

AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: “The Parable of the Seed and the Sower” Luke 8

Scripture of Lesson: Luke’s Gospel 8: 4-15

1. Significance of the parable

- a. Lord Jesus spoke this parable that illustrates the fundamentals of how a human soul is saved using a common tale of which everyone is familiar—that of the planting of seeds in a field by a farmer.
- b. As a field requires the right seed to produce the right fruits for harvest, the soul of human being requires the word of God to be planted in it, to take roots and to grow to bear spiritual and natural fruits that are acceptable to God.

He shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. [Psalm 1: 3]

c. God’s design for human souls

- i. God designed the man’s soul to be like a good soil, willing to accept God’s word, allow it to take roots in him, and to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to nurture the growth of the Inner Man towards full maturity of Jesus Christ.

till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; [Eph. 4:13]

- ii. God designed that we humans are responsible for the condition of our hearts – what things we allow to remain and to grow and what things we reject and remove from within us. We make such choices daily consciously and unconsciously. At the same time God allows Satan to work in this world until the end of the world so that we receive constant attacks and approaches from the Satan’s forces that come to us to destroy and harm the soul and the true life in it. This is very much like a field left untended is soon full of weeds and brambles with no useful fruits to the farmer.

And the Lord said to Satan, “From where do you come?” Satan answered the Lord and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.” [Job 2:2]

2. The elements of the parable

- a. The seed: the word of God [v. 11] The word of God is compared to the seed, which is scattered to the fields, which is the world. The word of God has been prepared through the stewardship of the Jewish people through the ages; then the Scripture was translated into English by the order of King James. This Bible has been used to preach the word of God to many parts of the world with God’s blessing.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” [Romans 1: 16]

- b. The sower: God’s messengers who preach God’s word. The messengers who were called and submitted their lives to God’s leading took the word of God and spread it to all nations and peoples. God depends on those who are willing to take the gospel of Christ to the world to bring the message of the salvation of God to the needy and seeking souls.

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. [Mark 16: 15]

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? [Rom. 10: 14]

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. [Rom. 10: 16-17]

c. The three types of soil: The types of soil refer to the kinds of hearts of the listeners. We note that receiving the seed itself is a blessing to the soil. How the seed is received is totally up to the condition of the soil. God has given us the 'free will' to respond to His words. The responsibility of preparing the soil/heart is with the owner of the heart, that is, ourselves. God sends His messengers with His word and the message is spoken to people. Our hearts' conditions determine the outcome of the word of God, which either takes root, germinates and grows into a mature tree that bears fruits that bring joy to God's heart; or fails to grow and die.

i. Wayside soil: The seeds are trodden down and eaten up by the birds [v. 12] These souls, though they hear the gospel, their hearts are full of the traffic of this world and of Satan and thus the word never bears the fruits God desires. Thus, they never accept God's word and are lost eternally.

And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [Mark 4:15]

ii. Stony soil: In this type of soil the seeds do not germinate for lack of moisture. They receive the word joyfully at first but the seeds never take roots into the soil because of the hardness of the rocks in the soil. These refer to people who accept the gospel initially but do not last nor grow, thus they fall away when faced with tests or temptations.

But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God [Rom 2:5]

iii. Thorny soil: This type of soil is full of cares, riches and pleasures of this life. Thus, the word of God takes root but the life never matures and is smothered by the hindrances of life.

And the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [Mark 4:19]

iv. Good soil: This type of soil has been prepared well by the owner by removing stones, thorns and weeds, is well watered and tilled to receive the seeds. The word of God is planted, takes root and brings forth life, which grows without inhibition and, through endurance, bears much fruit that brings joy and gladness to God's heart.

By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. [John 15:8]

Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness [2 Cor 9:10]

3. Applications for today's Christians

a. Let us prepare our hearts for the tree of life to grow in us.

i. We need to have removed the hardness in us, including the unbelief, callousness, blaming, unforgiveness, ungratefulness, sarcasm, jealousy, etc. God will help us if we earnestly seek His help with this trash removal task.

ii. We need to manage our lives so that the cares of life, greed for money and pursuit of pleasures do not mar the work of God in us.

iii. We need to say 'NO' to the numerous attacks of Satan and his cohorts including the immoral, cruel and dirty forces of this world, but consciously say 'YES' to the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit who approaches us.

- b. Let us read the Scripture, listen to the word of God and nurture the spiritual life in us.
 - i. Let us make it a daily habit to read the Bible. Subscription to a Bible website for a daily reading plan is a good way to get into this habit.
 - ii. Let us set aside at least 10 minutes twice daily to mediate on this scripture you read and to pray so that the scripture takes roots, germinate and grow in your heart and soul. You will find that, as your daily QT becomes a habit, you will want to increase the length of the QT periods, which you should do within reason for increased spiritual growth.
 - iii. Sooner or later you will begin to taste the fruits of your spiritual life, such as increased faith in God, appreciation for the life and sacrifice of Jesus for you, gratefulness of God's blessings for your life and the joy of the prospect for the eternal life with God in heaven.
 - iv. May God help you on this journey of heavenly blessing!

Discussion topic:

1. *What are the conditions of my heart now and how can I compare it to the four types of soil in this parable?*
2. *Does preparing the field alone bring a good harvest? What must I do to nurture the growth of the life of Jesus in me?*
3. *Can the farmer cause the seed to germinate and grow? Can we take credit for the life of Jesus in us? Let us compare the power of life in a little seed to the power of God imbedded in every living thing created by God.*