus is concerned, he says, if you sin against the Son of Man, you can be forgiven. But if you sin against the Holy Spirit, you'll not be forgiven. Now, I know that some theologians tell us that this problem was peculiar to Jews alone.

I wish I could just say that. I'm not so sure. I know it did apply to the Jews.

But when the Holy Spirit leads a person so far into the truth of God, and he says, no, I don't want it, the spirit may stop striving. And he says, he promises, my spirit shall not always strive with man. Yet the days of his flesh shall be 120 years.

Now, that's God's prerogative. But it's a serious, serious matter. Now, the reason that I speak of the unpardonable sin is because you may have somebody that will tell you this.

I've sinned away my day of grace and I can't be saved. Now, if they have any desire or any concern about being saved, they haven't committed the unpardonable sin. If there's any concern there.

The person who has committed the unpardonable sin has absolutely no concern. The Spirit of God is not dealing with him at all. And I'm not going to say who has committed and who hasn't.

I think that I talked with a man not recently, or not too long ago. Recently, rather. I tried to tell him he was in the hospital.

I tried to tell him the gospel story. And he says, oh, I've heard that all my life. And he served notice upon me.

I don't want to hear any more of it. Now, he had made the decision. Not God.

He made the decision. When people are brought before the judgment of the Great White Throne and consigned to hell, it will simply be for the reason, and the book, sir, opens, it will simply be for the reason of determining their decrees. Their degrees.

I said decrees almost. I'm trying, I'm going to emphasize the G, the degrees of judgment. As a matter of fact, all the judgments simply determine the degree of punishment or the degree of reward.

Now, the reason I say that, we are the ones that determine where we're going to spend eternity. Isn't that a terrible responsibility? Think of it, if you will. We are the ones that make the choice.

Some people make the wrong choice. Now, the Lord is talking about that kind of situation here. He will not, he's speaking in parables.

He is deliberately hiding the truth of these things from these people to whom he's talking. Isaiah said they closed their eyes. They turned away.

And God is going to have the last word. God is not mocked. The judicial hardening of the heart is a terrible, terrible thing.

But, take comfort in this. God never hardens the heart until the heart has first been hardened again. Take that consolation.

Let that be your consolation. Now, for anybody to have any concern in the matter of their salvation, it is a strong indication that the Spirit is still dealing with them. They have not committed the unpardonable sin.

But I'm not so sure that it can't be committed today. Now, I shouldn't say that because Satan will take advantage of it and he'll tell somebody, you have committed the unpardonable sin. You can't be saved.

I don't preach that very often. And I've got a select audience here this morning. I don't think I'm going to throw you by this kind of preaching.

I don't think I'm going to stumble anybody here. But I don't like to preach that because Satan will tell them, you can't be saved. You've committed the unpardonable sin.

Well, they haven't. If they have any concern at all about the matter of their soul's salvation, they haven't. They haven't done it.

God is still dealing with them. But I say this by way of explanation to explain the fact, the seeming inconsistency upon the part of the Lord. He would not talk to these people so they could understand.

He hid it from their minds. He says it's for you to understand, to his disciples. But it's not for them to understand.

I say this because some might accuse the Lord of just confining people to hell. They might go into hyper-Calvinism and say that God determines who's going to heaven and God determines who's going to hell. And they might take advantage.

But I don't want it to be that way. Now, this is the beginning of the parable. And this parable has a very particular place among the parables of our Lord Jesus.

This is kind of an introductory. These are introductory thoughts in your quarter of study. Here's something that I think is omitted from Matthew's account.

But I'd like to refer to Mark's account of this parable. Mark, chapter 4. He gives a parable of the sower at the beginning of the chapter, as we have in Matthew. The fact that he sat on the sea.

He speaks the parable to them. And he goes through it just as we've gone through it thus far. And then he says in verse 13 of the 4th chapter of Mark, And he says unto them, Know ye not this parable? And how then can ye know all parables? Now, this parable was an introductory parable.

And the Lord, in this parable, explains it. He gives the application. That you and I might have a clue to carry into the other parables.

Now, in this 13th chapter of Matthew, he gives two parables, and he gives the explanation for these parables. The parable of the tares and the wheat. The parable of the four types of soil.

The Lord does not leave that for us to solve. But he does leave some parables for us to solve. But he does give us the clue.

