

2/13/15

The Conditions of Man's Heart

Lk. 8:4-18

Jesus has been preaching and teaching about the Kingdom of God.

1. "He said to them, "I must preach the **kingdom** of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." Lk. 4:43
2. "Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed *are you* poor, For yours is the **kingdom** of God." Lk. 6:20
3. "For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the **kingdom** of God is greater than he." Lk. 7:28
4. "He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the **kingdom** of God. And the twelve *were* with Him." Lk. 8:1

Many of the Jews were rejecting Him and the message of the Kingdom, therefore He had given some stern warnings.

1. Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth charged them with unbelief in Him as Messiah by recalling the days when the widow of Zarephath and Naaman of Elijah and Elisha. Lk. 4:16-30
2. Jesus told the Pharisees He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Lk. 5:32

3. Jesus declared the Beatitudes about those who were in the Kingdom and Christ-like, in contrast to those rejecting the Kingdom, putting his finger on the problem, the heart. Lk. 6:45

* "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."

4. Jesus then rebuked the Pharisees and lawyers for rejecting the will of God to believe and be forgiven by the preaching of John and Himself, describing them as fickle, self-centered spoiled children, not wanting to play wedding or funeral. Lk. 7:32, 35

* "But wisdom is justified by all her children."

5. Jesus rebuked Simon the self-righteous Pharisee for exalting himself about the prostitute. Lk. 7:47

* "Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little."

Jesus now declared the parable of the Sower to describe the various responses of sinners to the gospel of the Kingdom, characterized by: Lk. 8:4-18

- I. The proclamation of the parable. vs. 4-10
- II. The interpretation of the parable. vs. 11-15
- III. The application of the parable. vs. 16-18

I. The proclamation of the parable. vs. 4-10

- A.** The situation set for the parable. vs. 4
1. Jesus is once again addresses the crowds, “And when a great multitude had gathered.” vs. 4a
 - a. Mark gives is the details. Mk. 4:1
 - 1) Jesus again began to teach by the sea of Galilee. vs. 1a
 - 2) A great multitude was gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea. vs. 1b
 - 3) The people were on the land facing the sea. vs. 1c
 - b. Matthew confirms this adding Jesus had just left the house. Matt. 13:1
* Both Matthew and Mark place the parable of the Sower right after Jesus’ family tried to rescue Him, thinking He had lost His mind. Matt. 12:46-50; Mk. 3:31-35
 2. Jesus was being sought out by all, “and they had come to Him from every city.” vs. 4b
 - a. Cana, Nazareth, Nain.
 - b. Corazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum.
 3. Jesus taught the people, “He spoke by a parable.” vs. 4c
 - a. The word parable “parabole”, is a compound word.
 - 1) The word “para” means along side, we get our word paralegal, paramedic, parallel parking.

- 2) The word “bole” to throw, in other words to place or throw alongside.
- b. Taking something you know and putting it next to what you don’t know, so that in knowing what you do know you will come know what you didn’t know.
 - 1) The idea is to compare one thing against another for similarity.
 - 2) The parabolic teaching primarily has the intent to stimulate the mind of the hearer who has grown indifferent, complacent, apathetic.
 - 3) But it also has a sever consequence when it is not heeded and given a deaf ear to it, as will be stated.
- c. Parables only either compare or contrast, they have a central message and not every detail is to be given a meaning, unless given in the parable such as in this parable of the Sower.
 - 1) Jesus gives every detailed meaning in Matthew, Mark and Luke.
 - 2) About 1/3 of our Lord’s teaching consists of parables and parabolic statements.
 - 3) The word “parabole” is found 48 times in the synoptic gospel and 2 times in Hebrews, translated figure KJV and symbolic and figurative NKJV. Heb. 9:9; 11:19

B. The declaration of the parable. vs. 5-8

* Jesus gives four possibilities when a farmer sows his seed.

