

# Ground for Growth

## The Parable of the Sower

The parable of the sower is one of the most important parables Jesus taught. It explains the many reasons why people do not follow through in following Christ. It also explains how we can make our lives into good ground for the seed of God's word to grow.

Luke 8:4-15

When a great crowd gathered and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold." As he said this, he called out, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

Then his disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to others I speak in parables, so that 'looking they may not

perceive, and listening they may not understand.'

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and

### **The Seed is the Word of God.**

In this parable, this seed represents the Word of God. The Word of God is more than merely information about God that we learn by reading the Bible, listening to a sermon or studying a good Christian book. The Word of God is the very means by which God leads us personally. Consider these important verses:

"The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, So shall my Word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:10-11)

While God's Word is potent to bring about change in our lives, we must work to provide good ground for the seed of God's Word to grow to fruitfulness. The parable of the sower describes this good ground in simple terms.

**They hear the Word.**

Hearing God's Word requires our intentional listening. Those who grow to spiritual maturity are able to listen for God's voice in many different ways. Whether it be through reading the Bible, listening to a sermon or message, engaging in a spiritual conversation with a friend, or simply sitting quietly, we can develop the discipline of hearing God's voice.

**They hold fast to it.**

But hearing God's Word also requires us to hold onto it. Each of us should develop some way of retaining God's Word so that it can take root in our lives. This may be as simple as writing Bible verses down in a notebook or jotting a note on a 3x5 card we keep in our pocket. When we repeatedly refer to the Word we have heard, it will more and more take root in our minds and hearts.

**They persevere in it.**

We should never give up. Spiritual fruit takes time to grow. As we persevere in the Word, we should give ourselves the grace and patience needed for spiritual fruit to grow.

**They bring forth fruit.**

God is interested that the fruit of righteousness grow in our lives. This spiritual fruit is listed beautifully in Paul's letter to the Galatians.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:22)