**The Seed on Good Soil**

Luke 8:1-15

Key Verse 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.”

**Introduction**

 In the parable of sower, Jesus describes four different kinds of soil referring to the hearts of people who hear the word of God. In fact the four kinds of hearts that the parable describes can be found for anyone who hears the word. The parable also teaches how we can produce fruits with the word of God. As we study this parable, we could say to ourselves, “This concerns me for my heart is seen in this parable”. May the Lord help us to examine how we hear the word of God and know how to bear good fruit.

**1. Read verses 1-3. Why do you think Jesus begins to travel from one place to another? (1) Who is with Jesus?(1b, 2, 3a) What do the women do and what can we learn from them? (3b)**

**1-1. Read verses 1-3**

 *1.After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; 3 Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod’s household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.*

**1-2.Why do you think Jesus begins to travel one place to another? (1)**

 After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God.

* Jesus preached consistently – He continued the main mission of his life to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God without being tired.
* He traveled many places to preach the good news. He didn’t stay in one place, but spread the good news to many places.
* He set a good example for his disciples; as he traveled from one town and village to another, his disciples must travel from one nation to another so that the good news may reach all nations without missing any nation.
* We should preach the gospel from one person to another so that people may at least have chance to listen to the gospel.
* Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom of God. The news of the kingdom of God is good news for everybody because it gives people the hope of being reformed and reconciled back to God.

**1-3. Who is with Jesus?(1b, 2, 3a)**

 The Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; 3 Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod’s household; Susanna; and many others.

* The twelve disciples – following Jesus, they were trained to succeed Jesus’ ministry as his apostle. The best way to train disciples is to let them see how to serve God’s work and participate in the work first hand.
* Women – those who were cured of evil spirits and diseases by Jesus.
* Mary(called Magdalene), from Magdala, a small town near Capernaum, cured of evil spirits (seven demons –Mk 16:9).
* She traveled with Jesus as one of his followers. She was present as one of Jesus' two most important moments: the crucifixion and the resurrection. Within the four Gospels she is named at least 12 times, more than most of the apostles. After receiving Jesus’ grace she became a zealous disciple of Jesus and his powerful supporter.

* Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod’s household –the meaning of her name is ‘gift of God’. She heard the news of Jesus’ resurrection from an angel together with Mary.
* She was in a high social class, but still followed Jesus and supported him.
* Susanna- the meaning of her name is ‘Lily’
* Jesus accepted women as his disciples. It was different from the Jewish culture at that time which ignored women. Jesus saw great potential from women who could become powerful workers for God’s work of salvation.

* Many others were also included. Jesus accepted those who have desire to follow him.

**1-4. What do the women do and what can we learn from them? (3b)**

 These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

* The women supported Jesus’ ministry by providing Jesus and his disciples with what they needed practically such as food and many other things out of their own means.
* After they received grace from Jesus, they showed their gratitude by supporting Jesus’ ministry. They became Jesus’ good co-workers.
* Jesus got support from his followers. The womens’ support was a great help for Jesus’ work and an important part of Jesus’ ministry.
* Receiving God’s grace is a blessing, but it is a greater blessing if we participate in Jesus’ salvation work. We can be God’s co-workers and a source of blessing by joining in his salvation work.

**2. Read verses 4-8. To whom does Jesus tell the parable? (4). What different soils does Jesus mention in his parable and what happens to the seeds that fall in the different soils? (5-8a) What do you think Jesus means by saying "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear”? (8b)**

**2-1. Read verses 4-8.**

*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.”*

**2-2. To whom does Jesus tell the parable? (4).**

*4 While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable:*

* A large crowd, people from town and after town; After Jesus traveled from town to town preaching, people were coming to Him to listen to his word. They were coming to the place where Jesus stayed to listen to his word.
* When we have the word of God, people will come to us to listen to the word of God.
* Parable –a short story that is used to explain or teach spiritual lessons. A parable is simple to remember and easily understood.

**2-3. What different soils does Jesus mention in his parable and what happens to the seeds that fall in the different soils? (5-8a)**

*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*

* Four different soils
* Soil on the path: the seed was trampled on, the bird ate it up
* Rocky ground: when the seed came up, the plant withered because it didn’t have moisture. The soil on the rock is very shallow and can’t keep enough water.
* Thorn soil: the seed grew up with thorns and the thorns choked the plants. Thorns have strong power of growth that can overpower other plants’ growth.
* Good soil: seed came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown
* The parable was plain and simple. It was probably easy for the crowd to understand the content of the parable because the people there were familiar with agriculture.

**2-4. What do you think Jesus means by saying "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear”? (8b)**

* It implies that there is hidden meaning in the parable and that only a certain type of listener can catch detect it.
* “whoever has ears to hear, let them hear” – those who have spiritual ears to understand the real meaning of the parable.

**3. Read verses 9-10. What do Jesus' disciples ask him? (9) To whom is the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God given? (10a) Why does Jesus speak to others in parables? (10b) Why do you think the secrets of the kingdom of God are given to the disciples but not others?**

**3-1. Read verses 9-10.**

*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.*

**3-2. What do Jesus' disciples ask him? (9)**

 His disciples asked him what this parable meant

* The disciples had an earnest desire to know the true meaning of the parable.
* Even though they didn’t understand at first, they had passion to understand Jesus’ words.
* Recognizing his disciples’ eager desire to understand the word of God, Jesus taught them the meaning of the parable. God blesses those who have an earnest desire to receive and understand his word. He reveals to them the truth.

**3-3. To whom is the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God given? (10a)**

*He said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you,*

* The knowledge was given to the disciples only.
* The secret of kingdom of God can be known only when God reveals the secret to the people. People cannot understand or find the secret for themselves. They are able to understand it when it is given to them as a gift.
* Again, the secret of the kingdom of God was given to the disciples who were seeking the truth with an earnest heart.

