

The Word as Seed

Luke 8:11 - 13

Nutshell: The Word of God is like seed. When God chooses to birth us into His family and kingdom, it is the Word He uses to make us alive. Then, by the Word, we decide to renovate our lives, seeding and weeding.

I. Context: Jesus' new form of teaching: parables.

II. Text

Luke 8:11 And this is the Comparison: the seed is the Word of God

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

A. An outline of Luke to this point

I. About this Letter: So you'll know about this Jesus, 1:1-4

II. Rejoice! The Messiah is born! A boyhood turning point, 1:5 – 2:52

III. John proclaims repentance for Christ's coming, 3:1 – 20

IV. Messiah's Entry Credentials: Baptism and Genealogy, 3:21–38

V. His Initiation: Fasting and Temptation, 4:1 - 13

VI. His Self-Introduction and Hometown Rejection, 4:14 - 30

VII. Jesus: the FIRST MAN with absolute authority **in** Scriptures, and **over** angels/demons, sickness, and nature, 4:31 - 5:11

VIII. Turning-Point Healings, 5:12 – 32

A. Repatriating a leper, 5:12 – 16, touching the unclean outcast to preview His taking of our exile into Himself

B. Forgiving sin, 5:17 – 26, thus declaring His Deity

C. Healing/ renewal of a man's (Matthew's) soul, 5:27 – 32

IX. New and Old Covenants:

A. NC = OC *replacement*, ~~patch-up~~, 5:33–39. NC: Law in ♥.

B. 6:1-11, OC Sabbath *strict*, but intended as a *help*.

X. Picking the 12, 6:12-16; teaching / etc., incl. Tyrites, 6:17-19

XI. Jesus' teaching manifesto: the **SERMON ON THE PLAIN**

- A. The Sermon on the Plain gives the *earthy* evidence of the *spiritual* traits in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt 5-7. Here, the poor are literal and the rich are their haters. But Christ's disciples are to love their haters.
 - B. Christ's disciples are to give generously, living by pity
 - C. Only right teaching can produce right living, always convicting *self* first. Only building squarely, exclusively on Christ will survive the floodplains life is lived in.
- XII. Messiah & His Mission Portrayed in His Interactions**
- A. Forecast: A **Gentile** seeks Jesus for a healing, Lk 7:1-10
 - B. Forecast: Hope still held out to **Israel**: Nain widow, 11-17
 - C. Recheck: But is this ↑ the Messiah? Just a healer? 18-23
 - 1. John expected Christ to judge the world, per prophecy
 - 2. Luke uses John to explicitly introduce the Interim in Christ's work, between a 1st and a 2nd coming
 - 3. Jesus' healings forecast an era of extended mercy, especially to the Gentiles- the era we're in now, 24-30
 - D. The Jews rejected John and Jesus on opposite counts, but Wisdom claimed both John and Jesus as her own, 31-35
 - E. Love for Jesus is tied to forgiveness. The sinful woman had both; Simon the Pharisee lacked both, 36-50.
 - F. Many women followed and helped Jesus' ministry, 8:1-3
 - G. Jesus now begins His formal Parable teaching, 8:4
 - 1. Parable #1: The Planter and the Soils, 8:4-8
 - 2. The Explanation's preview: 8:9-10
 - a. Parable put God's kingdom right before men
 - b. But unless God opens our eyes, we won't see it

Kid-speak: Jesus started teaching a new way, called _ (Parables/ Comparisons). He would say, "God's kingdom is LIKE *this*." And He would compare God's kingdom to something like fishing, or something else they already knew about.

- B. Lk 8:11. This may contain the most concise key for figuring out a parable: "The comparison is _"
 - 1. I.e., the one item you need to plug in to understand the parable is __. In this case, the Word of God.
 - a. It is helpful to remember that, in general, there is one main idea being conveyed in a parable
 - b. If it was an allegory, we would expect fairly strict