And that's important. So the Lord says there in Mark 4, If you don't know this parable, how are you going to know any of them? This is an introductory parable. And what an important one it is, because the Lord gives us the clue in solving the parable.

He explains it later. The four types of soil. Now, the four types of soil represent four different responses to the word of God.

The good seed is the word of God. You would have to say these represent the hearts, the minds of the people who live in the heart. And the scripture, of course, does refer to the mind.

It isn't the organ that's matted. It's the mind. It's your innermost being.

The heart is used to illustrate it because that's about as far in as you can get of any part of the body. About as sheltered as any organ in the body. So when the Lord speaks of the heart, he's speaking of our innermost being.

And he speaks to the heart. And I think that these four types of soil represent four conditions of the heart in regard to the word of God. I'm so glad for this parable.

To me, it is tremendously, tremendously important. Now, in this parable, we'll read the Lord's explanation and then we'll try to make some comments on it. Chapter 13, verse 18.

Matthew 13 and 18. Hear ye, therefore, the parable of the sower. When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.

That's his understanding, of course. This is he which receiveth the seed by the wayside. But he that receiveth the seed in the sown places, the same as he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it.

He hath, yes, hath he, not root in himself, but dureth for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that receiveth seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word.

And he becometh unfruitful. But he that receiveth the seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit. And then of course, some 100 fold, some 60, some 30.

Now, the seed has to be the word of God. I think if any of you learned the memory text today, you had to realize that. But just in case some of us didn't, I happen to know it, but 1 Peter chapter 1, this is the memory verse for this lesson today.

Good one, well chosen. 1 Peter chapter 1, wait. Yes, that's right, chapter 1. Verse 23.

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. The word of God is spoken of as incorruptible seed. It has life in it.

You pick up a seed, and that little seed as you look at it looks so insignificant, but there is life in that seed. And that life, God, under certain circumstances, can cause that seed to take root and grow. But the seed dies first, that's God's order.

As we read in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, the seed dies, and then out of that death God brings life. But there is life in that seed, and the word of God is like that seed. It has life in it.

And the word of God is that seed that is sown. Now as the sower sows the seed, it looks for all like he's just throwing it away. In those days, they broadcast their seed.

Incidentally, the word broadcast is not a radio term, it's an agricultural term. The radio people borrowed it from the farmers. So broadcast simply means that you throw the seed out.

That's broadcasting. Well, in a sense, radio waves are like that too. They throw them out.

They don't know where they're going, but they throw them out. So they call it broadcasting. But the old-time farmer, he had the bag of seed planted by his side, and he would grab it, and then he would spray it, let it go over the top of his fingers to give it uniform distribution, and he'd walk along and he'd develop a kind of a rhythm, a step, and he'd just work his way across the field sowing the seed.

And I suppose that had we done it, we would say, when we'd drill it right into the ground, we'd make sure it worked fine. He said he's sure thrown that away. My! Throwing good seed away like that? And you know, it seems like sometimes when we, especially over the radio, I think of it, although I know, it seems like I'm throwing the seed away, doesn't it? I sit there before that microphone in my study.

I make these tapes. Sometimes I think, who's going to listen? Is anybody going to listen? Seems like you're throwing it away, doesn't it? Just throwing it out into the clear air. There are people out there, they're listening.

Let's hope. They're good, good ground hearers. But so many times, we do that same thing.

We give out tracks. We sow the seed, and we're told to sow our, to sow the seed and to sow beside all waters, incidentally. We should sow beside all waters because you don't know what's going to grow, this or that.

That's not a verbatim quote. But you don't know what's going to grow, so you're just to sow the seed. And you know, we can do that.

Paul speaks about sowing the seed, and Paul is watered. The dog gets the increase. Now, you've got to sow it, and at times, I admit, it seems like you're just throwing it away.

Will they pay any attention? Will they read it? Will they leave their radio on? Will they listen? There's only one thing you can do. That's sow it. You can just sow the seed, that's all.

And so, it would seem here that the Lord is using this method of showing them, now don't get discouraged about this matter of being a testimony. It's going to reach somebody. It's not going to reach everybody.

As a matter of fact, here's something here that I think of in connection with the parable of the sower. Only one of those four types of soil produced any result. Does Satan ever bother you? Ah, what's the use? Nobody's going to pay any attention to you anyhow.

