

Lesson 1: Studying the Word to what end?

At the New Year Special, Pastor Mattox said something that I already knew but it really sort of intrigued me. Studying the Word of God is not gathering knowledge for knowledge sake. He said it is about building a personal relationship with Christ, walking in the SPIRIT and ultimately receiving rewards at the Judgment seat of Christ.

Kit spent a couple of services talking about the personal relationship with Christ which I enjoyed tremendously, and today I want to spend some time looking at receiving knowledge of the Word as a means to an end. An end which starts the day we believe and doesn't really have an end. The process of KNOWLEDGE to receiving REWARDS at the Judgement seat.

I'd like to start with what Jesus says about learning the word of God, "The Parable of the Sower"

Please turn to Luke 8: We'll just read these verses

⁴While 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 mysteries 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.’

Let's work our way through the parable in this first hour leveraging what the Word of God says about the parable:

A couple of points before we jump into the interpretation:

1. This parable is being spoken directly by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the God Man, The WORD OF GOD!

a. John: 1

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was with God in the beginning.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

2. Jesus says in verse 10, the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God have been given to you.

3. Jesus is speaking to His disciples but he is also speaking to us.

4. If Jesus is who he says he is and He is (accepted by faith), and He makes the statement that the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God have been given to us, SHOULDN'T we pursue this knowledge with a passion above all else?

a. If someone could provide us with the knowledge of the mystery of effortless weight loss, would we pursue that with a passion?

b. If someone could provide us with the knowledge of the mystery of making huge sums of money, would we pursue that with a passion?

c. Obviously we would or there would be no such things as infomercials.

5. So, if we believe that Jesus is God, He gives us the knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, then why are there millions of Christians in this world that never pursue that knowledge?

Let's continue to read Luke 8: Verses 11-15 in Luke for the interpretation of the parable.

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.

1. The seed is the Word of God:

a. The same seed is used for all the soils:

The seed is perfect, it is the soil that has problems.

- i. God doesn't change the seed. There aren't multiple types of seed. One God, one seed. One God, one Gospel. One God, One Word
- ii. We don't get to add to the seed. God doesn't need our fertilizer to help it take root. (if you understand what I am saying). The soil doesn't bring its own fertilizer.
- iii. Love of God is the fertilizer

b. Question:

The seed is perfect, and God will cultivate the soil?

- i. Sometimes God will cultivate the soil with a soft touch of his hand
- ii. Sometimes God needs to use a roto tiller and aggressively turn over the soil.

2. We know the seed, but who is the sower?

The Holy Spirit is the Sower.

a. Jesus sent one like Him to teach us

b. The Holy Spirit is the teacher.

i. John 14:

²⁶ **"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."**

3. **4 Soils** represent the 4 responses from those that hear.

a. **Along the Path:**

Hardened heart that the seed doesn't penetrate. The devil comes and takes away the seed. Unbelievers.

b. **On the Rocks:**

The seed penetrates the ground, but it has no root:

There are bible scholars who know the bible inside and out. In fact, we had a young Muslim lady when we were in Egypt (Hind) who was a wonderful lady, and knew a lot more than many Christians about what the bible says. But she didn't understand.

i. Though seeing they may not see. Though hearing they may not understand.

c. **Amongst the Thorns:**

They hear the word, place their faith in Christ but life chokes out the growth:

i. How many of us have times when life chokes out our growth? We all do.

- ii. This is where I would have a conversation with the kids about taking responsibility. It is our fault
- iii. There are many brand-new Christians (which we all started as at some point), who are fertile ground with a few weeds and thorns but the seed just takes root immediately and starts to grow.
- iv. Over time, if the weeds are not pulled, they multiply and soon life chokes out our growth: BTW- weeds don't have to be some big overt sin.
- v. Jesus says that the weeds are life's worries, riches and pleasures.

d. Seed in Good Soil:

Hear the word, retain the word and through perseverance (of faith) produce good fruit:

i. Perseverance:

1. Romans 5:

3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations (worries), knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance (of faith);

4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. -

- a. Exulting in our tribulations doesn't bring about perseverance, Cause and effect: exulting in our tribulation is a result of knowing
- b. If we don't know (*knowledge that brings about an effect*) that with each tribulation through which we trust God, we increase our perseverance of faith, then why would we ever exult in them?
- c. If we don't know that perseverance of faith defines our spiritual character (our spiritual character being based on the filling of the Holy Spirit) which is the basis for our hope, then why would we care about increasing our perseverance?
- d. If we don't understand that the foundation of our Hope is the LOVE of GOD, then where is our motivation for all of the above?
- e. Even believers with a lot of doctrine have difficulty exulting in tribulation, but with continued knowledge of the power of the filling of the Spirit and continued experience living in the filling of the Spirit

with the love of God being poured out in us, the result is the ability to exult in our tribulations...

- f. Knowing that tribulation brings perseverance, which develops proven character, which brings hope, a hope that doesn't disappoint because... because our hope is the love of God within each of us (indwelling of the Holy Spirit)

2. Produce a Crop:

- a. 2 Corinthians 5:

¹⁰ **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

- b. This is the evaluation at the judgment seat of Christ. Believers will receive rewards for the Crop they produce.

- c. *“There were two farmers who desperately needed rain, and both of them prayed for rain. But only one of them went out and prepared his fields to receive it. Which one do you think trusted God to send the rain; the answer the one who prepared his fields for it?”*
- d. *How do we know God will bring the rain? Study the word of God.*

AMEN