

# The Sower and the Seed

*Gospel According to Luke*

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**Bible Text:** Luke 8:1-15

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If you will, look with me in your Bibles to Luke 8. Luke 8 as we continue our study here through this Gospel according to Luke. I'll begin reading in verse 1 and read for us down to verse 15 and I want to speak with you on "The Sower and the Seed," perhaps a parable that is familiar to each one of us but my prayer is that the LORD be our Teacher to open it up even more so to our souls and not to come at this presuming we already know what this is about. May the Spirit of Grace make us all eager learners of His Word, the Gospel.

Luke 8,

1 And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, 2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, 3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance. 4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: 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. 6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. 8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? 10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. 11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard,

go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. 16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. 17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. 18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

There's a lot here and I pray that the LORD will direct my thoughts as I attempt to open up this portion, but ever cognizant of the fact that if the Spirit's not our Teacher, anything I have to say is just going to be a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

But what we have here, first of all, is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God illustrated. All of us like illustrations and I'm getting on up in years but I still like to read storybooks. I was over the other night at our grandson's and reading through some of the little books he's got and remembering when, you know, I used to read these when I was younger, and there's a side of us that likes stories, that's just how the LORD has made us, well, first of all, we saw already in verse 1 that our LORD went throughout every city and village preaching and showing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. Now natural-minded religious people would interpret that to mean He was going into every city and village and attempting to get as many followers as He could. How many preachers have you heard interpret our LORD's coming, His ministry, His preaching, His dying, in that sense? He really would like to save the world, but alas. And even taking that on down into the parable of the sower and the seed, they will say, "Well, you know, we have to beware of these particular enemies of the word that can spring up or take away the seed, the thorns, the persecution, the sun," and so they put it on us as if we've got to be on guard, but what soil do you know out there that determines its own fertility, so to speak? Whether or not it's going to produce or not? Whether it's going to be 100-fold or not? Does the soil determine that? No, it's passive.

It depends on God bringing forth that fruit and I will tell you it's the same thing with regard to the preaching of the Gospel. There is a determined end by God which will be fruitful in those hearers and I believe that's why in verse 8, the LORD said, "And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Just the very nature, even as what we read here in verse 10, the nature of a parable is to exclude. Isn't that what the LORD said? When the disciples asked, "What might this parable be," verse 10, "he said, Unto you it is given." There is that Seed, there is that Soil that God has purposed should bring forth Fruit to what? "To know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." Do you see the connection between verse 10 and here in verse 1? He went preaching Glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God but they're not Glad Tidings to everybody. They will be Glad Tidings only to those that God has purposed to save and that God in His Grace has given to His Son the LORD Jesus Christ and for whom the LORD Jesus Christ came into the world.

You say, "What about the rest?" Well, read the Scriptures. Verse 10, to others this will pass in parables, "that seeing they might not see," in other words they've got physical eyes, the problem isn't with the eyes, they can read what we're reading here in the Scriptures, "and hearing they might not," what? "Understand." Christ told Nicodemus, he came with a certain knowledge, called Him the Master, none could be a Teacher such as You are but what He's sent from God, he said a lot of good things but what did our LORD say to Nicodemus? "Except a man be born again he cannot," what? "See," perceive, understand, receive, embrace, "the kingdom of God."

So here's our LORD and as we saw last time, going from place to place. He wasn't trying to get everybody saved. When you read the rest of the Scriptures, you'll see that He'd cross an entire lake to deliver one demoniac of the Gadarenes and then He got in His boat and went His way. He sat at one well for one purpose, the Samaritan woman. He said, "I must needs go through Samaria." He was on a mission to save each one that the Father had given Him and to the rest, as it says here, they're left to their own blindness, to their own understanding.

You know, we've quoted and I've had people quote me, that from my youth up, Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your path." You can just like rat-tat-tat. But you go back and think, "Trust in the LORD." Where does True Faith originate? It's not in me. So, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart." If He's given you that heart to trust, continue to trust. That's what it means. "And lean not on your own understanding." One of the worst judgments that God could bring on any one of us is to leave us to our own understanding even with regard to this Word. We sing it, "Pass me not, O Gentle Savior/ Hear my humble cry/ While on others Thou art calling/ Please, please, please do not pass me by."

