

Research: Parable of the Sower and the Seed Luke 8:4-8, 11-15

The subject of this parable is receptivity. The verb “to hear” (akouo) is used seven times. “Take heed how ye hear” will be the great lesson for Jesus’ listeners. “To show them that the only true fruit of good teaching is holiness of life, and that there were many dangers which might prevent its growth, Jesus told them his first parable, the Parable of the Sower” (Farrar 172).

“The parable of the sower draws its lessons from the four different kinds of soil rather than from the work of the sower. The preacher puts the message of the kingdom into people's hearts as a farmer puts seed into the ground. But people's hearts vary just as the soil in different places varies. Some people hear the message but do not understand it because they are not interested. Others show early interest but soon give up because they have no deep spiritual concern. Others are too worried about the affairs of everyday life. Only a few respond to the message in faith, but when they do their lives are changed and a spiritual harvest results” (Bridgeway Bible Commentary).

4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

The word “parable” in Greek is parabole, which means “a teaching aid cast alongside the truth being taught.”

5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

“Way side” indicates a soil that gives the seed no opportunity to sprout. “In Palestine the common ground was divided into long narrow strips which each man could cultivate as he wished. There was no fence or wall round the strips, but between each of them ran a narrow ribbon of ground perhaps not much more than three feet across. These narrow dividing ribbons were rights of way. Anyone could walk up and down them. The result was that they were beat as hard as a pavement by the feet of countless passers-by. When any seed fell on them it might as well have fallen on the road for all the chance it had of getting into the ground” (Barclay),

6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

“Rocky ground” is soil that chokes the seed after it has grown before it can yield fruit. “It had no depth. If the seed fell there it would sprout quickly; but the moisture and the nourishment it needed to withstand the heat of the sun were simply not there and it soon withered and died” (Barclay).

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

“Thorny ground” – “At the moment that ground would look good enough. It is easy to make a garden look clean by simply turning over the soil. But if the weeds have been allowed to seed the seeds are still there in the earth and it is proverbial that one year’s seeds make seven years’ weeds. So in that ground the seeds of the weeds were still there; the weeds always grow more strongly than the good seeds; and there was only one possible result – the good seed had the life choked out of it” (Barclay).

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold.

“Good ground is the fertile and rich soil. “It was receptive enough to take the seed in; it had depth to allow the seed to let down its roots and draw the nourishment and the moisture it needed; it was clean enough to give the seed an unhindered change to grow” (Barclay).

“This parable is one of the few for which Jesus actually gives his listeners the “Key” or spiritual interpretation.

11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

What the seed does in the ground is the same as what the word of God does in thought. Our mental condition determines the fruitage of the word. What we plant in thought, determines the outcome of our lives.