And then there is that possibility of seeing, a stony ground here, somebody that receives the word, the wayside of course, which speaks to those whose hearts are so hardened. The wayside probably was that part of the ground that was at one time plowed up. But because of access into the field and out of the field, you have to use a path of some kind, you beat it down.

And the wayside, the seed falls out there as the sower sows the seed. The seed falls out there and it can't get into the ground. And it just lays on top and the birds come along.

And they pick it up. They catch it away. Now, it doesn't say that in Matthew, but I think it's the devil that's to blame for this.

Catching away the seed. Yes it is. The wicked one catches away that which is sown.

I thought I had to go to Mark, but I don't. It's right here. The wicked one catches away that seed that's sown in the heart.

I've seen this happen. God gives diversions. Now, I don't know whether the heart has been so hardened that the seed can't get in at all, but the birds see it.

And they take away the seed so that it won't have a chance to get in. Now, conceivably, if the seed did lay there long enough, perhaps a splashing rain would splash a thin amount of soil over that seed and it would take root. But the hardness of the soil, plus the birds, render this part of the sowing ineffective.

This has been called the heart that has been hardened. The seed just doesn't get in, so it lays on top. So Satan comes along and he furnishes a diversion.

He fills the minds of people after they hear the word of God, and this will explain and this perhaps will comfort you. I think there's a good deal of comfort in this parable as far as I'm concerned. Maybe you've been discouraged by trying to witness.

The Lord says, Expect it. Don't expect. Every time that you speak out the word of God, don't expect it to be effective.

Now, there's nothing wrong with the seed. Absolutely nothing wrong with the seed. It's the grounds.

And people vary. Their response is different. Now, I've seen this happen.

I recall with my brother, we had some meetings down in Kansas years ago. We took our vacation time and went to the little church building way down in the rural area in Kansas and had some meetings. There was a young woman who came to that meeting and she was interested.

And I knew she was interested. Seemingly she was. She came with her grandmother.

And one night as we approached the chapel or the church building, there was a car drove up and some fellas in a car waved at this girl and called her over to the car. Well, I was very, very discouraged about this, very apprehensive. And the upshot of it was she got in the car and drove off with the boys.

We didn't see her again. The devil is active in keeping the word of God and getting down into the heart. And that's the case here.

The word never got in. It didn't have a chance to get in. She heard it, but it didn't have a chance to get in.

Her grandmother listened. I thought maybe her grandmother was going to get saved. I'll have to tell you this.

It's just, it's humorous, but I'll have to tell you anyway. I watched the grandmother during the meeting. And the meetings were just about over.

We didn't get any older. You know that. But I was concerned about the way that people were responding.

And the last night of the meetings, the grandmother made her way down the aisle, and I knew she was headed for me. And I says, Oh Lord, give me wisdom to know what to say to this lady. And she says, Mr. Baird, I've got a question for you.

I sent out my prayer. And she said, I want to know something. And I said, Well, I hope I can tell you.

I hope I can make it plain. Whatever you want to know. And she says, Which one of you boys is the oldest? Well, I was able to answer her question.

I could have been discouraged, couldn't I? The Lord says, You expect that sort of thing. Don't give up. You're not going to, you're not going to bat a hundred percent.

You're not going to bat a thousand. No, you're not. Not when you sow and you reap.

You're not going to bat a thousand. Now, the next kind of ground is the stony ground. That would be the earth that was stirred and plowed.

But there was some dead rock there. It's called the stony ground. And some of this earth is pulled up over the stone.

And the seed light there. Now, the stony ground here was that person who heard the word of God and received it and lied that it took root immediately and it all went up in leaves. There was no root system developed.

The ground was so, so shallow that it all went to leaves, stalk and leaves. The ground, the root system didn't develop. Couldn't.

So that's actually why the growth was so rapid. It was because it was all going to top. The root system wasn't developing.

Now, there are a lot of people that hear the word of God and accept it mentally. And it's exciting to them. It sounds wonderful to them.

But there's not the matter of conviction. There's not the matter of the root. It doesn't get into their being.

And these people are those people that make a real splash. Everything goes to leaves. Now, I might say that in this parable that the secret of God's success is seen in fruit bearing.