And I believe that's what our LORD cried here in verse 8, "when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Now those that Christ came to save don't fit. You see, this is where the first blindness manifests itself because who He saves does not fit our understanding, who we think he ought to save. And I find it interesting here, well, beginning in verse 8 it says and the 12 were with Him. You think about these 12. These were not trained in the rabbinical schools. They didn't have a high education. They were fishermen. They were country folk and yet those are the ones the LORD saved, even among them was one hated, Matthew the tax collector. And you think about these following our LORD around while He was preaching the Kingdom, I'm sure the Pharisees and here's the blindness, stood off and kind of looked at this motley crew, here's this One Who says He's the Messiah and they're trying to fit Him, because they were waiting for a Messiah so they're trying to figure out where He fits in their thinking. Then you look over here and see there's not a one of them that Christ has called, one of them and they're thinking, "There's something not right here." We're going to see this next time because there's too much here, we want to look at Who the Sower is and Who the Seed is, but next time when we come back, look at the ground, the soil, what that represents.

When the LORD, in the parable, talks about the seed falling by the wayside, it's talking about there, those that saw and heard the same things as anybody else in that time and yet did not bring forth any Fruit. In fact, in verse 12 you can see that explanation, "Those by the way side are they that hear," but hear how? Hear physically just like you're hearing me right now, any that listen to this message on SermonAudio might hear the message with their physical ears but what? "Then cometh the devil," Satan, the adversary, "and taketh away the word out of their hearts," why? "Lest they should believe and be saved."

Now Bob just read for us from Matthew 13 and there's a connection with what we're reading here and what he read, but you remember, I don't want you to turn there now but you remember that it says the field owner sowed the seed and then the enemy came and sowed the tares and the reaction of the workers was, "Do you want us to go out and pull up the tares?" And what did the owner say? "No, let them both grow together." What I want you to see is this is all in God's purpose that the only ones that the devil ultimately can take that Word from are those that belong to him anyway, the Judases, where Christ said, "I've chosen 12 of you but one of you is the son of perdition."

You know, these things He's purposed and we know, even from the story of Job, that Satan can't even lift a finger but what God gives him the authority to do so. So if it says here in verse 12, "then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved," that was purposed. That was that soil where that seed fell. There was a physical hearing but it was not purposed that it should bring forth Fruit but there is as described here in verse 8, the other fell on Good Ground. Three-fourths of these were purposed to go away but the fourth it says here fell on Good Ground. You think, "What good ground?" The only Good Ground is that which is in Christ. There is no other Good Ground. So if this Seed fell on Good Ground, it must be that God purposed that it would bring forth that Fruit in its time.

That's the Kingdom of God. When you hear the word 'Kingdom,' there's a King that rules and Who is accomplishing His purpose and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, "What doest thou?" Now if we've not been taught that, we're going to miss everything else in this story. It's just going to seem like a disjointed story and all kinds of interpretations but if you understand this Key of the Kingdom of God, from eternity God purposed to save a people and pass by the rest and for that people Christ came into this world and we're going to see that as the Scriptures say, the Sower is Christ.

How many people do you know that get into this thing of, "Oh, we're the sowers. Let's go out there and sow this field." Christ in this parable right here, at the beginning of His ministry, in His public ministry is making a division, making a dividing between who would hear and who wouldn't, He is describing Who He is and why He came and what He would accomplish in spite of all of the thorns and the opposition and persecution and everything that should come even against Him, that His will would be accomplished.

So that's how we see the Gospel of the Kingdom illustrated and I asked Bob to read that entire chapter of Matthew 13, and if the LORD gave you attention as he was reading it, I know there's different parables in that chapter, just like we're going to run into different

parables here to the Gospel according to Luke, but they all have the same message, they have the same theme. The one who does the acting, I don't care whether it's casting the net into the sea, I don't care whether it's sowing the seed, I don't care whether it's going and buying a field and finding a pearl of great price in the field. How many messages have you heard where you're the one that's supposed to go and buy the field and give all in order to obtain the pearl of great price? I've heard so many messages that way and I'm just kind of blindly going along until one day as I was reading I was like, "Whoa, wait a minute here. This is backward." You know, ever since the fall, everything's been backward? Even when we read the Scriptures, the very first notion that comes to your mind, go ahead and put that aside because that's natural. "Oh, I got this." No, you don't, neither do I. Prayerfully come back to the Scriptures and ask that God would open our eyes to see Christ in it.

