

Jesus: A Friend of the Good-Hearted
Series: Luke
January 7, 2018 Pastor Bill Bump

The Bible says that on Judgment Day, there will be only two kinds of people: the saved and the lost.

Luke 19:10 *For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.*

Jesus is a friend of the lost because He came into the world to rescue those perishing in sin.

Ephesians 2:8-9 ⁸ *God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.*

An important question: Why doesn't everybody take advantage of this offer to be saved?

Jesus addressed that question in an insightful parable found in Luke 8.

Parables speak to the hearts of those who want to understand spiritual truth, for once explained, they reveal insights into what Jesus called the "mysteries of the Kingdom of God."

The parable of the farmer scattering seed

Luke 8:4-10 ⁴ *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: ⁵ "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. ⁶ Other seed fell among rocks. It began to grow, but the plant soon wilted and died for lack of moisture. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns that grew up with it and choked out the tender plants. ⁸ 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." ⁹ His disciples asked him what this parable meant. ¹⁰ 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.'"*

1. Some don't accept the offer because their hearts are hard and they need cultivating.

Luke 8:11-12 ¹¹ *"This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is God's word. ¹² 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."*

Zechariah 7:11-12a ¹¹ *Your ancestors refused to listen to this message. They stubbornly turned away and put their fingers in their ears to keep from hearing. ¹² They made their hearts as hard as stone, so they could not hear the instructions or the messages that the Lord of Heaven's Armies had sent them by his Spirit through the earlier prophets.*

What can harden a person's heart?

A. Repeated sin can harden a heart.

Hebrews 3:13 *You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.*

B. Pride or arrogance can harden a heart.

C. Painful circumstances can harden a heart.

D. Familiarity can harden a heart.

2. Some don't accept the offer because their hearts are shallow and they need deepening.

Luke 8:13 *"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."*

Three common tools God uses to deepen us:

A. Knowledge of the Bible

B. Christian relationships

C. Christian service

3. Some don't accept the offer because their hearts are too busy and they need refocusing.

Luke 8:14 *"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."*

Too busy, not with bad things but with the cares, pleasures, and riches of this world.

Jesus was always encouraging people to get their priorities straight.

Matthew 6:33 *Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.*

Why do some people take advantage of Jesus' offer of salvation?

Luke 8:15 *"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."*

When the seed of the gospel falls on receptive hearts, it produces a harvest of Christian character.

Galatians 5:22-23 ²² *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* ²³ *gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

Jesus wants to produce in us a harvest of the fruit of the Spirit.

Conclusion

The challenge for each of us is to determine the condition of our heart.

Jesus cast the seed on the ground, but only the heart that has been properly prepared can receive it and grow to full maturity.

Jesus is a friend of the good-hearted.