

Now That's a Good Story, But What Does it Mean? Luke 8:1-15

"Music and singing make teaching sticky!" – Phil Vischer (Bob the Tomato)
Telling stories do the same thing! This was Jesus' favorite teaching method!

This new sermon series is called "Jesus Stories", b/c Jesus was a storyteller, & the best there ever was/will be! His stories are timeless & world renowned!

William Barclay said, *"Even in an age when men know less and less of the Bible, and care less for it, it remains true that the stories Jesus told are the best known stories in the world."*

These Jesus stories are known as **parables!** A parable is defined as *"an earthly story with a heavenly meaning"* – a story with an eternal purpose!

Jesus used earthly things (stories) to make heavenly things comprehensible.

Archbishop Temple said it like this, *"Jesus taught men to see the operation of God in the regular and the normal – in the rising of the sun and the falling of the rain and the growth of the plant."*

"Jesus' very use of parables shows that it was his conviction that the things of this world can lead a man's thoughts directly to God, if he will only see." – Barclay

But why is it so hard for some to see the heavenly things when they have been clearly revealed through creation & clearly taught by Jesus in parables

This question is answered in the first parable that Jesus taught – the parable of the sower, the seed, and the soils, found in **Luke 8:1-8.**

Note: the parables of Jesus were not thought up while in deep thought & study, **they were in the moment, real-life, visible glimpses of heavenly truth!**

In this parable Jesus tells of a sower/gardener, seed that is being sown, and 4 different kinds of soils, all present in the same field!

- **Wayside ground (along the path)** – the common soil between fields where people walked! There were no fences/walls dividing property, only pathways. The seed that fell upon this wayside ground, would not grow because the ground was too hard for the seed to penetrate.
- **Rocky ground** – soil with only a thin layer of soil overtop limestone. Seed can't grow without the moisture & nourishment that soil provides.

The seed planted here will sprout up quickly but will wither & die.

- **Thorny ground** – soil already filled with seeds of weeds, thorns & thistles. The soil looks good at first, but the weeds grow up along with the good seed and will soon overtake & choke the good seed out.
- **Good ground** – soil soft enough to take in the seed, deep enough to establish healthy roots, & free enough from competing thorns & thistles that it can produce a harvest even a hundredfold.

Now put yourself in the sandals of the disciples & those who were with Jesus when He shared this story. *"Okay... but what are you trying to tell us?"*

The disciples **inquired/asked** Jesus about the story's deeper meaning – which played into the heavenly meaning Jesus had for this, & every parable!

Jesus answered, ***"To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'" – Vs. 10***

There will be those who hear these stories & it will lead them to seek out their meaning & acquire the heavenly truth found within them - & **growth will take place like seed in good soil.** But for others, these stories will have the same effect the seed had on the other 3 types of soils. **Luke 8:11-15**

- **Wayside ground (the path)** represents people with **hard hearts.** They are unwilling to hear the truth and accept God's heavenly rule in their lives!
- **Rocky ground** represents people with **shallow hearts.** They ***"hear the word, receive it with joy, but they have no root; they believe for a while, but in the time of testing fall away."***
- **Thorny ground** represents people with **strangled hearts.** They have a life so crowded with other things that Christ gets crowded out – ***"choked by the cares & riches & pleasures of life, & their fruit does not mature."***
- **Good ground** represents people with **open hearts.** They receive the truth & are set free to bear lasting fruit in their lives - a hundredfold!

Simply put, some will understand, & some will not. Some will have spiritual ears to hear & eyes to see & others won't. How can you know which soil you are? Answer this – ***"How do you respond to the stories of Jesus?"***

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