



TODD LEVIN MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

A monthly teaching publication to our partners and friends

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Dear Partners and Friends,

Has there ever been a time when the mountain looked too big to overcome or as Jesus said, “to cast into the sea?” Has the mountain ever looked greater than your faith? Why is it that many Christians seem to be more than conquered instead of more than a conqueror? I feel impressed this month to look a little closer with you at the parable of the sower. I believe there are some truths we can learn and certainly need to incorporate in our lives so that we are more effective in our faith walk

I want you to first notice something the Apostle Paul said when writing to the churches in Thessalonica. He was rejoicing because the Thessalonians had received the word that Paul preached, not as a word from man, but as the Word of God.

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”

1 Thessalonians 2:13

How important it is for you to receive the Word of God for yourself, as though God was speaking to you personally – because He is! And how we measure the Word determines what the Word will do in our life. If you sit down and open your Bible and begin to read let’s say from the book of James, how do you “measure” or “hear” the Word? Is it something that James is saying or something that the Holy Spirit is trying to get across to you through James’ letter?

Someone once said, “I find it hard to believe everything that’s in the Bible unless it’s in red.” What they were referring to was the words of Jesus, which in some Bibles are printed in red. For this individual it was hard for them to believe everything they read unless Jesus said it. The truth is friend, all scripture is God inspired and God breathed.

*“From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures that are able to give you the wisdom you need for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is **inspired by God** and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ISV)

Notice seven things that the Word of God is able to do:

1. Make wise unto salvation (2Tim 3:15; Rom 1:16; Jas 1:21).
2. Produce faith (2Tim 3:15; Rom 10:17).
3. Make Jesus Christ known (2Tim 3:15; Jn 5:39; 1Cor 15:1-8).
4. Build up (Acts 20:32).
5. Give inheritance (Acts 20:32).
6. Produce profit in doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (2Tim 3:16).
7. Make the man of God perfect (2Tim 3:17).

In the Gospel of Mark chapter four, we read about the **parable of the sower**. Here Jesus explains why some Christians are victorious and others are not. From this parable we begin to understand why some receive their healing and some don't; why some prosper and others never seem to get ahead. This parable is "symbolic." We see the four different types of soil: 1) wayside 2) stony ground 3) thorns and 4) good ground. Notice the soil is where the seed (Word) was to be sown – in a man's heart. Notice that each one heard the Word, but how they received determined what the Word would do in their lives. Only 1 out of 4, that's 25%, who actually saw any results.

*"The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the **way side**, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on **stony ground**; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they, which are sown among **thorns**; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on **good ground**; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."*

Mark 4:14-20

If seventy-five percent of people do not see desired results in prayer, then what are the twenty-five percent doing that the others are not? Let's look a little closer and find out.

1. **Wayside** – The Word of God was sown, but satan came immediately and stole the word that was sown. We know that the enemy is a thief. (**Jn 10:10; I Pt 5:8**) We also know that we overcome the enemy with the Word of God in the name of Jesus.

"I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."

I John 2:14

“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written...”

Matthew 4:10

So where did this individual go wrong? In Matthews Gospel we have another clue.

“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”

Matthew 13:19

Notice, he did not understand what he had heard. Generally what we don't understand we have a tendency to dismiss or reject. This person heard but could not receive the Word because he did not understand it. Information without understanding is meaningless. When we don't understand something then it cannot help us. How can we act on something we hear if we don't understand what we have just heard? It's like reading a portion of scripture and really not “grasping” what we've just read. So rather than going back and meditating on it until we do understand, often we just skip right over it. That would explain why the Word of God did not profit this individual. He couldn't receive the Word because he did not understand the Word.

It all goes back to how he heard it. Let me explain: When you hear something that you feel is important for your life, even when you don't understand, you don't just walk away. You stay with it until you get some understanding. For example, let's say a friend of yours was telling you all about this investment company which he recently got involved with and just made a hundred thousand dollars in less than six months. Now that he has your attention, you're wondering what you would need to do to see the same kind of results in your life. As he explained it to you, at first you were totally lost and did not understand exactly what you would need to do. Did you just get up and say, “Forget it! I don't understand, so I'm not interested!” Probably that's not how you acted but rather asked him to explain it again until you could follow what He was saying.

