**Sermon 040922 *Luke 8:1-15 The Parable of the Sower***

**Reading for service leader Luke 8:1-15**

Jesus had a great multitude gathered which included His disciples and certain women who helped to support Him financially. ***Luke 8:1 And the twelve were with Him, 2and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, 3and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.*** When we pray ‘Thy kingdom come’, we must also see that, as the target of our finances. We must support ministries that bring people into the kingdom of God.

It was incredibly humble of Jesus to accept help from these women. He could have made a fortune just turning water into wine. The rabbis refused to teach women, generally assigning them to inferior positions. This humility of Jesus rubs off on His followers with Joanna whose husband was in a very respected position, sharing the company with Mary Magdalene, who had been demon possessed. Humility opens the door for the gospel.

**Luke 8:4 *And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable:*** His fame had spread to every city, and they came to see for themselves. No wonder Christianity grew so fast, so that their number grew daily. ***Acts 16:5  So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.***

People are often searching for answers, and they do want solutions to the problems of life. ***Matt 7:7 7“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*** Satan knows all people have this emptiness, and he seeks to fill it with rubbish. But the first step of asking, seeking and knocking is always our responsibility.

***Luke 8:5 A sower …*** This person was known as a sower. He sowed seeds in lots of places. Jesus mentions 4 places. People may not have known the sower’s name, but they all knew the bloke who sowed seeds. Seeds are tiny, but you can drop them wherever you go. When the angels in heaven chat about you, do they know you as the sower?

***Luke 8:5 … went out to sow his seed.*** His deliberate goal was to sow his seeds. These were **his** seeds – not borrowed seeds. When John talks about the witnesses in this life he mentions 3 witnesses. ***1 John 5:8 And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.*** The 3 witnesses of our life on earth are: the Spirit, the water and the blood. These are what will testify of our walk on earth. The Spirit refers to how we have responded to the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Spirit is evident in our worship, service, wisdom and correction. The water, refers to what we have been born into; our race, wealth, country, suburb, family, gender, health, education, talents etc. The blood refers to our trials. How has our faith in God helped our response to the hard things in life that have shaped our resilience and personality?

These three elements form the foundation of who you are. They are the composition of your soul. They are the most powerful testimony you can share. When you speak of what God has done for other people, it can be good; but when you speak of what God has done in your life, it is always powerfully anointed, it is your seed. The best example of this is found in the account of the road to Emmaus. Jesus***expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself (Luke 24:27,31).*** And it was when ***He took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them, their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.*** This is the ultimate explosion of witness. The whole personality of the Son of God shone like the Sun.

Now this sower deliberately went out to sow. Hopefully if he or she was a DCF sower, the night before, after thanking God and confessing a sin, he may have prayed at step 3 – what can I do for You tomorrow? The mundane stuff of our daily itinerary is just a structure in which we can serve God in. Our heart needs to be set on serving God. ***Prov 16:1,3 The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord…3Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.*** Our continual task is to prepare our hearts to serve God. When the opportunity comes to speak out for Him, His Holy Spirit will give us words. ***Luke 12:11 11“Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. 12For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”*** Jesus explains: ***Luke 8:11*** ***Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.*** The very unveiling of the heart and mind of God, is shown to us in the life of Jesus.

We are taught in Ps 37:23 ***The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way.*** It is when we deliberately ask God “What can I do for you tomorrow?”, that we seek to attentively follow the path He has assigned for us. That is why step 3 of homework is so important. We ask “what can I do for You tomorrow?”. It is all anchored in ‘Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done’. The sower **deliberately** went out to sow his seeds.

***Luke 8:5 And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. .. 12Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.***

When we pray for our prodigals, we pray that the seeds that have been planted day after day, will not be lost. There is no training for parenthood and many mistakes are made on the way. But the story of the prodigal has a happy ending. Nevertheless, even Jesus Himself has Judas betraying Him.

Whenever the Word is being preached, Satan is at work trying to take it away from the heart. Notice the last place he wants the word to hit, is the heart, not the mind. If he can get people to debate a point just mentally, that will work. So, we pray for God’s word to hit hearts. When we love God in Mark 12:30, the first place is the heart. Then the soul, mind and strength.