- point-by-point comparisons
- 2. The various disciples have pressed Jesus, asking what this new teaching format might be
 - a. Jesus first gave them a basic definition of a parable: It was a spiritual divider, sorting men into categories of receivers (the disciples) vs. refusers, v 9-10
 - b. But, as we'll see in the parable, the refusers can *start off* looking like the receivers
- C. "This is the comparison." So is that what "the rest" couldn't get? The simple, interpretive key? The seed being the Word?
 - 1. No, it's that even *with* the interpretive key, they still refused the permanent, transformative **power** of the Word
 - 2. The parables simply brought spiritual inclinations to light
 - 3. "The rest" didn't want the Word's power bothering them
- D. The Mark version of this parable is very helpful at this point
 - 1. Mark adds Jesus' question: "Do you not know this analogy? And how will you know all analogies?" 4:13
 - 2. Hence, Jesus was going to give them either an interpretive principle *or* specifics from which principles could be drawn
 - 3. Then Mark continues with what we have in Luke:
- E. "The seed is the Word of God"
 - 1. That is the interpretive key for this parable
 - a. But perhaps Jesus' main idea is that seeing these 4 responses to the Word is the 4 ways men will receive all other parables
 - b. In any case, the Word is the key for this parable

Kid-speak: What did Jesus say Word of God is like? Seeds that you plant! Ever planted a seed?

- 2. "The seed" is the key, not the planter
 - a. Not that the planter is unimportant, just that his specific identity is not key
 - b. Whoever plants, **it's the seed that does the work**
- 3. James, Peter, and Paul all make reference to the Word of God as seed, showing the importance of this analogy
- F. James' analogy
 - 1. Jms 1:18-21
 - a. The Word was the vehicle of *God's decision* to "bring us

forth”, v 18

- i. Just as it is by *our desire* that sin is “brought forth,” v 15 (the only 2x “brought forth” is used)
- ii. Hence, when God decided it, the Word went from being refused to being received
- iii. Not when *we* decided it, nor when He *saw* we would decide it. We were dead in sin, including our will. We knew, but we refused. *He* had to say, “_, come forth.”
- b. With the Word as the tool of our new will being birthed, we can now choose to humbly receive that Word to replace every kind of spiritual uncleanness in our lives, v 21
- c. It becomes an “implanted” Word: a **seed** that can grow where impurity was displaced
2. We are to become our own main planters of the seed of the Word!
 - a. Caveat from Jms 1:22-27: Don’t kid yourself
 - b. Mere agreement with the Word ≠ implantation
 - c. Failure to bridle the tongue = outright self-deception about the Word’s implantation
 - d. The rest of James is pretty much chasing down these cases of self-deception

Kid-speak: James said that God uses His Word to make us alive. Then what are *we* supposed to do? Make sure the Word gets planted deep in our souls, while we get rid of everything in our souls that God doesn’t like.

G. Peter

1. 1 Pet 1:23, As James, Peter connects the new birth to the living **seed** of the Word
 - a. The seed *goes* everywhere
 - b. But it *takes root* by God’s gracious, sovereign choice
 - c. Enabling a new will, free and inclined to choose righteousness, mercy, and truth
2. “Having purified your souls” as *preparatory* work, v 22, *do* the ongoing work of loving Christians- no fake
 - a. This is consistent with the embedded, “undecaying” seed
 - b. If it’s in us, it won’t produce “decay”
 - c. Anything merely human, “flesh,” will bring only short-

term results, v 24

- d. Ah, how telling when we hear 1-2-3 spiritual growth methods described! An admission that the Word wasn't doing the trick.

Kid-speak: What did Peter say about God's Word? It's not just something we try out for awhile. It lasts forever. If *we* want to last forever, the Word need to stay in us!

H. Paul

1. 1 Cor 3:6, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God made to grow"
2. We have living seed in hand. When we plant it or water its planting, it encounters the soil of death in the human heart
3. Until God chooses otherwise

I. In Jesus' analogy, the seed = the Word of God

1. Not the fake word often foisted as the real Word
2. Rather, a seed which might *not* take root!
 - a. One sign of a fake word is its insistence on success
 - b. "Here's how *you* can ensure results"
 - i. Easiest (and most fake): your decision verifies your conversion
 - ii. Speak in tongues
 - c. Whereas, James and Peter speak in terms of purifying the soul
 - d. "No thanks. I want guaranteed results." And our Americanism works vs. us.
3. The parable, again, is ultimately about RECEPTION: Look at the word "hear" in every v, 12-15
4. Also, "take heed how you hear," v 18

Luke 8:12 And those by the road are the ones hearing; then the Accuser brings himself and takes away the Word from their heart, that they may not *by* believing be saved.

J. The last time we ran into "the Accuser/ Slanderer" was in chap 4, during the Temptation

- #### K. He's always on Alert, sending in a bomb squad to defuse the Word, just in case it hangs around and has a chance to sprout
1. As quickly as possible, cause the Word to be dismissed

2. Or simply crowd the heart with distractions so that there's no time to even consider the Word

Kid-speak: If you tell somebody about the Bible, who's going to come along and tell them that it's not true? The Devil!

