

LESSON AIM: To show that Jesus wants to plant or establish His Word in our hearts. He uses this parable to identify our heart with different conditions of soil. In order for His Word to grow, we need to have good soil to be rooted and grounded in Jesus yielding the fruit and strong faith.

KEY SCRIPTURE: Luke 8:5-15

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- 1) Who remembers all the different parts of the Armor of God?
- 2) What kind of a battle does the Bible say we are fighting?
- 3) Which part of the body is there no armor for? Why not?
- 4) Review last week's verse; have the students explain it in their own words.

INTRODUCTION:

- Do you remember childhood stories that begin with "Once upon a time"? Parables were Jesus favorite way of teaching and he often spoke in parables to make a strong point and would help people remember the story.
- This parable is to show us that we are the ones responsible to cultivate the soil of our heart in order for the seed of his Word to be planted, to grow and to be spiritually strong.
- A good visual is to bring in different kinds of seeds, soil (rocky soil, etc), some weeds, and a good healthy potted plant.
- You could also make individual bags of seeds with planting instructions for the kids to take home and plant.

LESSON:

Have any of you seen seeds up close? They come in all different shapes and sizes! Some seeds are round. Others are egg-shaped, triangular or oval. Some seeds have horns, others have tails, and many have wings. Some are smooth, others have ridges. But the size or shape doesn't match the size of the plant that will grow from it. For example, the tallest trees in the world, the California Redwood, grows from a seed six times smaller than the average watermelon seed. What do you think every seed needs in order to grow? Every seed needs rich, fertile ground. If you throw these seeds onto the sidewalk, what is going to happen? In this story, the seeds represent the word of God and the different kind of ground, or soil, represents our hearts. We are going to read a parable (remember what a parable is?) and this one is about a "sower". What is a Sower? (*allow students to guess*) It is someone who plants seeds, kind of like a farmer. Let's read this parable and figure out what it means.

Have the students read Luke 8:5-8 "The Parable of the Sower"

So Jesus is giving us the story before telling us what it means. Look at the verse and count how many different kinds of soil are mentioned. How many do you see? (4 different soils) What happened to the seed that fell on the first soil? (stepped on, birds ate it) What about the second? (Rocks, but had no water and died) What about the third? (Fell among the thorns and was choked out) What about the last? (Good soil, it grew and produced 100x what was planted).

Ok, so it just sounds like a story about some seeds. Even the disciples didn't get it when Jesus told the story, they had to ask Him "what does it mean?" Let's see what Jesus says.

Read together Luke 8:11-15.

"When he had said this, he called out, "Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand." Jesus told them the meaning: "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is God's word. 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. 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. 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. 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.

Very interesting! (Challenge the kids to really think as they answer; don't feed them the answers unless they are missing the point, let them dig in!) First of all, what does the seed represent? (God's Word) Each type of ground the seed falls on is a type of person (or the heart of a person). Let's look again at the first kind of soil. What kind of a person is this? (people that hear the gospel, but Satan comes and lies to them and they never ask Jesus to come into their life and repent of their sins) What about the rocky soil? (Those who are excited about Jesus at first, but they don't read their Bible, they don't go to church, they don't have any Christian friends, and when temptation comes they are not able to stand against the devil and they fall away) What about the seeds that fell among the thorns? (Those that hear about Jesus, but are too concerned about other things like money, clothes, cars, jobs, etc, so the Word never takes root in their heart). And what about the good soil?

Did you know that roots have four important jobs? Healthy roots drink water, find food, anchor their plant in soil, and hold it upright above the ground. Paul wrote about our need to let our "roots grow down" into Jesus so our life can be nourished by Him. Why? Because Christians need spiritual water, food and strength to grow and mature just like a plant needs those things!

So let's take a moment and look at our own hearts. You have been in Released Time all year. You have all heard the truth of God's Word. But remember, you could be excited but then let God's Word get choked out by other people that might make fun of you or tell you the Bible is not true. Or maybe you start to forget to read your Bible or go to church, and then pretty soon you forget about Jesus.

Let's pray and talk to God right now and ask Him that He would help you make your heart GOOD soil, where all that you have learned will take root and grow. He wants to make your life look like that field that had hundreds of beautiful plants that others can see and eat, or maybe a big strong tree that doesn't get blown over when the winds come and the birds can sit in it and be safe. It is up to you to create the kind of soil you want in your heart. But if you ask Him, He will help you keep good soil in your heart and bless your life!

AS MY ROOTS GROW DOWN, MY FAITH GROWS UP!

MEMORY VERSE:

(Every year):

“But be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” James 1:22