

The Parable of the Sower

For almost 2 years now we have been looking at the life and teaching of Jesus. I think it has been amazing! If there is anyone we can learn from it is Jesus, if there is anyone we aspire to be like it is Jesus.

Over the weeks leading up to Christmas we will be looking at Jesus' parables, the stories he told to tell people about his father's Kingdom and things or principles they needed to know. Last week Andy Burns, looked at the value of the Kingdom of God, how wonderful it is that we get to be a part of His Kingdom, how he lives inside of us and how that changes our outlook on life.

So to today's passage in Luke Chapter 8.

We are all dirt!! In Luke 8 God calls us all dirt.. the thing for us to do today friends is work out which kind of dirt we are, what kind of soil are we. Ultimately the soil is a metaphor for our hearts.

Luke 8

The Parable of the Sower

4 While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: 5 "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. 6 Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown."

When he said this, he called out, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

9 His disciples asked him what this parable meant. 10 He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that,

"though seeing, they may not see;
though hearing, they may not understand.'[a]

11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. 14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. 15 But the seed on good soil stands for those

with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

PRAY

Here we have Jesus telling the parable of the sower. Some of you may know this parable well, other may never have heard it, that's OK.

This parable is a really good parable for us to start with, there is something in it for everyone. As I said earlier, what kind of dirt/soil are you?

The fantastic thing about this parable for us here today, is that Jesus himself tells us what it means, he interprets it for us!! This is so cool...

In the story there are 3 main elements..

The Farmer, the seed and the soil.

Let's pick up each of these.

1. The farmer. The farmer is Jesus. He is the one who is sowing the seed.
I find it interesting looking at the story how God sows the seed. He doesn't seem very particular about where the seed falls. It goes everywhere, it falls on all types of soil.
2. The seed. The seed is the word of God!
What is the word, well in scripture "the word" is referred to in two different ways. One is to Jesus Christ himself, that he is the physical form of God's message. In John 1:1 it says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He was with God in the beginning. So you see that the Word is God. And then later on in verse 14 of John 1 it says, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." So Jesus, the Word, God, came to earth, came in flesh, and dwelt among his people. And so he, and his life, and his death, and his resurrection, Jesus Christ is the Word.
Secondly though, the Scriptures are also God's Word. It's the written form of God's message. Jesus is the physical form, the personal form. Scriptures are the written form of God's message. They are the inspired words of God, and they tell the same story. They tell of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and ascension on our behalf. The whole of Scripture points to Jesus, Old and New Testament. It's all about Jesus, his work on the cross, what he did on our behalf. Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is God breathed." So all of the Bible that we have are God's words to us. Again, we can go to them anytime, and see, and hear what God wants to communicate to us. A lot of us always think, "Man, I just want God to show up and

speak.” Well, he has. He’s given us his Word, and we can read that, and that’s God speaking to us.

So this seed is both the written word of God, the bible and the physical word of God, Jesus himself. And how the word is received is the main thing about this parable.

What kind of soil? Remember...

There is never a problem with God’s word!

3. The soil. The soil is us, it is our heart.

We have 4 soil types in this parable, and therefore 4 heart types. The type of heart determines what happens to the seed.

And remember Jesus tells us what each soil type is:

PATH

Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

Unresponsive heart

Remember, the seed does fall here. People with an unresponsive heart have heard the message, they have heard the word of God, they have heard the good news of what Jesus has done, but they don’t believe. They don’t trust. They don’t put their hope in it. Ultimately, their sin, and their pride, and their rebellion from God blind them.

Jesus also tells us there is an enemy the devil who takes the word away from their hearts. Friends we’re in a battle. We do have an enemy , who prowls around like a roaring lion wanting to devour and destroy.

ROCKY

Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.

Impulsive heart

People who are rocky soil have an impulsive reaction to things. The initial response with these people is excitement, joy: “Yes, I’m saved. I believe in Jesus. Thank you, Jesus, for your work.” They trust, they understand. They’re excited about it, and they respond with just an emotional reaction.

But when tough things come their way, rather than clinging to the Jesus in the word, they walk away from it. They are shallow, they have no roots to hold them fast into Jesus.

We have spoken about God causing things to grow and being like a church or individuals that are pot bound. The roots are so important. We need good strong roots to see God work in our lives

Rocky soil people don't have good roots.

THORNY

The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

Preoccupied heart

So these seeds find themselves in good soil to start with, and they start to grow up, but that soil is also sharing its space with greedy neighbours. There are other things in there that Jesus calls worries, riches, and pleasures, things that are distracting us from our walk with God, things that are becoming idols in our hearts rather than Jesus being on the throne of our heart. And he says that these get choked out. They're stuck. They're stagnant. They're immature. They never fully develop because all of a sudden, our attention goes from being connected to Jesus to pursuing these other things.

The plant that grows from the seed cannot grow properly when surrounded by these thorny weeds.

These things that grab our attention. The thing is, some of these thorny bushes look good, they have nice looking flowers on them, but they soon entangle us and stop growth and stop the good plant producing good fruit.

Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind

GOOD

But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

Responsive heart

The last type of soil that we look at is the good soil. It's the only good soil that Jesus says here, and it's the heart that's responsive to the Word of God.

This is the only response that Jesus says is good, that he highlights, that he blesses, that as the Word of God comes to us, we hold it fast. We cling to it. We believe it, and then out of that we go bear fruit patiently.

So the result of these 4 soils is that only one of them is good and one of them produces fruit.

The word of God, the seed, when in good soil will produce fruit.

That is how it works.

God makes things grow.

So what fruit is the fruit?

1. The fruit of the spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control.
2. Eph 2:8-10 Good works
3. 1 Peter Good deeds and people see this
4. Spiritual gifts. How do we use the gifts that God has given us?

Remember we don't do this to gain our salvation, but to show we're saved. We serve not to save, but because we are saved.

Ultimately the fruit is about mission, it is about doing what the word himself came to do, to seek and save the lost. Andy said the value of the kingdom is so great, it is what residents of the kingdom are all about, sharing that kingdom with those who are not yet part of it!

So how do we bear fruit?

Friends, we want to, as a church, bear a lot of fruit. We want to grow! It's a good thing. We want to have our faith in Jesus, and we want to then follow him as he led the way for bearing fruit. How do we do that? How do we bear fruit?

First of all, it begins with the Holy Spirit. We cannot go do this on our own.

We need to be those who are filled with the Holy Spirit. Apart from Him I can do nothing.

This doesn't happen automatically when we become a Christian, we need to ask God to fill us with his power. Are we a people full of God?

Secondly, we have to hear and hold fast to the Word. Listen to Scripture. Discuss Scripture. Pray through Scripture. Memorise Scripture. Be in a small group where you get to talk through and work through it with other people. Spend time in your Bible. If we're not connected to God's Word and his message, then we will be able to bear no fruit because he teaches us, he trains us, he shows us how to live that godly life based on Scripture.

Thirdly we need an honest and repentant heart. We need to realise that "we're not God, actually we're terrible sinners, and in desperate need of God. We need his grace. We need his mercy."

It's all about him and what he has done.

Finally to produce fruit we need to persevere and be patient.

Have you ever planted a seed and gone down the next day to find a full blown plant with loads of flowers? Producing fruit can take time, so we need to keep persevering and patiently waiting for the plant to grow.

So friends, ultimately this parable is all about Jesus and his word living inside of us.

So what Kind of Dirt are you?

Dave Rogers 02/10/2011