- L. Cause the Word to be dismissed.
 1. "That can't be true. Evolution is true."
 2. "That can't be true. Muslims say their way is true, too."
 3. "That can't be true. Life is about seeking my own ends."
 4. "That can't be true. I knew/heard of (a) cruel Christian(s)."
 5. "That can't be true. There's nothing harmful about the things Jesus wants me to give up."
 6. "That can't be true. The church just made it up."
- M. This is the Slanderer's full-bodied slander of God *through human* thinking
- N. 2 Cor 4:4 calls this Satan "blinding their minds"
 1. Their minds reason
 2. They're already vs. God
 3. All they have to do is justify their antipathy
 - a. As had been said, if you're making an excuse, one is as good as another
 - b. Any of the above 'reasons' can easily be disproven with further thought
 - c. But the purpose is dismissal, so no further thought is pursued

Kid-speak: Does the Devil tell people, "Hey, this is Devil. Listen to me!?" No. He lets us use our own thinking. He thinks the same way we do: "God can't be right, or He would let me be in charge!"

- O. Note that the Accuser's interferences listed above aren't directly detectable. It's all *human* reasoning.
 1. The Devil doesn't have much to do. He just rubs an irritation: voila! The human reasoning capacity goes to work!
 2. Of course, he can supply animus *or* fake objectivity to order
 - a. The louder the conscience, the more extensive the response
 - b. For some, it's so loud, they spend their lives trying to

convince everyone!

- P. The Word is a ticking time bomb to Satan, though, since he doesn't know how to project who are God's elect. Just get it out of there! It only has a 10% (?) chance to blow. That's too much!

Luke 8:13 And those on the rock *are* those who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a time, and in time of trial draw back.

Q. Referring back to v 6

R. Oh no! The Devil removed the Word just in case someone believed! Now it doesn't even necessarily matter if they believe! They might "believe for a time" only!

1. Where's our security in all this??
2. Not in us- *except* the evidence that room is meekly being made for the Word, moving out old crud
3. It's an ongoing test, not a one-stop-shop. Sorry, impatient, instant American.

S. "Receive the Word with joy"

1. The Word's truth is self-evident. None of the objections in III.L. hold up. This is obviously the truth from God *and* what I needed for deliverance!
2. For a while, they will look, think, and act exactly like a Christian!
 - a. They have a human soul. The Word is redemptive. The Word is being believed/received. Conversion begins occurring.
 - b. This is where systematic theologies helpfully define "temporary conversion"
3. Heb 6:4-6 is probably the most extensive definition of a temporary conversion
 - a. Except it is extensive to the point of triggering a "non-return" policy from God
 - b. It enjoys conversion's benefits- "tasting" a real encounter of the Word's natural power and the Spirit's agreement with the Word

T. What pulls them up short? "A time of trial"

1. When they are put to the proof, their mere human agreement is not sufficient to sustain them
2. All their soul's agreements now lose their luster and finally make room for the disagreements

3. They humanly agreed. Now they humanly doubt.
Humanity's natural soul reverts to suspicion of God.

Kid-speak: Jesus talks about a time of testing. When you're a kid with Christian parents, you might not have a big time of testing. You might. But some day, you'll definitely have a big time of testing, and *it won't be easy to keep believing in Jesus*. What's the best way to be ready for the test? Answer all the questions now- Well, maybe a little at a time.

Parents: Anti-gang them (Prov 1); Wisdom-encrust them (main thrust of Prov 1-9); Anti-fornication them: get them ready for marriage (second main thrust of Prov 1-9)

V. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, "Uphold the strengthless")
The offense of the Word is real. I.e., doubt isn't an anomaly.

VI. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): *What have I done wrong?*
How have I lost righteousness?
Am I getting the Word implanted in me?

VII. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):
How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?
I will get the Word implanted meekly.

VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: *How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?*
Lord, bless and strengthen my housekeeping, to invite the Word to its true depth in my soul.

Wrap-up: We've spoken much about our own responsibility to plant the Word's seed deep in our own souls.

But being a planter in other people's souls is a good reminder how the seed works, Col 4:5-6.

We must use "wisdom" implanting the Word in our own souls, including rotating crops to keep the soil fresh, making sure our souls continue to get the tastiness ("seasoned with salt") of the Word.