

What will you do with the Word?

Part 1

E.T.S.: Jesus shares the parable of the sower/parable of the seed/parable of the soil to show the importance of the Word.

E.S.S.: The message examines how we should receive, relate, and respond to the Word.

Christ Follower: Determine, with God's help, to do with God's Word what He intends you to do.

Christ Seeker: Accept that God's Word is truth that you need to accept so that you can be saved.

Introduction

Open your copy of God's Word to Luke chapter eight.

Illustration

It's back to school time for teachers who are preparing for students to arrive, for students who are thrilled to be going back to school, and parents who wonder where the summer has gone.

A prevalent phenomenon with students, especially later on in their school career, is to ask this question of their teachers, parents, and others: "What am I actually going to do with this? Why do I need to learn or know this? When am I ever going to use this information in real life?"

A friend who teaches college students recently posted this quotation from Malcolm Muggeridge:

"Education, the great mumbo jumbo and fraud of the ages, purports to equip us to live and is prescribed as a universal remedy for everything from juvenile delinquency to premature senility. For the most part it serves to enlarge stupidity, inflate conceit, enhance credulity, and put those subjected to it at the mercy of brainwashers with printing presses, radio, and television at their disposal" (Malcolm Muggeridge).

What encouragement!

Introduction

Rather than thinking about what you will do with algebra, chemistry, or ancient history, I want you to think about about what you will do with something else today.

What will you do with the Word?

That question should prompt your thinking as we read and examine the passage today. Follow along as I read Luke 8:4-21.

Bible

(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. (19) Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press. (20) And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. (21) And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

Luke 8:4-21 - KJV

Introduction

During this second journey around Galilee, a multitude of people gathered to Jesus, and He taught them. He spake to them by way of a parable. A *parable*, simply defined, is a similitude; a fictitious narrative used to convey a moral or truth. Jesus used them regularly to convey spiritual truth to those who heard Him.

The passage we read includes a parable, the explanation of the parable, a second parable that builds on the first, and an application of the parables in life. These work together to show us what we should do with the Word.

Let's remember the importance of the Word.

Bible

(16) All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for

reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - KJV

Explanation

The Word is God's given by Him to us to show us His way. There is truth apart from the Bible, but no truth matches the importance of the truth in the Bible. It is God's message to you and me.

In Luke 8:4-21, Jesus expressed, through different means, what we should do with the Word. These expressions speak to us about how we receive, relate, and respond to the Word.

1...Reflect on how I receive the Word (vv. 4-15)

Explanation

Let's first identify the different portrayals in the parable:

- The sower: directly, the context leads me to identify the sower as Jesus. He is the one going about "preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God" (v. 1). However, as Jesus will demonstrate later in the text, anyone who spreads the seed is a sower.
- The seed: the Word of God (v. 11). It is God's truth as revealed in His Word.

- The soil: those who have the privilege and responsibility of coming under the sound of God's Word.

Through the soil, Jesus describes four ways of receiving the Word.

- Some hear, but never believe (vv. 5 & 12). The devil accomplishes his work in their lives.

Bible

(3) But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: (4) In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 - KJV

Application

If you have never personally accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, this describes you. You do not realize it, but the devil works constantly in your life to keep you from the Gospel. Right now, you are hearing the Word of God. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is being proclaimed.

How will you receive the Word?

If you hear and walk away, the seed was sowed, but it fell by the wayside and was devoured.

Satan has once again blinded you. Do not give in! Believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Explanation

- Others hear and receive, but fall away because of temptations (vv. 6 & 13).

The word used in verse 13 is used throughout the New Testament of both temptations to sin and trials of faith. Additionally, the phrase *fall away* is used in contexts of people who are unsaved and saved. We're not being asked to judge someone else's salvation here, but whether or not either temptations to sin or trials of faith tend to move us away from or move us closer to God. Pastor Tony Evans describes it so: "Believers who lack the discipline of spending time with God, living in obedience to his Word, and serving his people, are unable to stand up under the pressure when difficulties come their way. They become unproductive" (Tony Evans).

Application

How are you prone to respond to temptations to sin or trials of faith? Do you move away from or closer to God? The answer reveals something about how you receive the Word.

Explanation

- Others hear, and are overcome, not by temptations or trials, but by distractions (vv. 7 & 14).

"These people hear and believe the word but are distracted by three things: cares, the sheer busyness of life, making a living, caring for family and self, contributing to the community, and so on; riches, either the pursuit of them or the enjoyment and contemplation of them; and pleasures, entertainment and fun. None of these things are bad in themselves, but any of them

can distract Christians from letting God's Word bear fruit in their lives" (Zondervan's NT Commentary).