I encourage you to sharpen your prayers. Look for the weapons of warfare that the enemy is using to steal the seeds planted over many years. Some of the targets the enemy aims at are:

* Media – half truths. Anti-Christian. Idolatry. Blasphemy. Entertainment- Violence and lust. Normalizing what is evil. Games.
* Defilement of the land – Smoking ceremonies. Dedication of the land to the ‘ancient’ spirits. Abortion. LGBTQ. Idolatry in Sport. Violence.
* Finances – Mortgage worries. Cost of living. Pets. Holidays. Investments. Giving.
* Health – Diet. Exercise. Bad habits – alcohol and cigarettes.
* Mental health. Depression. Loneliness. Failure. Bad decisions. Sloth.
* Targets – head, heart, arms, vulnerable bits.

***Luke 8:6 6Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. … 13But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.***

It is a huge delusion that just knowing about God is enough, but knowing must be relational. We must grow in our walk with God. Growth requires prayer. I have already given you the routine before you shut your eyes at night. Thank God for something. Confess a sin***. Proverb 28:13 He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.*** Unless we look for our own sin, we do not understand how to give or receive mercy. Ask God what you can do for Him tomorrow. Ask Him for something. That is just a start. We need to converse with Jesus all day. We must listen to the Holy Spirit and ask for His help. Secondly, we must read and study the Bible. I encourage you to write notes and make links. It is only in reading the Scriptures that we understand and grasp the heart and mind of God. Thirdly, Christian friends are essential. We must build each other up. Fellowship is so important for growth, for correction, for encouragement, for compassion and for healing.

These three components are like a plant with roots in fertile ground. Temptations are constant and we need to be well grounded to fight them. Reading the Bible returns our minds to the heart and will of God. It contradicts temptation. Prayer is our cry for help. Christian friends often shut and open the doors to deepen our walk with God.

A plant without moisture looks dead and withered. It is like a marriage without hugs. It is like a hymn that is just music and words. Like prayer without thanks and repentance. It is like Bible study, with no change in behaviour.

***Luke 8:7And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. …  14Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.***

There is nothing more satisfying in this life than bearing spiritual fruit for God. But the cares, riches and pleasures of life can smother our desire to walk in purity before God. The weeds are an impurity. In the OT the word for Pure is *Bar.* So, in ***Ps19:8 The commandment of the Lord is pure.*** Satan uses cares, riches and pleasures to defile our obedience to God. When we learn the laws of God, there is no hidden motive – just love and growth and protection for us. But the heart behind the rule is always what matters.

Interestingly, this word *bar* is also translated: ‘Favourite’ in SoS 6:9, where the Shulamite is the favourite of her Mum. ***My dove, my perfect one, Is the only one, the only one of her mother,
the favorite of the one who bore her.*** Everything about her is a delight. The daughters call her blessed. All the girls praise her. We need to delight in God’s commandments.

Then in the next verse in SoS 6:10 it is translated as ‘clear’ as the sun***. Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun,…***

This purity is so bright we cannot see imperfections. It is powerful and beyond our perception. We are given the sun to understand righteousness. Mal 4:2. ***The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings****.* Purity heals us. Grumpiness, lack of humility, greed, idolatry all lead to sickness in the day. We are given sickness to understand the impact of sin to our daily walk. The cares, riches and pleasures of life are like a sick plant, that does not bear fruit.

***Luke 8: 8 But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.”  … … 15But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.***

Now age is not a barrier when bearing fruit for God. ***Psalm 92:12-15 12The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. 14They shall still bear fruit in old age;***

We never know how well people have responded to the seeds we sow. Sometimes we are blessed to find out years later that people have been blessed. But our duty is to sow. Someone else may have ploughed the ground and God has prepared people for a time to receive the seed – His word. God prepares the heart to be noble and good.

The word for ‘noble’ is *kale or kalos.* It means beautiful, lovely, worthy, honorable, noble, visibly good. So, there is a huge work in people’s heart being done before the seed is planted. Christian parents work hard to prepare their children. Nothing works better than a good example. But we aim for fruit – even just the smallest fruit.

