

Beside the Road (Parable of the Sower--Part 1 of 4)

(Subtitle: God's Word, Heart, and the devil)

Luke 8:4-15 (New American Standard Bible)

*⁴When a large crowd was coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable: ⁵“The sower went out to sow **his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up.** ⁶Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. ⁷Other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out. ⁸Other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great.” As He said these things, He would call out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

⁹His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable meant. ¹⁰And He said, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND.

*¹¹“Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. ¹²**Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved.** ¹³Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. ¹⁴The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. ¹⁵But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.*

Introduction

Starting today for the next four Sundays, we are going to listen to Jesus' teaching. In particular, we are going to study the parable of the sower--one of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God (v. 10).

When it comes down to the Kingdom mysteries, we ought to thank God, because we are privileged to know the secrets of God's Kingdom. What is the nature of divine mysteries? It is hidden to many and revealed only to a few chosen ones, which we are. To keep the mysteries hidden from many, Jesus spoke about them often by a parable.

For instance, the audience in today's text, the crowd in the first century, heard this parable only once from the mouth of Jesus and that was it. No further explanation was given afterward. Consequently, it left them wondering what the parable was all about. However, for us, the Lord explained the meaning of it. And, His explanation is conveniently

recorded in the Scripture so that anytime we need it, we can go back, read and re-read until we understand it. Praise God.

Content

In this parable of the sower, Jesus reveals three parties actively engaged in our salvation: God, We, and the devil. More specifically, God's Word, our heart's response, and the devil's scheme. First, Jesus reveals that God initiates our salvation through His Word. Without the Word, there is no salvation. Next, He shows that our heart condition determines how much the Word of God bears fruit that will culminate in eternal life. Finally, He exposes the devil's strategy to keep us from being saved. The Word of God, Hearts, and the devil's scheme—that's what we are going to focus on in the parable of sower.

In terms of how we receive God's Word into our hearts, there are four types of people, Jesus says: *beside the road, the rocky soil, among the thorns, and the good soil*. Today we are going to examine the first type of people whom Jesus calls "those beside the road" (v. 12).

We are going to focus on three verses: v. 5, 11, and 12.

⁵*"The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up.*

The sower: is the Son of Man. *The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man (Matthew 13:37).*

... went out to sow: *the sower goes out in order to do "sowing."* Sowing with a purpose. One thing that God is never casual about: His Word. God does not sow His Word for nothing. Neither does He do so in a casual manner. He is dead serious about His Word and, with a laser focus, He sows it in our hearts with a clear purpose in mind: to set us free from sin and death and to bring us into His presence forever.

Therefore, it is never God's will to lock the Word of God in a chain. He never wants us to keep His Word locked in the Bible, either. Rather, God actively takes His seed out from His Word and spreads it in our hearts. For this purpose, He uses the sermons and your daily devotions. His intention is clear: bring forth salvation through His Word that is sown in your heart.

His seed (singular): not just any other seeds, but His seed. *The seed is the word of God---ο λογος του θεου (v. 11).* The Word of God that is recorded in the Bible. The Word of God that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

*"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there, But water the earth,*

*And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater, ¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:10-11, NKJV).*

With your salvation in mind, God sends forth His seed to your heart.

Like every seed has life in it, so does the Word of God. It contains eternal life in it. When properly planted, it brings forth a life-giving/transforming power in our lives. Hebrews 4:12. ¹² *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

The devil would never bother us if it wasn't the Word of God. E.g. He never bothers when we are watching TV or Netflix. We are often brainwashed or brain-filled with the devil's message such as arrogance, the love of money, lusts, sensual desires, greed, and hate, transmitted into our hearts. But, whenever God's genuine Word is being spoken/sown to our heart, the devil and his minions get into action. To make sure it never be planted in our heart.

As he sowed (lit. translation---while he is sowing). The devil gets to work while you read or hear the Word of God preached. E.g. Sermon time, reading the Bible. Often, we find ourselves either fall asleep or our mind goes off from the message. E.g. On Sunday morning, as you listen to the sermon, your mind goes off from the message. This is not an accident. Rather, while you listen to God's Word, while you read the Bible, the devil tries to keep you from getting God's Word. Beware such Satan's scheme.

it was trampled under foot (κατεπατηθη):---Another meaning of "to trample" is "to despise" (Hebrews 10:29). Those who underestimate the Scripture (e.g. calling it a myth, irrelevant to today's issues, or even being ashamed of His Word---Luke 9:26) may end up trampling it under their feet: ⁶ "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will **trample** them **under their feet**, and turn and tear you to pieces (Matthew 7:6). As the animals have no idea how precious pearls are, some folks have no idea how precious and important God's Word is to their salvation. Ask yourself, *what is God's Word to me and how do I treat God's Word?* Remember your salvation and eternal life depend on it.

the birds of the air ate it up: (lit. devoured it up). The devil devours up God's Word from your heart so that you may have no chance in salvation. Listen to verse 12.

¹² *Those beside the road are those who have heard; then **the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved.***

This happens all the time in our spiritual realm. Beware the devil's scheme. Beware what he is doing. He knows what is at stake here. Your salvation through God's Word. He

does not want you to get saved through the Word of God. Without God's Word, the devil knows, you have no chance of salvation. So, as soon as you hear the Word, he immediately snatches it away from your heart so that you may not believe and get saved.

¹⁹ *When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and **snatches away** what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road (Matthew 13:19).*

¹⁵ *These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, **immediately** Satan comes and **takes away** the word which has been sown in them (Mark 4:15).*

Conclusion

Imagine this: You and Jesus are seated at a table. Jesus gives you a ticket to Heaven which reads "The Word of God." Right next to you, though, the devil is also seated. As soon as the ticket is laid on the table, the devil distracts you from the ticket and snatches it away. Often, without you even realizing. Other times, with your consent.

If you take your salvation seriously, you will never allow such a thing to happen. But, sadly, God's people do. All the time. We allow our enemy to take away God's Word, God's gift, and God's salvation right under our nose. It's time that we stopped that.

Know what's going on in your heart. Take God's Word seriously. Don't let the devil take the Word away. Let it be sown well into your heart. Your salvation depends on it. We will continue our series next week.

Amen.