Application

Is your focus so much in the world, even the necessities and responsibilities, that the efficacy of God's Word is being choked out? We tend to get so wrapped up in everything that we leave little or no time for God.

Paul addressed this generally within two contexts of 1 Corinthians where he comes to the same conclusion.

Bible

(12) All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

1 Corinthians 6:12 - KJV

(23) All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

1 Corinthians 10:23 - KJV

Application

Isn't this also what Jesus will discuss with Martha in Luke 10?

Explanation

- Others truly hear the Word (vv. 8 & 15).

What does it mean to *truly hear the Word*?

Those who truly hear the Word demonstrate:

- *Sincerity.*

Jesus says that they come in an honest and good heart. Do not think that this contradicts the reality of the problem of evil that dwells in every man's heart. Jesus speaks of the approach to the Word. This person comes without preconceived ideas or responses, or desiring to misuse or discredit it. This person comes hungry and thirsty to receive what he or she knows he or she needs.

Illustration

I am pursuing my degree in Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Through courses I have taken, I have been exposed to the empirical research that shows that incorporating spirituality into therapy is effective. Because of this, counselors and therapists will take and use the Bible or other religious material to use it for its effectiveness, even if the counselor or therapist does not actually believe in God or the teachings of the Bible or whatever religious material they are using.

Explanation

That's an example of one who comes to God's Word without sincerity.

Another example could be a believer who looks for a verse to use as an argument or justification for his or her behavior.

It may be someone who uses a verse to guilt someone else into doing something that they want them to do.

It could be a pastor who uses the Word wrongly to browbeat people into submission to him, rather than to God.

Application

Those who have good soil for the Word must come to the Word in sincerity.

Explanation

Those who truly hear the Word demonstrate:

- *Exposure.*

In the text Jesus said, "Having heard the word..."

To receive the Word, a person has to be in a place where they can hear the Word. They have to be exposed to it.

A person whose only exposure to God's Word comes on Sunday, and then wonders why they don't grow already has the answer. Believers need regular exposure to God's Word.

Application

How much exposure are you getting to the Word?

Explanation

Those who truly hear the Word demonstrate:

- *Obedience.*

Jesus followed by saying, "Keep it..."

The word literally means to hold fast. So, it speaks about more than simple obedience, though that is involved. It speaks of a carefulness and determination to not let go of what has been heard and received.

Bible

(23) Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

Hebrews 10:23 - KJV

Explanation

Those who truly hear the Word demonstrate:

- *Faithfulness.*

Jesus followed by saying, "Bring forth fruit with patience."

Patience is cheerful endurance.

Any gardener or farmer will tell you that a harvest doesn't come immediately or effortlessly.

Reaping a harvest requires patience and effort. And, yet, it is not the gardener or farmer who produce the crop. These were established and they are maintained by God (see Genesis 8:21-22).

Application

So it is with spiritual fruit.

A harvest is not reaped without patience and effort. Yet, it is the Lord Who gives the fruit when it comes.

For us, the question is not necessarily how much fruit do you have, but how faithful are you in sowing, watering, and preparing to reap?

Conclusion

Our time is up for today. However, take some time to reflect on how you receive the Word.

Illustration

I mentioned last week that I had done something that I hadn't done in twenty years and went to the dentist. Though they informed me that everything was good, seeing that I hadn't been in twenty years, there was still some issues that needed to be addressed. I took a first step on

Tuesday and had a molar tooth extraced. As it the time came closer and closer, my anxiety level increased. By the time I was sitting in the chair at the dentist, my blood pressure and heart rates were elevated. When I first checked my heart rate, it was at 117 bpm. I began praying, followed by reciting to myself Psalm 23:4 over and over: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Within two to three minutes, my heart rate dropped to 71 bpm and did not go over about 90 bpm after that.

That's not the main thought I want you to take. The main thought came after that. God convicted me with this: If you can so evidently take and trust my Word in this situation, what about all the other times and situations in your life?

Conclusion

Which soil best identifies you?

Have you ever personally believed in Jesus for salvation from your sins? He came to earth, the Son of God became the Son of Man. He lived the perfect life that none of us can. He died the death that we all deserve because of our sin. Then, on the third day, He rose victorious over death, the grave, and hell. He lives today and offers you forgiveness of sins and new life.

Will you believe and be saved?

For those who would profess to know Jesus: How do you receive the Word? Determine, with God's help, to do with His Word what He intends you to do.

Message Break