Now the only one who, the merchant in that parable is Christ who sold all that he had. He gave up that glory in Heaven to come and buy that field for one reason, that pearl of great price. You say, "How does that pearl of great price describe sinners that he came to save?" Well, they were a great price to God in that He had given them to His Son and that's how they're described. When you read the book of Revelation, those that the LORD has redeemed, it's not for anything in them but those that the LORD has redeemed are called precious stones and the LORD came to redeem, to bring to Himself to share that glory with those that the Father had given Him.

So that's how we see the Gospel of the Kingdom of God illustrated and here's the point right here, first of all, it's a message of hope and salvation, but for whom? Sinners. Sinners. And the LORD here is making a difference not only with the 12 that were following Him in verse 1 but in verses 2 and 3, look at these women. Now we're in a society back here in Christ's day where the women weren't even considered. They were to be seen and not heard and especially these kinds of women. You don't read where the women went into the synagogues. It was for men, it was a man's religion and works religion and yet you look at the women that the LORD came to save, the Samaritan woman, these were not upright, you know, pure women, these were sinners and that's what we see here, "certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities."

Think about somebody out there just walking around in the street just crying. Sometimes you see people even today in the street and people say, "Well, they're messed up. Or, you know, it's a mental illness." I believe there are still those today that the LORD leaves to themselves and they're demon possessed. I don't know what would change, you know. We live in a modern era where people like to talk about, "Well, they've got psychological problems," and all this, but I'll tell you this, every one of us that is born in this world, we're born under the possession, if you will, the spirit of Satan and were it not for the Grace of God delivering us out of that, it doesn't necessarily have to manifest itself outwardly like we see people out of their minds, but even being in a congregation where the Gospel's not being preached and a person having a false hope. What is Satan's purpose but to blind and to delude?

So if we have any understanding at all today, any coming and following after Christ, when it says here in verse 2, "certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities," that's what's required for any of us to truly follow after Christ. He's got to deliver us from that blindness and that darkness and that bondage that would otherwise keep us from following Him. But these weren't women that were known in society for their integrity or for their uprightness, "Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils." Why does the Scripture point these things out? Well, to show us the very kinds of people that Christ came to save, sinners. Now He didn't save everybody that has evil spirits or everybody that had infirmities. Just because He healed one didn't require Him to heal all the rest. So even here you see that this Gospel of the Kingdom that's being illustrated is to show us that it's God that determines it because there were many others that He passed by.

Then you look down in verse 3. I don't know if it struck you as I was reading it, but "Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward." Who would have ever thought that there would have been one of the LORD's elect ones in Herod's household? You just stop and think about Herod and you go, "Oh!" In fact, the LORD called him the fox and yet there was the wife of one of Herod's stewards that the LORD sought out and manifest by bringing her out and drawing her to Himself that she was the LORD's and it was for such that He came.

I kind of wonder about Herod's steward. I wonder what Herod thought about it. "Do you know your wife's out there following this madman Jesus of Nazareth?" Remember, Herod's the one that delivered, you know, Him up to Pilate. They came together, a coalition against the LORD to crucify Him, and yet here was one in his household. Just like later you read in Paul when he writes in his epistles, he says, "And those of the household of Caesar, greet you." Whoa. That was the whole reason why the LORD took Paul to Rome and sat there for 2 ½ years. Read the end of the book of Acts. He sat there and the LORD opened up the opportunity for him to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom so that some even in Caesar's household would be caused to hear.

Those are the ones that the LORD says here, "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear," and it says, "and Susanna, and many others." These are just given as examples, "many others which ministered unto him of their substance." You can go and read in Matthew 27 there the story of the crucifixion but it says there that when Christ hung there on the cross, there were women that stood there and observed Him while all the others had fled. Of all people, what society considered to be the weakest of the weak and yet it was those that the LORD sustained and they were there when they crucified our LORD. That's God's work of Grace.

