

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER // Luke 8:4-15

From the series, The Gospel of Luke

This week, we studied the call to evangelism as it is presented in the Parable of the Sower. The mission of the Church universal (not just CBC) is to make and multiply disciples. One of our tasks as followers of Christ is to accomplish the Great Commission. This assumes evangelism. Our study of evangelism can be summarized by Luke 8:8: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Evangelism can be difficult for many reasons, one of which is the fact that we never know how someone will respond to the gospel. It is not the natural state of humanity to confess our sins and our need for salvation – so why do some respond positively to the gospel while others do not? Along with giving us a metaphor to better understand evangelism, the Parable of the Sower provides general categories that help us understand the reasons behind the responses of each individual when presented with the gospel:

1. **SOWER** // We sow the seed, but God gives the growth. The emphasis is not the sower – the sower is just the message deliverer.
2. **SEED** // The seed is the Word of God. We cannot lose sight of that – we can change our method, but we should never change our message or water down the gospel in any way.
3. **SOIL** // Evangelistic success in the gospel ministry is not contingent upon the quality of the seed or the ability of the sower, but rather due to the condition of the soil. Jesus list four types of soil (hearts).
 - a. Hard Heart (vs. 12) – This person is not a Christian because the seed has landed on a hardened heart. The seed lays dormant and Satan snatches it up.
 - b. Shallow Heart (vs. 13) – This person has no depth to their faith. True salvation stands the test of time, but this is merely an emotional response that will fizzle out in time.
 - c. Overgrown Heart (vs. 14) – This is a double-minded person. Some of the gospel message takes root, but it is choked out by preoccupation with things of the world. Their lives are too distracted by worry, wealth, and the world to provide an environment for faith to grow.
 - d. Fertile Heart (vs. 15) – Soil does not become fertile on its own – fertile soul is found where some has already been to plow it. The Spirit of the living God has a ministry to get the seed where it needs to be by divinely preparing the heart.
4. **SPIRIT** // The Spirit of the living God is the divine farmer working behind the divine plow – the Spirit prepares the heart before the seed is spread.

On any given Sunday, all four soils are likely represented in the congregation. We are all dependent on God to do something for us that we cannot do on our own. As Christians, perhaps God is hoping to use us to work alongside Him to help prepare the soil and spread the seeds of the gospel for someone else. “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Based on your experience, in what ways can evangelism be difficult? What has (or could) help you overcome those difficulties?
2. Pastor Neal stated, “Evangelism is not what you get, but what you do.” What does this mean to you?
3. What does this parable tell us about our role as Christians in the Great Commission?
4. In light of studying this parable, reflect on the state of the “soil” of your heart. What is your response to this reflection?