



## Road Trip: On the Road with Jesus in Galilee

### Week 19: **Encouragement for Sowers** (Luke 8:4-21)

In general, bible commentaries can be somewhat disappointing.

They are helpful if you're looking for ammo to argue points of doctrine, but many times commentaries fall short when it comes to stirring your faith with biblical truth. Too many times, they are simply man's attempt to explain the things of God without faith. They tend to dwindle down to intellectual conversations between men.

What I'm really after when I go to commentaries is not just understanding, but a challenging viewpoint for the scriptures from someone who has both seen and heard Heaven's perspective. I want a commentary written in the language of Heaven. I really don't want a perspective that's driven by the world around me, but a mindset that finds its source and strength from the kingdom that dwells within!

### Today's Text:

<sup>4</sup> One day Jesus told a story in the form of a parable to a large crowd that had gathered from many towns to hear him: <sup>5</sup> "A farmer went out to plant his seed. As he scattered it across his field, some seed fell on a footpath, where it was stepped on, and the birds ate it. <sup>6</sup> Other seed fell among rocks. It began to grow, but the plant soon wilted and died for lack of moisture. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns that grew up with it and choked out the tender plants. <sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on fertile soil. This seed grew and produced a crop that was a hundred times as much as had been planted!" When he had said this, he called out, "Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."

<sup>9</sup> His disciples asked him what this parable meant. <sup>10</sup> He replied, "**You** are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of God. But I use parables to teach **the others** so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: 'When they look, they won't really see. When they hear, they won't understand.'

<sup>11</sup> "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is God's word. <sup>12</sup> The seeds that fell on the footpath represent those who hear the message, only to have the devil come and take it away from their hearts and prevent them from believing and being saved. <sup>13</sup> The seeds on the rocky soil represent those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they believe for a while, then they fall away when they face temptation. <sup>14</sup> The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity. <sup>15</sup> And the seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, good-hearted people who hear God's word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest.

<sup>16</sup> "No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a bowl or hides it under a bed. A lamp is placed on a stand, where its light can be seen by all who enter the house. <sup>17</sup> For all that is secret will eventually be brought into the open, and everything that is concealed will be brought to light and made known to all.

<sup>18</sup> "So **pay attention to how you hear**. To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening, even what they think they understand will be taken away from them."

<sup>19</sup> Then Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they couldn't get to him because of the crowd. <sup>20</sup> Someone told Jesus, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, and they want to see you." <sup>21</sup> Jesus replied, "**My mother and my brothers are all those who hear God's word and obey it.**" (Luke 8:4-21 NLT-SE)

## Discipleship Training: 101

### - Disciples On Assignment

- **It's Not About Us...** We tend to personalize this story and wonder what type of soil we are. Again, we easily slip into thinking this is all about us. It is about us, not as spiritual "soil testers," but as carriers of the message of Jesus. Our contemporary model is one of giving spiritual information to people we believe to be "uninformed." Our thinking is that if we could only give them enough information, they would undoubtedly choose to give their lives to Jesus and receive salvation.

This is NOT the model we saw being propagated by the disciples. Their assignment was to spread the word of Jesus to anyone who would listen, not passively, but actively preaching the the unbelieving world.

### • The Jesus Model

#### - The **context** for training was *relationship*

- Jesus said, "Follow me", rather than simply, "Teach what I teach". The Apostle Paul confirmed this when he wrote; "Follow me as I follow Christ". This is clearly referring to a **relationship**, requiring uncommon personal involvement, commitment, responsibility and accountability for the mentor and the one being mentored. Even the word 'Christian' is telling us this, because it literally means "one who follows after the anointed one and his anointing."

#### - The **method** for training was *proclamation*

- **The Words of Jesus...** It's really important for us that the words of Jesus become more important than the words of Paul. We need to see Paul's ministry through the light of the gospels. We don't see Jesus through the light of the epistles. We don't want to be disciples of Paul. We want to be disciples of Jesus! We want to know what it was that Jesus brought into every situation that made it radically different. We want to learn everything we can about Presence.
  - <sup>14</sup> But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? <sup>15</sup> And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!" (Rom 10:14–15 NLT-SE)
  - "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. (Mark 16:15 NLT-SE)

#### - The **focus** for training was on *mission*

- How foolish would it to spend years training someone to do what you do, yet never give them the opportunity to actually put the skills they've learned to the test. Jesus was calling the disciples to a mission, to say what he said and do what he did to a fearful, hopeless, but thirsty generation (John 12:12-14). There was a specific reason they were being trained. This mission to manifest the kingdom of God is what they had been trained for. This was the reason they had left everything to follow Jesus (Matt. 19:27).
- When you look closely at Jesus' model of ministry, you notice that He **taught** (illustrated truths), **trained** (demonstrated truths) and **activated** them in those truths (now you do it).
  - <sup>22</sup> Don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. <sup>25</sup> But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. (James 1:22–25 NLT-SE)

- As you look at a variety of contemporary discipleship programs you will see that some teach, but don't train or activate, while others teach and train, but don't activate and others just train and activate and don't teach.

**Jesus and the apostles did all three: they taught, they demonstrated and they activated.**

#### - The Language of Heaven

- **Pay attention to how you hear...** "When Jesus came from Heaven to earth he came saying, "You have heard it said, but now I say..." He came bringing Heaven's perspective, to give us Heaven's mindset, to teach us a language that only Heaven knows. We've all grown up speaking the language of Earth. Jesus came to teach us the language of heaven." ~ Graham Cooke
- When you read Jesus' words in the gospel, what he is saying is, "This is the way we do things in Heaven!" What he is teaching us is, "As He is, so are we in this world."
  - By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because **as he is so also are we in this world.** (1 John 4:17 ESV)



Graham Cooke

#### - The Discouragement of Sowing

- **The Seed...** In context, when Jesus speaks of the "seed" being the word of God, he is not referring to the Torah. The disciples are on assignment. They are being prepared to spread the message of Jesus after his departure. Obviously, they do not know that. So, when Jesus speaks to them about the Word, he is referring to his literal words!
- **The Soil...** When Jesus speaks of the Word falling on the four different soils, it is meant to prepare the disciples for the disappointment that will inevitably come when their message is rejected. He does not want them to dwell of their "success" at convincing people to receive their message. Their responsibility is to sow!
  - "A man's reception of God's Word is determined by the condition of his heart."
- The OT quote in v. 9-10...
  - <sup>8</sup> Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?" I said, "Here I am. Send me." <sup>9</sup> And he said, "Yes, go, and say to this people, 'Listen carefully, but do not understand. Watch closely, but learn nothing.' <sup>10</sup> Harden the hearts of these people. Plug their ears and shut their eyes. That way, they will not see with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor understand with their hearts and turn to me for healing." (Is 6:8-10 NLT-SE)
- **What will you do...** when after liberally sowing the words and works of Jesus into the lives of your family, friends and co-workers only to have them rejected? How will you respond if you don't get the results you think you should? The text above is Jesus' response to that question. He knew the lack of response would be discouraging to his disciples. Nothing is more important than this assignment we've been given as disciples of Christ. **We may just have to leave a few things behind to accomplish it.**

"All of us CEO's know, it is not where we're trying to go that is the problem, you can get great consensus from your staff on the goal and you can spend all your time talking about the goal of where we're trying to go. But all you CEO's know that's not the problem. **It is not where we are trying to go that is the problem, it is what are you willing to leave behind to try to get there?"**

Steven Mansfield, CEO of Southern Methodist Hospitals