Now, leaves always speak of profession. The Lord said, and as he went along the way he saw a fig tree that had leaves on it. And he went over and it should have had fruit on it.

But it didn't. And the Lord cursed it. Now, and it dried up.

Well, at least the apostle said he cursed it. The Lord said, no fruit grow on thee from him. Now, that fruit tree, I may say, was a picture of Israel.

Now, God came looking for fruit. And all he found was leaves. Every leaf on that fig tree said, I'm a fig tree.

I'm a fig tree. See? See my leaves? I'm a fig tree. And you know the same thing is true about a certain type of hearers.

Everything is leaves. Everything is tough. I'm a Christian.

I'm a Christian. No roots. No convictions.

It's simply an academic acceptance of scripture. Like they receive anything that they learn at school. It does not get in.

There's no fruit. And the Lord wants us to realize that. Now, the reason I'm making the point of this is that some people are so terribly, terribly discouraged when they see people who make professions of salvation and they go on for a while, pretty soon they're all gone.

Don't be discouraged. Expect it. The Lord says, this is the type of ground.

Expect it. But don't give up, because it happens. I, Mr. Methaven, the Christian man that helps us build our chapel, supervise the building of the chapel there in Boer, Colorado, where we lived for so many years, was a Christian man.

He was a Nazarene. He went to the Nazarene church. I loved that man.

He was a Christian man, but he did believe in the falling away doctrine. He was Arminian in his theology. He believed that you could save, be saved, and be lost.

I used to argue with him. I'd say, Ned, you're going to be in heaven in spite of yourself. And I was sure of my ground when I said that.

Oh, Ken, he says, I'm not worried about myself. But he says, I'm thinking about these people that come to church and join church, and they just seem to have such a good time, and pretty soon they're gone, and you never see them again. They turn from it.

So he believed in the falling away doctrine. That's the only way he could explain it. They become unsaved.

They didn't get saved in the first place. There's a stony ground here. Nothing there.

No roots. No conviction. Now the Lord says, don't be overthrown by this thing.

Don't be discouraged by this thing. Expect it. And I do expect it.

Then there's the stony ground. Or I mean the thorny ground, I'm sorry. Here.

And the Lord says of them, verse 22, He also that receiveth seed among the poor, is he that heareth the word, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. Here again it takes root. At least it gets into the mind, and gets into the intelligence, and takes root, but it doesn't develop a root system because it's choked.

It's got too much competition. There are the thorns. And they grow up.

They grow up around it. They take all the nourishment away. And so the Lord says of this type of hearer, the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

He doesn't bear fruit at all. He just, this type of hearer, this type of person, has so many troubles. And I've seen it happen.

I went to witness to a lady once by her invitation. Went to talk with her about the things of God. And she had so many troubles, and so many trials, and she talked so fast, and so much, I couldn't get a word in.

I just, I really tried to get there. And she just, her mind was completely distracted. Now this is not necessarily satanic.

Now the first group is satanic. But, well I suppose Satan could use the deceitfulness of riches to to throw it. But this is just the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches.

So many people are so occupied with what they can buy with their money, and so money minded, so absolutely materialistic in their viewpoint, that even if they hear the word of God, it just doesn't make any progress. Their thoughts and their hearts are intent upon making their millions. And the deceitfulness of riches, they think that they can find satisfaction.

Now there's a bit of deceit here. Riches will tell you, if you get enough of me, you'll be happy. But you find out it's a lie.

Most of the people that, most of the people that are rich are not happy. They're really not happy. And riches would say now, oh if I just had a million dollars, many people would say, if I just had a million dollars I'd be happy.

No you wouldn't. You'd be worrying about how to keep it. You'd be worrying about how to spend it.

And you'd be worrying about keeping as much of it from the government as you can. It's not the way to happiness. Money is not the way to happiness.

No. If we have food and raiment, and are satisfied, we're rich. Paul tells us that.

In his last epistle, I think, as I recall. But they think it. It's either the cares or the snares.

The riches are the snares, and then there are the cares. They're both just as effective in keeping the person from bearing fruit. Now, we come to the last one.

The good ground. Thank God for the good ground. Thank God we've got at least one-fourth one-fourth of this parable is productive.

The good ground. He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Now, the plowshares got into the ground and plowed it up.

I've often thought of this as being the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God getting the plowshare in the ground and turning it over, turning it over. You know what? When the Spirit of God does deal with people, he does plow them up.