**3-4. Why does Jesus speak to others in parables? (10b)**

*but to others I speak in parables, so that,“‘though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand*.

* Though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.
* The secret of kingdom of God is closed to certain people.
* However they do not have the knowledge of the secret of the kingdom of God for they don’t have the desire to receive the word of God. So they reject the word.

**3-5. Why do you think the secrets of the kingdom of God is given to the disciples but not others?**

* It was because of their different attitude toward word of God.
* God hides the secret of kingdom of God to those who don’t have right attitude toward the word of God.
* May the Lord help us to have right attitude toward the word of God daily.

**4. Read verses 11-14. What does the seed refer to in the parable? What are the similarities between the seed and the word of God? (11a) Who does the analogy of the seed on the path refer to and what happens to them? (12). Who is referred to in the story of the seed that falls on the rocky ground and what happens to them? (13). What kind of person does the seed that falls among thorns represent and what happens to them (14)**

**4-1. Read 11-14**

 *“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.*

**4-2. What does the seed refer to in the parable?**

* The seed is the word of God
* The heart of man is as soil to the seed of God’s word. Soil is capable of receiving seed and producing fruits. But unless the seed is sown in it, the soil can’t produce any fruit. So we should take care of seed and soil together.
* However, the success of seeding depends on the nature of soil, the man’s heart.

**4-3. What are the similarities between the seed and the word of God? (11a)**

* Both of them have great potential to produce much fruit.
* According to the condition of the soil and man’s heart, the outcomes are very different.

**4-4. Who does the analogy of the seed on the path refer to and what happens to them? (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.*

* Path soil – those who hear the word of God but don’t accept it. Their minds are hard. There is no room for them to accept the word of God because of their own thoughts and pride. They hear the word of God carelessly.
* The word does not sink down into their conscience. The word does not make the least impression on their hearts.

* The devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts. Devil takes away the word of God from their hearts to have them not to believe and to be saved from their sins.
* People can be saved when they believe the word of God. God saves people through his word. Here is the importance of preaching the word of God. The word of God creates faith in man’s heart.
* Satan does all things that he can to keep us from believing the word of God such as creating prejudices in our minds, sticking to our guns, diverting our minds from the word of God to something else, and letting us forget the words of God, and so on.
* We need to be aware of the devil when we hear the word. He works diligently, especially among the people who hear the word of God to take the word out of their hearts just as birds eat seeds.

**4-5. Who is referred to in the story of the seed that falls on the rocky ground and what happens to them? (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.*

* Those who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but don’t have root. They believe for a while, but in the time of the testing they fall away.
* They receive word of God with emotional excitement and passion. The word of God doesn’t take deep root in their hearts. Their faith is temporary. (Colossian 2:6)
* The problem is that there is no real work in their hearts and souls.
* They cannot endure when it is tested through troubles or hardships. Their little faith disappears. And they go back to the condition that they had before.
* Our faith would go through some test so that it may be proved as genuine faith.
* Feelings are an important part in our spiritual life, but nothing can content us but a deep, humbling, and self-denying work of the Holy Spirit and the union with Jesus Christ through obedience to the word of God.

**4-6. What kind of person does the seed that falls among thorns represent and what happens to them (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.*

* When they hear the word of God, they have good potential to grow well and produce good fruits. They accept the word of God and have willingness to obey them.
* But they allow the things of this world to get hold on their hearts and they leave no room for the word of God to do its work in their hearts. They hear many messages and attend bible studies but never grow for life’s worry, riches, and pleasures override them.
* The money, pleasures and worries become traps to catch our hearts.
* life worries; The worries weaken faith and make people powerless.
* riches: Love for money chocks the spiritual growth so that they may not produce any fruits. We cannot serve two masters; money and God (good example – foolish rich young man)
* The pleasure of this world may ruin the soul, even lawful delights such as entertainment, sports and other activities. Being indulged, and delighting too much in the world’s pleasures can be a daily deception.
* Thousands of things of this world which in themselves are innocent can lead us to the hell, robbing us of the word of God and deep seated desire of our hearts.

**5. Read verse 15. Who does the seed on good soil stand for?(15a) What do they do and what results from their actions? (15b) Which soil do you think you relate to and what do you think you need to do to produce a crop?**

**5-1. Read verse 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.*

**5-2. Who does the seed on good soil stand for?(15a)**

*But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart*

* Those who have noble and good heart.
* The good heart is a heart firmly fixed for God and it is an upright heart.
* They have the courageous heart to give up things of this world to receive the blessing from God.

**5-3. What do they do and what results from their actions? (15b)**

*who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.*

* Hear the word, retain it, and persevere – not just receive the word but keep it and preserve it with patience.
* The seed of the word of God sinks down deeply into their wills, and produces practical results in their faith and practice. They not only hear with pleasure, but act with decision. They repent. They believe. They obey.
* They produce crop 100 times more.
* Only when we produce fruits keeping good heart we can enjoy the fruit of salvation.
* Just form of religion or attending church cannot give us true hope or peace to us.
* There should be fruits of Holy Spirit in our hearts as well as our practical lives, otherwise the word of God is preached to us in vain. Those only, who bear such fruits, shall be found at Christ’s right hand in the heaven.

**5-4. Which soil do you think you relate to and what do you think you need to do to produce a crop?**

**In conclusion**

 We have learned that there are four ways in which we may hear the word of God, and among these four only one is right. What kind soil do you have? Ask yourself, “Does my heart belong to the right one?” We are encouraged to take this parable with a sense of the warning and responsibility as Jesus’ true followers and take necessary actions to have good heart soil. May the Holy Spirit change our hearts to be good soils and bear much fruit for God’s glory.

**One word: Good Soil**