So it's a message of Hope of Salvation for sinners but in verse 4, it's not everybody preaching the Gospel. Just because they mention the name of Christ doesn't mean that, you know, they're the LORD's. But it says in verse 4, "when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable." Now here we see the distinctiveness of the Message of the Gospel. It's not for everybody. It was never intended for everybody and our LORD makes that plain here because He, Himself,

explains that parable. You know, parables are, I think the simple illustration is that it's an earthly story with a Heavenly meaning and that's true. You know, you might say, "Well, how do you explain the infinite mysteries of God's Kingdom in earthly terms?" Well, Christ did it through a parable but I've also been taught and heard in the past that we want to try to make this Gospel Message just as simple as we can. Have you ever heard that? We want even the child that's sitting there to be able to understand it and believe, and you've heard the same reasoning, Christ said suffer the little children to come unto Me.

So what they do is try to water down the Message in order to put it down on a level that even a child can grab. Our LORD didn't do that. That's not the way He went about preaching the Kingdom of God and that's not how He sent his apostles out to preach. He went preaching specifically in parables in order to make a distinction and to show that any that do hear, any that do come after Him, it will be because of His work of Grace and not for anything in us.

I'm mindful of that even as I preach. I can put together messages and try to make it as simple as possible but that does not work salvation. That is not what is going to bring salvation to the heart of any here, it's got to be the work of the Spirit. And I will tell you, that no matter how simple you make it, you look at the parable of the sower and the seed, for example, how simple could our LORD have made it? He was in an agricultural society as they walked around and looked, all these things made sense, and yet grab you about four or five commentaries that are just out there, you can go and Google it online and start reading men's interpretations of this simple parable, you'll have for every man you'll have a different interpretation. And I have to admit and confess that for years even thinking I knew something of the Gospel as I would read this, I would bring my own interpretation to it and it usually had to do with how I was being taught. But I'll tell you, if you're not taught of the Spirit, you're going to go awry every time.

So here is the distinctiveness and the LORD did it on purpose of this message, to separate out. You see, He's the LORD of the harvest and it's interesting how many parables, how many terms our LORD took to Himself that involve farming because it was an agricultural society. Even when He's called the LORD of the harvest, He said, "Pray ye the LORD of the harvest." But here again, something just as simple as that, religious people will take and run with it. They'll say, "I got it. Let's have a prayer meeting. There's no enough workers out in the field so let's get together and make this thing happen." I will tell you that's why there's so-called Bible schools today. That's why there's preacher schools. It's because someone got the idea, "We need more people out in the field," and they're preacher factories.

I can't tell you how many men and women now being sent out in the field for this one reason, the LORD says pray the LORD of the harvest and send them out, but that's where they go wrong. It doesn't say pray the LORD of the harvest and get busy sending them out. What does it say, "Pray ye the LORD of the harvest that," what? "He might send forth his laborers," what? "Into his field, his harvest field." That's what our LORD is doing here and in any harvest, you watch as you drive down the road after a field has been harvested, there's little stubs left behind. There's wheat, you take that harvest and

bring it in and then when it's milled, there's wheat and then there's the chaff. You're not mixing it. It doesn't stay mixed. This is what our LORD is doing here in preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, He is the LORD of the harvest, He is the Sower and He is the Seed.

Now we're gonna come back next time, LORD willing and look at the type of soil that's described here but you say, "Well, how is He the Sower?" Verse 5, it just says, "A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side," but just if you like to underscore and here again, how quickly we read over a sentence. There are three elements that are mentioned there in that first part of verse 5, do you see it? There's a sower and there's the sowing, don't forget the verb and then there's the seed, that which was sown. A sower, the sowing and the seed. Again, different ones will interpret this in various way. They'll say, "Well, the sower's the preacher." Some say, "Well, it's the Spirit." Some say, "Well, no, that's believers as we go out and witness, we're sowing." Already if that's your thought, you've pulled it right out of the context.

When the LORD said, "A sower went out to sow his seed," He was talking about Himself. "If y'all are wondering what I'm about here, I'm here preaching you the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, let me put it in simple terms, I'm that Sower." Now you stop and think about a sower, it wasn't the master of the household typically that went out and sowed, it was his servants and it was a lowly job, being out there in the heat, you know, sowing the seed. But that's the picture that the LORD gives of Himself in coming into this world. Not as these self-righteous religious people all in their pomp and circumstance and prettied up to appear as something before men, here was a sower. Just like He takes the term shepherd. No one ever considered a shepherd but a shepherd with his sheep, a sower with his seed. You know, it pleased God and Christ coming into this world that He should humble Himself and take on, what? The form of a servant. And that's why most people miss Him. Left to their blindness, they don't see God in Christ, just like these didn't. But a few like these women and some others, the disciples, motley crew, why do they believe? Why do they follow Him? Because He opened their eyes. He directed His Word to them.