Question – Why would you be so persistent until you understood what was being said?

Answer – Because you valued what was being said as something that could better your life and bring increase.

Question - Why are some so lighthearted and nonchalant - casual about the Word of God?

Possibility - Could it be that they do not hear it – measure it - as a Word from God but rather something that Paul said? Or Peter, James and John said? Perhaps they are not that hungry for God therefore not wanting to “dig” in the Word until they do get understanding. Perhaps they are a nominal Christian – one in name but not in lifestyle.

Bottom line: He did not understand the Word that was sown, therefore He could not receive the Word. What you do not receive will not benefit you personally.

“Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.”

Proverbs 4:5-8

2. **Stony Ground** – They too heard the Word and “received it” with gladness. So already we are one step closer to seeing results than the “Wayside” because this individual “received it.” This implies understanding or he could not have received it. But receiving the Word was not enough as we can see by the end result. The Word sown did not take root in their heart and therefore produced no results. Here is a believer who gets so excited about what they’ve heard but did not take time to get their heart persuaded.

“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.”

Romans 4:20-21

You need to hear from God yourself! Jesus said in **John 6:63**, “*the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*” Notice: “the words Jesus speaks to us are life.” I’ll tell you the truth, when God speaks to me, something goes off in my spirit. It becomes more than information and now has become revelation – something revealed. When my heart becomes fully persuaded about something God has said, then regardless of the storms in life, I shall not be easily offended and give up. God’s Word becomes final authority in my life. I don’t “try” the Word to get results. I “do” the Word to get results and continue to stand on the Word until my harvest comes. (**Gal 6:9**)

Unfortunately we see there was no root or depth of consecration, commitment and stability to stand persecution and trials. We read here in **Mark 4:17** that when persecution or affliction came, this individual was quickly offended. This person’s heart was partially prepared to receive the Word, but not all the stones were taken out so the seed could not grow and fully develop. God’s Word was not final authority in his life. The flesh ruled, not the Word. Faith worketh by love. (**Gal 5:6**) Love is not easily offended, provoked and takes no account of evil done to it. (**I Cor 13:5**) You may know what the Word says, but are there some things in your heart and life that God has been dealing with you about? Unforgiveness? Resentment? Envy? Jealousy or greed?

I also want to point out to you why persecution and trials come. Notice what **verse 17** says, “...*ariseth for the word’s sake.*” The enemy is simply after the Word of God in your life. Persecution is satan’s expression of fear towards you. He actually fears the Word of God in you, that’s why he tries to steal it out of you. It was the Word that defeated him 2000 years ago and it is the same Word that keeps him under your feet. If satan is successful in persuading you that God’s Word doesn’t work, at least not for you, then he will take that which you have and you become vulnerable.

Bottomline: Make God’s Word final authority in your thinking, believing and doing. When the storms of life begin to blow, you will not be easily moved because your house is built upon the rock of God’s Word that is established and endures forever. (**Matt 7:21-27; 1 Pt 1:25; Psa 119:89**)

3. **Thorns** – This individual heard the Word too but things were choking the seed and it became unfruitful. We can see that the ground was partially prepared but the thorns were not all taken out. The seed couldn’t grow normally but was cut off. Jesus listed three specific reasons why His Word did not produce in this person’s life.

First we can see that, “**the cares of this world**” choked the seed. How often we get our eyes on the problem instead of keeping our eyes on the answer – the truth found in the Word of God.

“My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.”

Proverbs 4:20-22

When you become so caught up in the midst of a storm and you feel like you’re going to drown though it may seem as though your head is barely above the water, examine your heart. Most likely you have taken your eyes off the Word of God and have been looking in the wrong direction. If you remember when Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water, as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus and held fast to the Word Jesus had given to him – “Come,” he remained on top – above the circumstances. But the moment he took his eyes off Jesus, let go of the Word and began to look at the circumstances, the winds and the storm, he began to sink.

