

**Fruit Production**  
**Job 5:1-7**  
**Luke 8:4-8, 11-15**

A group of ministers and a salesman's organization were holding conventions in the same hotel, and the catering department had to work at top speed serving dinners to both. The salesmen were having spiked watermelon for dessert. But the chef discovered that it was being served to the ministers by mistake.

"Quick!" he commanded a waiter. "Bring it back!"

The waiter returned, reporting that it was too late. The ministers were already eating the liquor-spiced treat.

"Do they like it?" asked the chef.

"Don't know," replied the waiter, "but they're putting the seeds in their pockets."<sup>1</sup>

The parable of the sower is one of my favorite parables. I have always found it comforting because it helps me understand why every person reacts differently to the love of God. It helps me understand that my job is to plant and nurture, leaving the rest up to God.

The parable begins with Jesus telling how the sower went out to sow his seed. As he sowed, the seeds fell in different places. Some fell on the path, some fell on rocks, some fell among thorns, and the rest fell on good soil. The seeds on the path were trampled on and the birds ate them. The seeds that tried to grow on the rock soon withered because of the hot sun and lack of water. The seeds that fell among the thorns were choked out as they grew by the thorns. And the seeds that fell on good soil produced abundantly.

Now, Jesus could have stopped there, and we would have a good parable about seeds and how the harvest will produce or not produce. But Jesus really wants his disciple and us to understand what he is really saying, so he elaborates on the parable.

The seed, he explains, is the word of God. The seeds on the path represent those who have heard the Word of God. Unfortunately, the devil comes and takes away the Word from their hearts and they do not believe. This is representative of those who have heard the Good News, but don't believe it. Perhaps this is the child that grew up going to church, but as an adult could care less about God. Or this is the friend whom you have shared God's love with who thinks it's a bunch of brainwashing junk.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/m/ministry.htm> (accessed June 28, 2011)

Next we have the seeds that fell on the rock. This seed represents those who when first hearing about the Good News are enthusiastic about it and want to follow Christ. But after a time, they fall away and get distracted by other things. They don't have a solid foundation to keep the faith. This reminds me of a friend's brother, who in his early 20's, went to church with his sister, and became enthusiastic about God's love. For several months, he submerged his life in faithful activities: worship, Bible study, prayer. After a time, his faith wavered and could he could no longer stand against the temptations in life. So he stopped going to worship and Bible Study, and he stopped praying. He soon fell away from faith and went back to his old way of life.

There are some persons, who simply like to latch on to the newest discovery they find. At first, their enthusiasm brings them to use all their energy for their newly found discovery. But after a while, they find something else to latch on to and away they go. I have seen persons come and go in this manner and they fit the example of the seed falling on the rock.

Next we have the seeds that fell among the thorns. These persons truly want to follow Christ, but have a hard time dealing with the temptations around them. They grow in the faith, but once they reach a certain point, they often get choked out by temptations. Greed, addictions, pleasures, materialism, and peer pressure all play into this persons temptations. They have trouble keeping the faith because falling prey to temptation is simply too great for them.

I know many who, although they believe in God, simply have trouble practicing their faith because they are too wrapped up in everything else. These are the working parents who are simply too busy to worship or practice their faith. These are the ones so focused on their toys that they simply don't have time for faith. The potential to grow is there, but never fully matures because they are too wrapped up in everything else.

Lastly, there is the seed that falls on good soil. For those of you who garden, you know what it means to have good soil. Good soil not only means the ability to grow things, but the ability to grow them well and abundant. Likewise, when God's word is firmly planted in those who accept Jesus and believe in Him, their faith flourishes and grows. They are able to practice their faith with sound beliefs and a solid foundation. The love and grace of God freely flows in most everything they do.

While we know it feels good to know that because our faith we have helped others grow in faith, it can be frustrating when the words we share fall on deaf ears. Or when we think we have shared God's love, but the good news doesn't have a lasting impression. This is when this passage is important to remember. Our job is to simply share God's love. The rest is up to God and those who hear God's Word.

A Christian baroness, living in the highlands of Nairobi, Kenya, told of a young national who was employed as her houseboy. After three months he asked the baroness to give him a letter of reference to a friendly sheik some miles away. The baroness, not wishing the houseboy to leave just when he had learned the routine of the household, offered to increase his pay. The lad replied that he was not leaving for higher pay. Rather, he had decided he would become either a Christian or a Moslem. This was why he had come to work for the baroness for three months. He had wished to see how Christians acted. Now he wanted to work for three months for the sheik to observe the ways of the Moslems. Then he would decide which way of life he would follow. The baroness was stunned as she recalled her many blemishes in her dealings with the houseboy. She could only exclaim, "Why didn't you tell me at the beginning!"<sup>2</sup>

Sharing the Word of God is done by all that we do. Therefore, let us sow the Word of God everywhere and trust that the Word of God will flourish when it reaches good soil.

### **Prayer:**

Gracious God,  
Only you know how your love with touch the lives of others. Help us to do our part by sharing as much as we are able so that your love can reach more soil. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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<sup>2</sup> Leslie B. Flynn, Dare to Care Like Jesus. <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/w/witnessing.htm> (accessed June 30, 2011)