1. The first possibility is that the seed does not sprout up at all, “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it.” vs. 5
2. The second possibility is that the seed sprouts up, but it dries up, “Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture.” vs. 6
3. The third possibility is that the seed sprouts up in the midst of thorns suffocate it, “And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it.” vs. 7
4. The fourth possibility is that the seed sprouts up to be fruitful, “But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.” When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” vs. 8

C. The explanation of the parable. vs. 9-10

1. The parable was not comprehended by the twelve apostles, “Then His disciples asked Him, saying, “What does this parable mean?” vs. 9

- a. Matthew, “And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” Matt. 13:10
 - b. Marks, “But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.” Mk. 4:10
2. The Lord tells His disciples what the parable means. vs. 10
 - a. The twelve had opened their heart to Jesus and were now in the Kingdom of God, “And He said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.” vs. 10a-b
 - 1) They had believed in Jesus as Messiah and repented of their sins.
 - 2) They had been born again and given, the perfect passive, resulting in the ability and privilege to know “ginosko” aorist active, to grasp the mysteries “mysterion” of the kingdom in fulfillment of the thing previously kept secret from the foundation of the world, but now made known by Jesus. Matt. 13:35, “Psalm 78:2”
 - b. The other sinners who had not opened and hardened their heart to Jesus were hindered to understand the kingdom by their own doing, “but to the rest *it*

is given in parables, that ‘Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.’ vs. 10c-e

- 1) Jesus is quoting Isaiah when he was sent by God to His people who did not believe the word of God for their judgment. Is. 6:9
- 2) Therefore the hardening of their hearts against the measure of light they had received became greater darkness to them by God’s judgment, as a result of their own stubborn rebellion against God.
- 3) Matthew and Mark quote Isaiah, but include verse ten. Is. 6:9-10
 - a) Matthew says, “And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.’ Matt. 13:14-15
 - b) Mark says, “Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing

they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And *their* sins be forgiven them.” Mk. 4:12

* Pharaoh hardened his heart, then God hardened Pharaoh’s heart!

- c. The purpose of parables is not to conceal, but to reveal truth.
 - 1) Jesus tells His disciples, “Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.” Matt. 13:13
 - 2) In other words, attempting to gain their interest to awaken their apathy, indifference and spiritual blindness with hardened hearts, in hope they see the gospel truth.
 - 3) The parable of the Sower is found in all three synoptic gospels, Matthew is the longest 23 verses with 8 kingdom parables, Mark is next with 20 verses with 4 kingdom parables and Luke is the briefest with 14 verses with 2 kingdom parables, as a picture of the present age in the absence of the King till He returns.
 - 5) Jesus said, the parable of the Sower is a key parable to understand all other parables, “And He said to them, “Do you not understand this

parable? How then will you understand all the parables? Mk. 4:13

Illustration

Evangelism is trying to turn people from going the wrong direction, being sure they are going the right way.

Application

1. We must learn to take simple and everyday language to communicate our faith to others.

* “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a **preacher**? Rom. 10:14

2. The person is not the important one, but the proclamation of Jesus through the gospel, desiring interest the sinner to hear.

* “Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.” 1Cor. 3:5-7

3. Jesus is our greatest example!

The proclamation of the parable was to save sinners!

II. The interpretation of the parable. vs. 11-15

- We are not left to our own interpretation, but our Lord provides it.

- A.** Jesus explains to His disciples what He meant by the seed, “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.” vs. 11
1. The word of God is the revelation of God to man about the good news through the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - a. That Jesus is the anointed Messiah promised in the Scriptures. Gen. 3:15; 49:10, Deut. 18:15; Is. 7:14; Mic. 5:2
 - b. That Jesus was God Incarnate, the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. Jn. 1:1, 14, 29; Phil. 2:5-8
 2. The word of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ calls for all sinners to repent of their sins and be born again.
 - a. Acknowledging they are sinners.
 - b. Confessing their sin in Jesus name.
 - c. Abandoning their sins.
 - d. Living a sanctified life to God, through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 3. The Sower is not stated by Luke.
 - a. Jesus said He the Son of Man was the Sower. Matt. 13:37
 - b. The gospel only saves.
 - 1) “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we

might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” Ja. 1:18

- 2) “born again not of corruptible seed but Incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.” 1Pet. 1:23

B. Jesus explains to His disciples the meaning of the various sowing of seed. vs. 12-15

1. The four different types of soils represent the conditions of the heart of people.
 - a. Luke says the seed that fell on good ground are the good heart. Lk. 8:15
 - b. Matthew says, “Lest they understand with their hearts.” Matt. 13:15
 - c. Mark says, the word that was sown in their hearts.” Mk. 4:15c
2. The way side represents a heart of unbelief. vs. 12
 - a. They are exposed to the gospel, “Those by the wayside are the ones who hear.” vs. 12a
 - 1) The tense is a participle present active, literally “are hearing”.
 - 2) The ground is hard having been walked on, their heart, not broken up to receive the seed, the word.
 - b. They continue to be blinded by Satan and sin, due to their unbelief, “then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts.” vs. 12b

1) The birds devoured the seed, birds always represent evil, like leaven, unless otherwise stated in the context. vs. 5

2) “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.” 2Cor. 4:3-4

c. The purpose is stated, “lest they should believe and be saved.” vs. 12c

1) These do not believe the gospel to be true, nor place their confidence in Jesus and remained unsaved.

