

Beside the Road

The Parable of the Sower – Part 1

Subtitle: God's Word, the Heart, and the Devil

Luke 8:4-15 (New American Standard Bible 1995)

⁴ When 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.** ⁶ Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. ⁷ Other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out. ⁸ Other 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.”

⁹ His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable meant. ¹⁰ And 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.** ¹³ Those 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. ¹⁴ The 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. ¹⁵ But 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

For the next four Sundays, we will sit at the feet of Jesus and listen carefully to one of His most important teachings — the Parable of the Sower.

This parable is not about farming. It is about salvation. It is about the Word of God. It is about your heart. And it is about the enemy who wants to keep you from eternal life.

Jesus said: “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear* (v. 8).” That means this parable is not just to be understood — it is to be examined personally.

Today, we focus on the first soil (v. 5, 12): The seed that fell **beside the road**. The Word of God sown in hardened heart.

Content

I. The Sower — God’s Serious Intention

In verse 5, Jesus says: “*The sower went out to sow his seed.*”

The sower represents Christ Himself. Jesus is not casual about His Word. He does not scatter it aimlessly. He sows with purpose. To bring us into eternal salvation through His Word. Imagine a farmer. He does not throw seed for entertainment. Seed costs something. He expects a harvest. Likewise, when He sends His Word, He expects a soul harvest. He sends it with eternal purpose of bringing us to salvation.

Isaiah says: “*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).*

Let me repeat: *God’s Word... shall not return to Him void, but it shall accomplish what He pleases.* God sows His Word into our hearts with one purpose in mind: Salvation. Every sermon you hear... Every Scripture you read... Every time the gospel is spoken... God is sowing. He is working toward your salvation through His Word. He is serious about your soul. Serious about your eternal salvation.

II. The Seed — The Living Word

Jesus explains plainly: “*The seed is the word of God*” (v. 11). This is not ordinary seed. This is not human opinion. This is not motivational speech. It is the Word of God. It is the Word of Life. And like every seed, God’s Word contains life inside it. It is living and active.

Hebrews 4:12 says: “*The word of God is living and active...*” In your soul. In your heart. A seed looks small and insignificant. But inside that seed is a forest. It has life within. Likewise, inside God’s Word is eternity. Eternal life. Your eternal life lies therein.

How does it work?

Scripture tells us: *“Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ”* (Romans 10:17). First, you need to hear God’s Word. Without hearing the Word, there is no faith. Without faith, there is no salvation. That is why this parable matters so much. It matters eternally. Remember: the battle over your eternity begins with the Word entering your heart. But what happens when the Word does not sink into your heart?

III. The Soil **“Beside the Road”**— The Hardened Heart

Jesus describes the first soil: *“Some fell **beside the road**, and it was trampled under foot...”* (v. 12). Picture a well-traveled path. Hard. Packed. Unreceptive. The seed does not sink in — it sits on the surface. This represents a hardened heart.

A heart is hardened by:

- Stubbornness
- Sin
- Distraction
- Over-familiarity with truth.

The Word lands... but never enters. Some people hear sermons for years — but nothing penetrates. No change in lifestyle. Their hearts have become like concrete. When soil is hard, seed cannot go down. When the heart is hard, truth cannot go in.

The problem is not the seed. The problem is the condition of the soil. The condition of our heart. That means we can’t blame the preacher, the church, or even the message. We must examine our own hearts. And before the seed has any chance to sink in, another force enters the scene.

IV. The Snatcher — Satan’s Immediate Attack

Jesus then explains: *“Then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved”* (v. 12). The greatest spiritual battle in your life is not around you — it is over what enters and stays in your heart.

Notice here who's at work. The devil. Notice how he works. He does not need to destroy the Word — he only needs to remove it. Notice also the speed. He comes and snatches the Word immediately: "Immediately Satan comes" (Mark 4:15). Immediately after the Word is sown in your heart.

Immediately. The devil does not wait. Why does the devil attack the Word immediately? Because he knows what it can do. He is not afraid of a Bible sitting on your shelf. He is afraid of God's Word rooted in your heart.

He also knows: If the Word remains — you may believe. If you believe — you may be saved. So, he distracts. Have you noticed? When the Word is preached:

- Minds wander.
- Sleepiness increases.
- Distractions multiply.
- Urgency fades by Monday.

That is not accidental. It is intentional. While God is sowing, the devil is stealing. Like the birds devour the seed before it penetrates. Beware of his scheme.

V. Trampled Under Foot

Jesus says the seed was "*trampled*" (v. 5). To trample is to treat lightly. To treat casually. To treat with despise.

When people treat Scripture as:

- Myth
- Optional
- Outdated
- Irrelevant
- Merely symbolic

They are trampling what is holy. Ask yourself: How do I treat God's Word? Is it eternal life? Or is it background noise? Is it authority? Or is it someone's opinion? Is it God's command? Or is it suggestion?

Your response reveals the condition of your heart. What you do with the Word determines your eternity.

VI. The Sobering Reality

Jesus exposes the devil's scheme in verse 12: "So that they will not believe and be saved" (v. 12). The devil's goal is not inconvenience. It is unbelief. Where there is no belief, there is no salvation.

This is serious. Eternally serious. This is not about church attendance. It is about your eternal destiny. The Word must remain long enough in your heart to produce faith. If it is stolen, faith never forms. That results in infinite loss.

VII. The Call — Guard the Word

So, what must we do? Three practical steps.

First — *recognize the battle in your heart*. Your heart is a battleground for your soul. We are in spiritual warfare. Our enemy never rests. Neither should we.

Second — *soften the soil*. Humble yourself. Repent quickly. Pray before hearing. E.g., Norma's prayer before the Sunday service opened her heart to receive God's Word proclaimed. Ask God to open your heart. Every time you worship. Every time you listen to sermon. Every time you read God's Word.

Third — *guard what you hear*. Keep God's Word in your heart. When you listen to sermon, Jot down the sermon points. When you leave church:

- Reflect on the message.
- Discuss it.
- Pray over it.
- Meditate on it.

Do not let it evaporate by lunchtime. Imagine Jesus placing a living seed into your hands. Therein, your eternal life lies. Before it reaches your heart, Satan tries to snatch it away. Will you let him? Or will you press it into your heart and protect it?

Conclusion

This parable is not about farmers. It is about you. Every Sunday, God sows. Every time you open Scripture, God sows. The question is not: Is the Word powerful? The question is: What kind of soil is your heart?

If your heart has become hardened, there is hope. God can break hard ground. But you must let Him.

Next week, we will look at the rocky soil — the shallow heart. But today, hear this: Do not let the Word sit on the surface. Let it sink. Let it root. Let it remain. Because the same Word Satan tries to steal is the Word that can save you. *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

Amen.