The word for patience is *hypomone* = to remain under, sometimes translated as perseverance, steadfastness, endurance. The noble and good heart is learning to overcome trials. It is in these times we turn to God with cries for help, but we grow. In Paul’s teaching on battle in Eph 6 he inspires us with the words: “having done all, still stand”.

### *Luke 8:9 9Then His disciples asked Him, saying, “What does this parable mean?” 10And He said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that ‘Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’*

In the Scriptures there is a blatant wisdom that is blocked from the proud and sinful heart. ***John 3:3 Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*** The second step to salvation is to admit we are sinners. The world does not want to admit that. The proud heart cannot know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. They can see and hear, but they completely miss the revelation of God.

A Fundamental theorem of understanding is that EVERYTHING in the physical is given to us to understand the spiritual. This is why Jesus taught in parables. You do not need a PhD to get it. People need to be born again. Step 1: Admit that God is real. Step 2: Admit you are a sinner. Step 3: Accept that Jesus, the Son of God came and died to pay the penalty for your sins. Step 4: Make Jesus the Lord of your life.

**Closing thought:**

The psalmist Asaph proclaims: Ps 73:26 ***My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*** It seems bordering on arrogant to think we own a part of God – but He has given us His Holy Spirit.

The word ‘portion’ or *cheleq* is also used to refer to inheritance, legacy, share, booty of food, of land, of inheritance.

Even the minutest atom of God in our character is incredible. Our flesh and our heart fail all the time. We walk in a fallen world and fail. Why did God create night and day? So that we could understand that even the tiniest candle can defeat the darkest night. So be determined to shine for God. Just the smallest word: ‘God bless you’, the smile, the thanks, the helping hand …. Are advances for the kingdom of God. Plant these seeds.

See this little light of mine - I’m going to let it shine… Why do we keep up the fight? Because God is the strength of our heart, my portion forever ….. having done all, still stand. The point of going to the shop is not to buy milk, but to plant seeds. You go to work, not to earn money, but to plant seeds. You go to the birthday party, not to eat cake, but to plant seeds. ‘Thy kingdom come’.

We will never lose – because we have God as our portion FOREVER. Amen

Last song: See this little light of mine -> Such love.

***2 Cor 12:9  And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”*** Go and plant seeds for God.

Homework:

The sermon on Sunday is on Luke 8:1-15. The Sower.

We all know prodigals and people who have not accepted the gospel.

Considering the first three soils as targets that Saran aims at to block the gospel, how have you prayed, or how should you pray?

1. If the ground is like rock, so any words spoken just seem to go nowhere?
2. What are the birds that steal the seed before it can take root?
3. What about the thorns? What chokes the gospel so the prodigal cannot see the love of God?
4. What do we need to pray so that the gospel is received, and the person bears fruit?

Warfare always needs a strategy. Targets need to be identified. The strongholds of the enemy need to be targeted by prayer.

Think of one of the main people, perhaps a prodigal, who you pray for. Do you bind the enemy? Do you curse every weapon of the enemy? Do you know of bad friendships that are leading the prodigal astray? If there is pride involved, how do you attack that in prayer? If there is a history of abuse, or hatred or grief – how do you target that in prayer?

The seed is the Word of God. How do you sow the seed?

HW 2

Here’s a thought from Our Daily Bread August 29 as you prepare for the sermon on Luke 8:1-15.

In 1879 a professor of Botany, William Beale, buried bottles of seeds in deep soil. Every 20 years a bottle was dug up to see if would still germinate. People thought he was crazy. In 2021 another bottle was dug up and planted. Some actually did germinate after 142 years!

So, is Satan saying to you that seeds you planted many years ago, are now dead – time has expired? No! If the physical seed can still have life after 142 years, then surely spiritual seed, can also survive.

Be determined to plant a seed. Be the sower.

There’s an old Sunday School song: “See this little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine”. No longer sing it like a kid – sing it like a determined warrior. The seeds of our God don’t expire.

HW 3

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| 1 |   |   |   | 2 |

Clue: 1 Across : What is the difference between going to the shops to buy milk and going to the shops to plant seeds for God … and buying milk while you are there.

1 Down: 8th letter. 2 Down: Alternative to coffee.