2) These sinners are dead in trespasses and sins, like we once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.” Eph. 2:1-2

3. The rock represents a shallow heart. vs. 13

a. They are equally exposed to the gospel, take hold of it, “But the ones on the rock *are those* who, when they hear, receive the word with joy and

these have no root” representing their heart.” vs. 13a-c

- 1) They word receive “dechomai”, means to take with the hand, embrace or to make one’s own.
 - 2) They have joy “chara”, gladness.
 - 3) These being on the rock sprout up, having a few inches of dirt and the sun heat on the rock, but have no deep root, representing their heart.
- b. They do not continue in the gospel, “who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.” vs. 13d
- 1) The word temptation “peirasmos”, is allurement or enticement to sin.
* “For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.” Matt. 13:21c-d; Mk. 4:17c-e
 - 2) The result is that they fall away “aphistemi”, simply means to depart, to withdraw or cease.
 - 3) G. Campbell Morgan said, “they apostatized”.
 - 4) Perhaps seeing Christianity as a problem-free life and living by their emotions and feelings!
4. The thorns represent an uncultivated heart. vs. 14
- a. They also hear and take hold of the gospel, “Now the ones *that* fell among

thorns are those who, when they have heard.” vs. 14a-b

* The received the seed. Matt. 13:22a

- b. They don’t grow, develop and mature in Christ, so they are allured enticed and overcome by worldliness, “and go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.” vs. 14c-f
 - 1) The failure is to believe one can live in both worlds.
 - 2) The neglect is in not weeding out the things that choke God’s will revealed in God’s word.
5. The good ground represents the heart that is committed to God. vs. 15
- a. They are illuminated by the Holy Spirit hearing the word by a receptive heart, seeing their sinfulness and poverty of spirit to merit salvation they repent, “But the ones *that* fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart.” vs. 15a-b
 - 1) The word noble “kalos” means honest and honorable for the purpose of God.
 - 2) The word good “agathos” means excellent and upright, seeing their need of salvation.

- b. They are committed to grow, develop and mature in Christ, “keep *it* and bear fruit with patience.” vs. 15c
- 1) The word keep “katecho” means to retain or hold fast, they do not let go of it or depart from it.
 - 2) The evidence is seen, as they bear fruit by living out the word in their lives, regardless of the difficulties.
 - 3) They do this with patient “hupomone”, steadfastness, constancy and endurance, without ever implying sinless perfection.
 - 4) Matthew indicates fruit to be, 30, 60, 100 fold, Mark reverses them. Matt. 12:23; Mk. 4:20
 - 5) The good seed are sons of the kingdom, planted in the world by God to reproduce! Matt. 13:38

Illustration

A farmer prepares the soil and scatter much seed for a harvest, knowing not all seed will sprout up.

Application

1. If we take the ratio Jesus gave in the Parable of the Sower, we can safely say that one of four will receive Christ and continue to the end.
 - a. But that was not the intent of the parable, but Jesus just gave four conditions of hearts

that hear the gospel and what they allow to hinder them from continuing in the gospel.

- b. Who would dare to say that a sinner with a hard wayside heart, who rejects one or many times, will never come? Hard ground can be broken up!
 - * The wayside are the only ones Jesus said were not saved, “lest they should believe and be saved. vs. 12c
 - c. Who would be so bold to say that a stony heart that falls away in a time of temptation, will not come back to Christ or even the worldly heart taken away with cares, riches and pleasures of life? Stony ground can be removed!
 - d. Who would be so arrogant to say that a noble and good heart can not turn away from Christ to be among stones or thorns? The miracle is going from darkness to light, the natural is going from light to darkness!
 - 1) When a woman miscarriages at three month, does that mean she was never pregnant or that the child had life?
 - 2) “God is not willing that any should perish.” 2Pet. 3:9
2. Maybe your heart is hard and callous by sin, you are cynical and proud, you need to humble yourself before God, open your heart to the gospel and repent of your sins.
- * “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in

humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.” 2Tim. 2:26

3. The same caution is given to the believer about departing from Christ.

- a. Paul uses the same word, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will **depart** from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.” 1Tim. 4:1
- b. “Beware, **brethren**, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Heb. 3:12-13
- c. “For **we** have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” Heb. 3:14-15
- d. “For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of evil*, for which **some have strayed from the faith** in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and

pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.” 1Tim. 6:10-11

- e. “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much **fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, so you will be my disciples.” Jn. 15:5, 8

The interpretation of the parable was to instruct the saint!

III. **The application of the parable. vs. 16-18**

- * Jesus having placed the emphasis on hearing and responding to the gospel in the Parable of the Sower, now He illustrates it with the parable of the lighted lamp. Mk. 4:21-23
- A. Jesus declared to those of the fertile and fruitful heart to use the light given to aid others to see Christ. vs. 16
 1. A Christian is not to cover his spiritual life and light of the gospel, “No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts *it* under a bed.” vs. 16a-c
 - a. Literally, having lit, light dispels darkness.
 - b. Light attracts and guides sinners out of darkness.
 2. A Christian is to be a witness for Christ wherever he or she is, “but sets *it* on a

lampstand, that those who enter may see the light.” vs. 16d-e

- a. They are light to those unbelievers in the home or family members.
- b. They are light to unbelievers at work, friends or in the public.

B. Jesus declared to those of the fertile and fruitful heart to remember that God wants to reveal sin in the heart of every sinner. vs. 17

1. A Christian is to understand that God will bring to light the secrets of people’s heart to save them, “For nothing is secret that will not be revealed.” vs. 17a
 - a. The believer used to reach sinners.
 - b. The sinner is lost and blind by sin and Satan, God will reveals their heart.
2. A Christian is to understand that nothing can be kept from God, He can expose it, “nor *anything* hidden that will not be known and come to light.” vs. 17b
 - a. To convict and forgive the unbeliever.
 - b. To present Christ and be saved.

C. Jesus declared to the fertile and fruitful heart to use the light to increase in light. vs. 18

1. A Christian is responsible for how he lives out the word, “Therefore **take heed how you hear.**” vs. 18a

- a. This is the punch line for this parable for the Parable of the Sower, all four heard the same gospel.
- b. “Take heed how you hear” is based on the condition of the heart, here lies the problem or solution to our lives!
 - 1) Mark says, “Take heed what you hear.” Mk. 4:24b
 - 2) The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked... Jer. 17:9
- 2. A Christian is to be a faithful steward, “For whoever has, to him *more* will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.” vs. 18b-d
 - a. The believer that has, obeys and cultivates is a wise steward and will be multiplied by God and if not God could take what he has away.
 - b. The believer is to understand that the light given to the unbeliever if rejected can result in greater darkness.

Illustration

Faithful and evil steward, “And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare *himself* or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to

whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.” Lk. 12:47-48

Application

1. Have you ever led anyone to Christ during your Christian life?
 - a. Jesus said, “We are the light of the world.” Matt. 5:14
 - b. Jesus said, “freely you have received, freely give.” Matt. 10:8
 - c. Paul said we are ambassadors of Christ. 2Cor. 5:20
2. I have to examine my life to see if my deeds cancel out my words of the gospel?
 - a. Be you a doer of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. Ja. 1:22
 - b. All things are naked and open... Heb. 4:12
 - c. All will be judged by our motives at the Bema-seat of Christ. 1Cor. 3:12-15; 4:5, 2Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10
3. The believer must not just hear, but be a doer of the will of God, in the word of God.
 - a. We are to press towards the mark... Phil. 3:14
 - b. We are to grow in the knowledge and grace of Christ. 2Pet. 3:18
 - c. We are to, “Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of

bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.” Heb. 12:14-15

- d. If my spiritual life was my business, would it be thriving or broke?

The application of the parable was to warn the saint!

Conclusion

Jesus declared the parable of the Sower to describe the various responses of sinners to the gospel of the Kingdom:

- I. The proclamation of the parable was to save sinners!
- II. The interpretation of the parable was to instruct the saints!
- III. The application of the parable was to warn the saints!