
Sermon Notes

May 12, 2019

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Sowing the Seed (2) Luke 8:4-15

A Well-Known Parable

- ❖ The parable of the sower is one of Jesus' most well-known and best-loved parables
 - a surprisingly simple story with a very straightforward message but one about which many miss the point
 - in v. 9, even the disciples need to ask Jesus to explain what this parable means
- ❖ Jesus ends His story with the somewhat cryptic comment, ***He who has ears to hear, let him hear***
 - there is more here "than meets the ear"
 - those who have "ears to hear" ask questions
 - Jesus uses parables to reveal the ***secrets of the kingdom of God*** to those who are interested in going deeper and plunging into the heart of the gospel message
 - the only people who can understand and benefit from Jesus' style of storytelling are those who are eager to learn truth
 - anyone who truly wants to understand can ask to have his/her mind opened and enlightened
 - with what kind of ears are you listening?

4 Types of Soil

- ❖ The farmer in Jesus' story uses the broadcast method of sowing his seed
 - in Jesus' time, a skillful farmer would throw seed as widely and as evenly as possible in order to cover the whole plowed field with no margins on the perimeter left unseeded
 - inevitably, some seed falls in places where the soil isn't ideal
 - only the seed that finds its way into good soil will ever produce a crop worth harvesting
- ❖ **v. 5, the hardened footpath**
 - seed is trampled underfoot
 - the birds come and eat it
- ❖ **v. 6, the rock**
 - a kind of soil that has a rock bed under the field's surface
 - seed sprouts and initially looks promising and lush
 - when the sun beats down and the water is gone, this crop dies out as quickly as it sprang up
- ❖ **v. 7, the weed infested soil that is full of thorns**
 - seed sown in a field of weeds will not produce a healthy harvest
 - weeds suck up the soil's moisture and nutrients, block the sun's light, and choke the life out of anything that might be worthwhile

- ❖ **v. 8, the good soil**
 - fertile, fruitful soil in which the seed flourishes
 - the roots go deep and eventually produce an abundant crop
- ❖ This parable is **NOT about the sower OR the seed**, it is about the soil
 - Jesus makes no comment about the sower and his skill (the sower = anyone who disperses God's Word)
 - all the seed comes from the same source
 - v. 11, *The seed is the word of God*
 - the seed is perfect, eternally unchanging
 - the unadulterated Word of God is the only true, legitimate seed
- ❖ The plowed field = the human heart
 - v. 12, the devil takes the word away from the heart
 - v. 15, those who hear the word and hold it fast in their hearts are those who produce fruit
- ❖ All four soil types consist of the same organic material (minerals, nutrients, access to water, etc...)
 - what sets the four soils apart is their preparedness to receive the good seed of God's Word
 - your response to the Word of God depends of the condition of your heart
 - the production of fruit in your life is the only evidence you have that you have heard, received and rightly reacted to the Word of God

- ❖ The first three soils represent unregenerate, unbelieving hearts
 - only the fourth soil type, the good soil, is capable of bearing fruit for God
 - v. 12 tells us that the seed along the path = hearts that are hardened and impervious to the truth (may be like religious leaders of whom Jesus says their father is the devil, John 8:44)
 - v. 13 tells us that the shallow hearted hearers of v. 6 only make a superficial response (Spurgeon: "Great joy often accompanies false conversions.")
 - v. 14, the seed among the thorns in v. 7 gets off to a promising start, but these people are too occupied and too enthralled with worldly matters
- ❖ The first three soils all show promise, but none bear fruit
- ❖ Only the good soil... receives the Word and bears fruit, more fruit, much fruit, fruit that will last
 - the mark of authentic faith is endurance
 - temporary faith is not true faith

Personal Reflection

1. With what kind of ears do you listen to God's Word?
2. Evaluate your response to God's Word. What does this tell you about the condition of your heart?
3. What fruit is God's Word producing in your life at this season? Does the presence and production of that fruit convince you that you have received and rightly reacted to the Word of God? If not, what needs to change?