This is a soft ground. It has to be plowed up. I have seen this happen.

I've heard of it happening in cases of people. They come and their faces change during the course of a series of meetings, gospel meetings. We used to have them.

Now we don't have them. Like I said, perhaps. But I've seen them come.

They're quite adamant at first. Their faces are hard, but when the word of God hammers away, they soften up. And when the Spirit of God deals, when the plowshare of the Spirit of God gets in, he turns a few things over, but he makes the ground soft.

It's the good ground. It's the ground that has been plowed. You know, I don't think that we get saved.

I don't think that we get... Well, I know we don't get saved unless the Spirit of God deals with us. But it's the Spirit of God that convicts us of our sin and he upsets us many, many times. He upsets people.

He stirs the soil. He makes it good ground. He softens the ground so that the seed can get in.

And finally the seed gets in. But even here, the results are not uniform. In some instances there are the hundredfold, the sixtyfold, and the thirtyfold yields.

Well, I spoke of this as being people. These are people that yield some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Here again, you don't see that which you'd like to see.

Why aren't they all hundredfold? This is the good seed. Why should there be hundredfold Christians? Paul was one, I'm sure. He was a hundredfold Christian.

He yielded a hundredfold to God. But then there's the sixty. And then there's the thirty.

Why should it be that way? Why isn't it all a hundred? You know, this is quite challenging when you think of it, that there should be three degrees of fruit bearing, even in the good soil. Here we've gone over three types of soil that will produce nothing after we've gone out there with the trouble of sowing that seed. Now we get to the good ground and there's still some discipline.

Why? Why shouldn't there be a hundredfold from all of us? It's the same seed, isn't it? It's the same spirit, isn't it? It's the same God, isn't it? It's the same Savior that died for us, isn't it? It's the same life that indwells each and every one of us, isn't it? Does the Spirit of God, does the Spirit of God play favorites? It's a good seed. It's all on equal grounds. It doesn't bring equal results.

Why? Challenging, isn't it? Why? Now I'm not trying to get you to categorize yourself this morning, but if you want to, go ahead. I can't stop you. Which is it? Thirty? Sixty? A hundred? I think that we have to recognize the fact that Paul was a hundred, he was certainly a hundredfold hearer of the Word of God.

And I think probably the explanation for this, now I am not entirely satisfied and I'm open for more knowledge on it. But as far as the Apostle Paul, let's not concentrate too much about this sixty-fold business and this thirty-fold business, it's just kind of embarrassing. But let's think about the Apostle Paul now.

I think the Apostle Paul realized that he was the chief of sinners. He said so. There in the first chapter of 1 Timothy, he says, This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the

world to save sinners of whom I am chief.

And then he goes on to speak about the fact that the only reason that God saved him at all was just as an example of his mercy. That's the way Paul referred to himself. He just wanted to make an example of him to see what the grace of God could do for the man like the Apostle Paul.

Now, I think as far as I'm concerned that the reason that the Apostle Paul yielded so much by way of fruit to God was because God's grace was so great in saving him. He was the chief of sinners. He says so himself.

Now, that doesn't mean that he was licentious. That doesn't mean that he was lewd. I don't think that he went in for the baser sort of thing.

But it was his pride. It was his opposition to the Lord Jesus. And he even went so far as to kill some of the Christians.

When the vote was given against him, he put in the black stone. He caused their death. Now, it seems that Paul realized what he was and was God's marvelous grace in saving him.

And that seemed to be the motivation for his whole life. I'd like to give this explanation that perhaps our motivation for the things of God is in direct proportion as we realize what a trophy of grace we really are. How God has saved us.

What we would have been had he left us to our own devices. I don't know how to explain this except perhaps by that method. That it's as we realize the tremendous grace of God that he ever picked us up.

That he saved our souls when we could have gone on to hell. And I think that it's as we as that wave of thanksgiving comes over us and the joy of knowing I'm not going to be in hell, I'm going to be in heaven because God loved me and died for me. It's as we really live like that that it bears fruit.

And we really try to give back to God. We really try to compensate to the Lord Jesus that which he has done for us. But, you know, I'm glad that it turned.

Now, I don't think I don't think that we should be discouraged even in the good path. It bears fruit. Thank God it bears fruit.

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