How do you measure the Word of God? Do you really believe that God is supplying all your needs or have you been worried about how you are going to make ends meet? Do you truly believe Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever? (**Heb 13:8**) Is your heart more persuaded with God’s report or the doctor’s report? (**Isa 53:1; I Jn 5:9**)

Secondly, He mentioned “**deceitfulness of riches**.” What did He mean by that? Wealth in and of itself is not bad. Where it becomes a problem is when:

A. You’re more in love with money than in love with God.

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

Matthew 6:24

“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

I Timothy 6:10

B. You trust in money more than in God.

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.”

I Timothy 6:17

C. It becomes a pride factor in your life – “Look what I have.” “Look what I can do.”

“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

I Timothy 6:9

Actually the word deceit in the Greek according to Vines Expository Dictionary means: that which gives a false impression, whether by appearance, statement or influence. When people, even Christians, begin to parade around all of the “stuff” they have, it often gives us the impression that they are somebody. It draws attention to them instead of drawing attention to the Lord. Let us not forget it is the Lord who causes us to prosper.

Thirdly, “**the lusts of other things – pleasures of this life**” We deceive ourselves into pursuing things instead of pursuing God. Joy and happiness will not be found long term in temporal things.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

1 John 2:15-17

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Colossians 3:1-3

God is not opposed to you having “things” as long as the “things” don’t have you. Have you been pursuing things more than you’ve been pursuing God, His presence and His Word? If so, your priorities are out of order. In this state, is it any wonder why the Word could not produce a harvest? Let us remember the words of Jesus in **Matthew 6:33**,

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Jesus said to seek “first,” not second or third, but “first” the kingdom of God or God’s way of doing things. It’s always been that way – God first. It goes right back to how we hear or measure the Word. Jesus said in **Mark 4:24**,

“And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.”

God said to walk in this fashion – “Him first,” and then all the things would be added to me. “Yes Lord, I hear you. I believe you! I’ll do it your way not mine.” No more need to strive or gain God’s favor through your works. It’s by God’s grace that you and I have been accepted. It’s by God’s grace that we are forgiven. It’s by God’s grace we are healed and He continues to supply ALL of our need. He is faithful!

4. **Good ground** – This was the only kind of ground that could produce any harvest. But even on this ground there were various degrees of harvest. (*He’s not referring to different kinds of Christians.*) Only 1 out of 4 saw any results. That means that 75% did not see any results.

Question: What was different about the good ground, which was missing in the others?

Answer: The good ground illustrates those who hear the Word of God, measure it as a Word from God, and wholeheartedly once and for all surrender to obey it, open their hearts and receive it and purpose to please God in all things. They get rid of all shallowness, pride of life, lusts of the flesh, deceitfulness of riches and lusts for other things that would hinder them in living for God. When they hear the Word, they receive the Word because they have made a quality decision that what they hear will be a reality in their life.

In closing, I want to encourage you to continue in God’s Word today.

“Jesus said to those Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are really my disciples.”

John 8:31

It’s not enough just to receive it and act upon it. You must **continue** in it. Keep your eyes fixed on God’s promises. The storms of life may blow, but you are unshakeable and unmovable because your heart is firmly established upon the solid rock of God’s Word!

Your Friends and Partners,

Todd + Eva

PRAISE REPORTS AND PRAYER REQUEST:

Let us know how we can pray for you. Please take a few moments and write down your prayer requests and praise reports. We want to lift up your requests to the Lord. Tell us how God has blessed you and let us rejoice together!

- () Todd, enclosed is my *monthly* partner gift of: \$ _____
- () Todd, I've prayerfully decided to become your faithful monthly partner, an armor-bearer. I am enclosing my first monthly support gift of: \$ _____
- () Todd, enclosed is a *special* gift of: \$ _____

If you would like to schedule Todd Levin in your Church or Bible School, please contact us at: 724-872-0347 or email toddlevintoday@hotmail.com

P.S. Would you do me a favor? Would you pray about partnering together with us? Your prayers and financial help go a long way in aiding us to spread the Gospel not only in the United States but across the globe. As more partners link up with us, we will be able to travel to more countries and bring the uncompromised Word of God to a hurting people. Others need to know that Jesus is the answer to every problem they face in life. Thank God for an opportunity to be a part of His plan. Together we can reach our generation for Jesus. Let us know if we can count on you! Your best seed gift will help keep this ministry going strong. Thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration.

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