

<sup>4</sup> And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: <sup>5</sup> “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. <sup>6</sup> Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. <sup>7</sup> And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. <sup>8</sup> But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.” When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” <sup>9</sup> Then His disciples asked Him, saying, “What does this parable mean?” <sup>10</sup> And He said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that ‘Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’ <sup>11</sup> Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God. <sup>12</sup> Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. <sup>13</sup> But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. <sup>14</sup> Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. <sup>15</sup> But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the Word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

Luke 8:4-15 A 2-20-22 Isaiah 55:10-13 Hebrews 4:9-13 Ps. 119:I-II Resp. Psalm 119:103f.  
Hymns: 1, 296, 381, 49

## **JESUS KEEPS SPREADING HIS WORD**

- 1. Many don’t listen, and are lost**
- 2. Some listen, believe, and are saved**

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

We’re told, “A great multitude had gathered, and they had come to [Jesus] from every city.” Why did all those people travel from all around to hear Jesus? The Bible says that when people heard Jesus, “They were astonished at His teaching, for His Word was with authority” (Lk. 4:32). Jesus didn’t preach a political message, a feel-good message, a social-gospel message, or a message of personal wealth and empowerment. Jesus preached His Word – the Word of God – confronting people with sin, and giving them the assurance of His grace, forgiveness, and salvation. That’s what drew the people to hear Jesus.

### **1**

Jesus “spoke a parable” to the people, afterwards crying out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” Jesus was urging them to listen to what He was saying, think about it, and understand it. When His disciples asked Him about His parable He told them, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that ‘Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’” Jesus’ parables were a test. The peoples’ eternal salvation was at stake. Did they want to understand what Jesus was saying? Would they really listen to His words? Did they want to know if Jesus really is the Messiah? Did they believe Jesus’ words, and believe in Him? Or would they just let Jesus’ words ‘go in one ear and out the other’?

Jesus says, “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it.” “Those by the wayside are the ones

who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.” Many people hear God’s Word at a wedding, a funeral, at church on Christmas Eve and/or Easter, and give it little or no thought. Contrary to what many people think, the devil, is very real. He works hard to snatch the Word of God people hear out of their hearts so they don’t believe it and they aren’t saved.

Jesus continues, “Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture.” “The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation” (from the original, “time of examination, time of testing”), “[they] fall away.” Some people hear God’s Word and believe it for a while. But temptations come along that test their faith. They keep giving in to temptations, and end up falling away from God.

Jesus says, “Some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it.” “Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.” Some hear God’s Word and believe it. But due to troubles they face in life, and letting money and possessions and sinful desires come to control them, they don’t grow and mature in their faith. They let their faith get “choked” – from the original: “overwhelmed, taken over, suffocated, crushed,” and die.

We’re certainly not immune to letting God’s Word ‘go in one ear and out the other.’ Having our body in the pew but our mind elsewhere, dwelling on worries and worldly things, reading our Bible but not thinking about what the words mean – these are some of the ways we keep ourselves from hearing God’s Word. When our heart and our mind stray, we need to turn them back to God and His Word.

## 2

Jesus says, “But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.” “The ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the Word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.” No one is “good ground” by himself or herself. By nature we all ignore or resist God and His Word. Romans 8:7 says, “The carnal” (“fleshly, human”) “mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.” Jesus says of unbelievers who hear His Word, “hearing they [do] not understand.” “Understand” in the original is literally, “join together in the mind.” No one can truly understand the Scriptures using human reason. It’s only when God in His grace makes our heart and mind receptive to His Word that we listen to it, understand it, and believe it.

Jesus tells His disciples, “To you” (emphasizing “you” in the original) “it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,” The disciples hadn’t understood Jesus’ parable of the sower and the seed. But they asked Him to explain it to them. Right there is the difference between those who believe in Jesus, and those who do not. By the grace of God, all of us who believe in Him want to understand His Word and grow in our faith.

When Jesus says that we’ll “know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,” “know” in the original is “knowledge grounded in personal experience.” By the faith God gives us, we don’t just know things about the Bible. We know that the Bible is the Word of God. Through the Bible we know God, and we know that He saves us by faith in His Son. He tells us, “The Holy Scriptures ... are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” – 2 Timothy 3:15. By

the faith God has given us through His Word, we know that He sent His Son, Jesus, who died for our sins on the cross, and rose again. By the faith God has given us through His Word, we know that our sins are forgiven, and that we're saved and we're going to heaven.

We're told that the faith God works in us through His Word "[keeps]" – from the original, "continues to keep, continues to hold fast to" – His Word. Jesus says, "If you abide in My Word, you are truly My disciples" (Jn. 8:31, my emphasis). "Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it!" (Lk. 11:28).

We're told that faith "*bears fruit with patience.*" This is the opposite of those in Jesus' parable who have no faith, or let their faith wither and die. When Jesus says that we "[bear] fruit with patience," the original is literally, faith "*keeps on bearing fruit with steadfastness, with perseverance, with endurance.*" The idea from the original is that by the faith God gives us we live for Him and serve Him with deliberate purpose and loyalty, even in the face of greatest trials and suffering, with hope and confidence. We say, "I wish my faith were always like that." God through His Word helps us to grow and mature in our faith, that we "*keep on bearing fruit with patience.*"

Through the millions of Bibles all over the world, through the witness of His believing people all over the world, through the TV and radio, through the internet, and in other ways as well, Jesus keeps spreading His Word. He does this because He "*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*" – 1 Timothy 2:4. Jesus wants everyone to hear His Word and believe in Him and be saved.

For different reasons, many people don't listen to God's Word, and are lost eternally. "Thank You, Jesus, that by Your grace, we listen to Your Word, we believe Your Word and believe in You, and we're saved!"

I know my faith is founded On Jesus Christ, my God and Lord;  
And this my faith confessing, Unmoved I stand upon His Word.  
Man's reason cannot fathom The truth of God profound;  
Who trusts her subtle wisdom Relies on shifting ground.  
God's Word is all sufficient, It makes divinely sure,  
And trusting in its wisdom, My faith shall rest secure.

Increase my faith, dear Savior, For Satan seeks by night and day  
To rob me of this treasure And take my hope of bliss away.  
But, Lord, with Thee beside me, I shall be undismayed;  
And led by Thy good Spirit, I shall be unafraid.  
Abide with me, O Savior, A firmer faith bestow;  
Then I shall bid defiance To every evil foe.

In faith, Lord, let me serve Thee; Though persecution, grief and pain  
Should seek to overwhelm me, Let me a steadfast trust retain;  
And then at my departure Take Thou me home to Thee  
And let me there inherit All Thou hast promised me.  
In life and death, Lord, keep me Until Thy Heav'n I gain.  
Where I by Thy great mercy The end of faith attain. Amen. (TLH #381:1, 3)