

Sermon Notes on Lk. 8:4-15, Sexagesima Sunday

1. The parable of the sower is the first parable in the Synoptic Gospels (Mt., Mk., Lk.). There are no parables in John. There are nine parables in the first block: Mt. 13:1-52; Mk. 4:1-34; Lk. 8:4-18. A second block is found at Lk. 14-16. A third block is found at Mt. 21, 22, 24 and 25. Text parallels are: Mt. 13:1-23; Mk. 4:1-20.
2. Life is given only through physical seed or spiritual seed. Physical seed, whether it be of man, animals or plants is God-given and we find this in Genesis 1. Spiritual seed is found only in the Word of the Gospel: Lk. 8:11; 1 Pet. 1:23; Jn. 6:63; Rom. 1:16; 1 Pet. 1:3; Jn. 1:13; Jam. 1:18; Jn. 5:24-29. Gal. 3:21-22 clearly says that life does not come by the Law. If you preach Law only you are not giving life. The Law always convicts man of sin. The Gospel always gives life.
3. At Lk. 8:11 we read "The seed is the Word of God." At Lk. 22:19 we read "This is My Body." In both cases "is" means "is." What is the difference? The word "seed" is figurative, meaning "life-giving." But the word "body" is not figurative but literal. If you say to someone "You are a jack-ass" the term "jack-ass" is figurative. But if you say "You are a human being," nothing is figurative.
4. Vs. 10: "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to the others (I speak) in parables." A mystery is something known only by revelation. We know the Gospel only because the Holy Spirit reveals it to us. Unbelievers don't bother about parables because the Spirit has not enlightened them. The term "Kingdom of God" here denotes the Gospel, the message of salvation. See Lk. 8:1 for another example. Sometimes it means the Christian Church. See Lk. 7:28. Sometimes it means everlasting life. See Lk. 21:31.
5. Vs. 18 reads "Beware how you hear." Our parable is Law, not Gospel. It warns, not comforts. Vs. 8 ends with "Let him who has ears, hear." He is talking to all sinners, all of us. All of us have ears. All of us need to hear. Jesus is not saying that the different soils mean that ^{there} are different kinds of people, some better than others. He speaks of four kinds of soil to warn us about Satan, the dangers of life and our own sinful flesh.
6. In vss. 5 and 12 Jesus is warning us about the danger of Satan taking the Word from us before it can germinate. Satan does not want us to believe and be saved. The first danger to hearing the Word is the activity of Satan. In vss. 6 and 13 Jesus is warning ^{about} initial joy over the Gospel which vanishes when affliction and testing come our way. Many have lost their souls because of false enthusiasm and the inability to endure in time of trial. In vss. 7 and 14 Jesus is warning us about worries, riches and temporal pleasures choking the Word in our lives. That happens often. But in vss. 8 and 15 Jesus is speaking about the attentive hearer who kept and observed the Word and therefore became fruitful. True hearers vary in the amount of fruit: But all are fruitful. Read Jn. 15:5. Note that the faithful hearer kept the Word and bore fruit in patience. See Hebr. 10:36.
7. Do you ever let your mind wander while hearing a sermon so that you don't hear the sermon? That's Satan at work. Do you ever complain about the pastor being dull? That's Satan at work. Do you ever avoid affliction because of the Word? You are in danger. Do worries, the desire for money and worldly pleasures ever choke the Word in your life? You need to confess your sins to God and pastor and seek forgiveness. But do you ever find, according to vss. 8 and 15, that you endure, faithfully hear the Word and bear fruit? Thank the Lord for this. He is the author and the giver.
8. A Christian is both a saint and a sinner. He finds much in this text to cause him to repent. He also finds much to cause him to thank God for His blessings.

Sermon Outline on Lk. 8:4-15, Sexagesima Sunday

Theme: HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR (vs. 8)

Introduction: The Word of God created us, Hebr. 11:3; Ps. 33:6,9; God's Word is almighty, Mt. 8:8. It is the power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1:16. It will remain when all else passes away. Mt. 24: Jesus said: "Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it." The Word of God is our lamp and light in this dark world of sin. Ps. 119:105. Only the Word of the Lord can convert my soul. Ps. 19:7. Therefore, let him who has ears to hear, hear God's Word. Sinners need God's Word.

I-THE DANGERS TO HEARING GOD'S WORD.

A-Satan wants to take the Word away while we are hearing it. In vs. 5 of our text Jesus says this is like seed that fell along the way-side and it was trampled under foot and the wild birds devoured it. He explains this in vs. 12. Satan comes and takes the Word out of our hearts so that we cannot believe and be saved. This happens when we think of something else during a sermon and so do not hear what the preacher is saying.

B-Enthusiastic hearers can easily fall away in times of affliction. In vs. 6 Jesus says these are like seed that fell on the rocks. When the seed germinated it dried up because it had no moisture. This is explained in vs. 13. These people receive the Word with joy and enthusiasm. They believe for a while but when affliction comes they fall away. Judas fits into this category. At first he was enthusiastic about Jesus but he became disappointed and fell away. Jesus says: "He who endures to the end shall be saved." Mt. 10:22. He warns us not to be offended at Him. Mt. 11:6. Demas loved the world more than the Lord and therefore left Paul. II Tim. 4:10.

C-Some hear, believe but are overcome by worry, riches and pleasures. In vs. 7 Jesus likens these to seed sowed among thorns. The seed and the thorns grow up together but the thorns choke the seed. In vs. 14 Jesus makes application. These are those who hear the Word of God but are choked by worries, the desire for wealth and the pleasures of this life. Worry is always dangerous. See Mt. 6:25-34. Worry is always sin. It chokes out faith. Wealth is not wrong but it can choke faith if it becomes a god. Earthly pleasures are not wrong but if they become gods they choke faith. I Jn. 2:15-17. Godliness with contentment is great gain. I Tim. 6:6-12.

II-THE BLESSINGS IN HEARING GOD'S WORD AND ENDURING.

A-The Word of God gives spiritual life. Jesus says in vs. 11: "The seed is the Word." That means: "The Word gives life, spiritual life. All of us received our physical life through the seed, the sperm, of our fathers. This is a principle of nature. Gen. 1:29-30. It is the same for man, animals, birds, fish and all plant life. The Gospel of Jesus Christ gives spiritual life. See I Pet. 1:23; Jn. 6:63; Rom. 1:16; I Pet. 1:3; Jn. 1:13; Jam. 1:18; Jn. 5:24-29. The Word of God plants faith which ends in eternal life. That's why Satan wants to take the Word out of our hearts. See vs. 12 of our text.

B-The Word of God produces spiritual fruit. See Vs. 15 of our text. But this is true only of those who endure. See Hebr. 10:36; Jn. 15:1-8. Jesus lives in the heart of the believer by faith and produces spiritual fruit, faith in God and love to neighbor. See Eph. 1:15-19.

Conclusion: Why does Jesus, in all three Synoptics (Mt. Mk. and Lk.) not only tell the parable but also carefully explain it? Because it is the most important of all parables. It is the mother of all the other parables. It says: "Bless^{ed} are they who hear the Word of God and keep it." Lk. 11:28.

Bless^{ed}