You say, "Well, prove to me that the sower is Christ." Well, if you listened while Bob was reading, this was an open Book test so you should have gotten it. Matthew 13. And this is why, we read these things and think, "Okay, la-di-da," but it's right there. Have you ever had a test like that in school where it was open book and you missed it and you blamed the teacher? You say, "Well, you gave us some that wasn't in the book." And so the teacher says, "Well, here, let me turn this book around here," and they go right to the spot and you're just sitting there staring at it and you think, "I missed that." We'd all miss it, you know, but for Christ and His Spirit.

But you see this in Matthew 13:36. You know, Scripture is its own best interpreter. "Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is," what? "The Son of man." So when you come

over here, He that sowed the Good Seed because that's all that He ever sows is Good Seed, is the Son of Man. The Son of Man went out to sow His Seed.

So that's clear. The Sower is Christ. The sowing. You say, "What did He sow?" Well, you might say that it relates back to verse 1 where He preached the Kingdom of God and His preaching and that's the Seed, the Gospel. It's true but there's more to it than that because in John 12:24, look in John 12:24. I know time is getting away from us but we'll, by God's Grace, bring this ship into safe port. John 12:23, "Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." So what's the Seed? It's not just the Doctrine of Christ's death, it's actually His death. So long as a seed lays on a table, you can go back 10 years from now it's still going to be that seed, just like Christ from eternity has been the Seed. But it wasn't from eternity that our salvation was accomplished. It was decreed but until that Seed was actually taken and sown in the ground and as this says here, once it dies, what does that Seed do when it's in the ground? It actually dies, but out of it, it brings forth much Fruit. Out of death comes Life. That's a mystery. Why did God even create that to be so in the natural world? To give us a picture of the work of the LORD Jesus Christ.

So back here in Luke 8, when it's talking about this seed that is sown, notice the difference, if it's sown by the wayside, something's going to come and pick it up and take it. If it falls on a rock, it doesn't have any root, it goes away. But when it says the other fell on good ground, that can also mean in good ground. In that ground, it had to be in the ground. Christ was speaking of His death and sprang up and bear Fruit a hundredfold. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. If this was easy, everybody would understand it but he that hath ears to hear, they're going to see.

It's not a man that's the Sower, the sowing has to do with His death and the Seed is Christ. It's called the Good Seed and, again, back to the text that Bob read and then I'll be done, Matthew 13:27, "He answered and said unto them, He that soweth," what? "The good seed is the Son of man." There's none good but God and so the Seed was the very person of Christ that was sown. Now we preach Him as that Seed but the Seed is Christ. Even Paul said that in Galatians 3:16, it doesn't say, "and as to seeds, but to one seed which is Christ." And He, it's because of His death, it's because of Him being sown in His field, this world is the field, but the Fruit that comes forth and He's called the Son of Man but Scripture also calls Him the Seed of the woman, He is called the Seed of David. That word "seed" is all the way through Scripture and where God has been pleased to sow that Seed is not purposed for everybody, we're going to see that next time. Some of this, the soil, the thorns, the persecution, all that's going to take it away but for those that God has purposed to save, it brings forth that Fruit even as is described here in Luke 8.

That's the Gospel of the Kingdom. It's not a message of a god that's wringing his hands and hoping that sinners will be believing on him and, "I've done all I can, now it's up to you." That's not the Message of Scripture. Christ said, "Of all that the Father has given

me," what? "That I should not lose one." He really didn't lose any when the devil came and took this one, when the devil came and took Judas away. It wasn't that, "Oh, I lost one of mine." The LORD already said he's the son of perdition, let him go his way. And in our lifetime we're going to see a lot of people come and go but I will tell you, if in the end we are one of these that in spite of the persecution, in spite of the cares of the world, in spite of the birds coming and taking away the Seed in others that we are there just like these women at the foot of the cross and behold Him, the Savior. Do you know what? That's a Grace. That's all it is. It's God's Grace for a sinner such as we are.