

Take Care How You Listen (Part 1)

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[0:00] Our text for this morning and really for the next two Sunday mornings is Luke chapter 8 and verses 4 through 21.

! So you can be turning to that. This will be the larger text. We'll take a couple of Sundays to look at it. So let me read the entire text, starting with verse 4, Luke chapter 8.

Now the parable is this.

The seed is the word of God. 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.

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.

[2:13] 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.

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. No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. Therefore take heed how you hear, for whoever has, to him more will be given.

And whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him. Then his mother and brothers came to him and could not approach him because of the crowd.

And it was told him by some who said, Your mother and brother, brothers are standing outside desiring to see you. But he answered and said to them, My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.

[3:27] All right? May God bless his word this morning as we have read it. And I want to say to you on the front end, by way of introduction, that though it may seem at first reading that these verses don't really all go together, that we have several different things happening here, I want to assure you that there is one theme that runs throughout this entire text that I just read.

And so I would say to you that the Holy Spirit has one main point, one main thing to teach us in this passage. And really, it's not all that hard to pick it out.

The two parables, you have the parable of the soil, you have the parable of the lamp. And then added to that, this inquiry by Jesus' mother and brothers.

These all come together and they form for us simply illustrations and applications of this one theme, this one point that runs throughout the text.

Is the text then about sowing seed? No, not really. Though that's a big part of it, and that's the part that we remember the most, perhaps.

[4:47] Is this text about lighting lamps? You know, kind of letting the lamp shine and bring out light. No, it's not about that, not primarily.

Is this text about relating to the family? How to relate to the family? How to relate properly to the members of your family? Some have drawn that from that portion of the text, but that's really not what it's about at all.

If it is about that, then we'd have to admit that Jesus was pretty cold. Not about these things. The text is about one thing primarily.

And it's about listening. It's about listening. It's about, specifically, about listening to the Word of God. Listening to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Which is, of course, the Bible says, the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes.

Romans 1.16. That's what this text is about. The larger text. About listening.

[5:51] And it's really easy to see how this theme runs throughout the passage. And let me just point this out to you. First of all, Jesus tells this simple parable. And then, at the close of it, in verse 8, He says, He said these things to them.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear. So it's about listening, isn't it? It's about hearing. Clearly. Then, in verse 10, Jesus explains to His disciples why He has now shifted from a former way of preaching and teaching to a new way of teaching.

That being the telling of parables. And He explains to them why this shift in His approach. And He says, So that seeing they may not see. And hearing they may not understand.

They might see with their eyes, but not really see the truth. Hear with their ears, but not really understand. So again, it's about hearing, about listening, about understanding.

And then, starting in verse 11, Jesus gives the explanation of this parable, the meaning of the parable, to His disciples. And He, in the explanation, identifies various ways that people hear the gospel.

[7:11] Again, about hearing, about listening. And then, Jesus tells another short parable about a lamp. We've even made a little song out of it.

And again, the lamp is just a metaphor for the Word of God. And He explains this by saying, in verse 18, Take care, take heed, how you hear, how you listen.

Same thing. Even the passage where Jesus' mother and brothers come, or attempt to come to Jesus, and they're inquiring after Jesus, and they can't get to Jesus. Even that portion of the text is concluded by Jesus saying, My mother and my brothers are those who do what?

Hear the Word of God. And then He adds to that, and do it. Do you see? Pretty simple to pick it out. The theme that runs throughout this entire passage is the theme of listening, of hearing.

Hearing, specifically, hearing the gospel. It is about those who will not listen, and those who will. And why some will not, and some will.

[8:31] It's about why you should listen, and what will happen to you if you don't. And it's about how true listeners respond to what they have heard. It's about all of those things.

And these are the things that we're going to be seeing over the next couple of Sundays. All right, so that's the introduction. Enough with that. Let's look at the text. And let's begin.

A good place to begin is where Jesus began. And Jesus began by telling a parable. A simple parable. If you're writing notes, taking notes, that's number one. A simple parable.

Simple parable. And I say simple because what the parable portrays is very commonplace. At least it was to the people of Jesus' day. And I don't think it's very hard for us today to visualize this kind of, this scene of the sower going out into the field and planting the seed into the soil.

It's a very, very simple parable. Let me read it again to you. A sower went out to sow, to sow his seed.

[9:39] And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside. Now you need to understand that the seed fell in different places because of the method of sowing.

It was broadcasting. You know, you can kind of picture that. Here is the planter, the sower, the farmer. And he's got a bag of seed and he reaches into the bag and he is broadcasting the seed as he's walking throughout the field.

It's a very, very vivid image and something that's pretty easy for us to imagine in our own minds. And so some of it fell by the wayside. That would be a pathway that was running maybe down through the middle of the field or to one side of the field.

Not a road per se, but a pathway where people would walk, you know, to get from one place to another instead of walking around the field. Many of the fields had pathways that would run between them or in the middle of them.

And so some of the seed fell there. I mean, if you're broadcasting, you can't pinpoint where the seed is going to fall. They didn't have the technology of the day and these very mechanized planters.

[10:51] And so it just fell different places and some of it fell by the wayside. Pretty easy to see. It's a simple, simple parable. Very easy to see. And so since some of it fell on the path, it was trampled down and the birds of the air devoured it.

Some fell on rock and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. The idea here is not like gravel, but rock that was lying just immediately under the surface so that the soil may have looked very good, but it was very thin.

And so the seed fell upon that thin layer of soil and it quickly germinated and it sprouted up, but it could not put any roots down because of the rock and there was no moisture and so it quickly died.

So it's very easy to see. It's a simple, simple parable. And some fell among thorns and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. And so some of it fell among the parts of the soil, the field, where it may have looked like good soil, but there were other things in the soil, impurities, other kinds of weeds and thorns specifically, and they were much stronger than the seed.

And so when the seed attempted to germinate and spring up, the thorns were much stronger and they choked it out and it died. So it's a very simple, simple parable.

[12:22] But others fell on good ground, thankfully. Otherwise, pretty unsuccessful crop that this man is sowing. It fell on good ground, it sprang up, and it yielded a crop of a hundredfold.

There's the parable. Simple, simple parable. All right, so now, there you have it. And if we were to stop right there, what would we have?

I mean, what does it mean? And if you can possibly do this, just maybe block out of your mind Jesus' explanation. Now, we read it a moment ago and you've read it before and you know the explanation of the parable, but try to imagine not knowing that.

And just putting that out of your mind, you don't know what this parable means and so maybe you're asking, what does it mean? Well, I would say to you that by itself, without any explanation, it means absolutely nothing.

Parable doesn't mean anything without an explanation. Or we could say it could mean whatever you would like for it to mean. You just apply it any way you'd want to and so it just kind of leaves that open.

[13:37] You see, the word parable that we have here in the text, in the English text, is really a transliteration transliteration of the word in the Greek text. It's parabole.

Parable. All right, so they just bring it right over into the English. Parabole, and it begins with a preposition, para, which means beside or alongside.

And so the meaning is simply this, a placing of one thing alongside of another. The technical term would be juxtaposition.

Maybe not a term you would use. But that's what a parable is. Jesus often used parables as juxtaposed to a doctrinal truth or a divine truth.

And he would put the two side by side. And the parable by itself didn't mean anything, but it would explain the doctrinal truth or put light on the doctrinal truth or ground the doctrinal truth into some recognizable reality.

[14:40] and for a host of other reasons. And Jesus often did this. And this is why many have attached this definition to parables. You've heard it before, I'm sure, an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

That's what a parable is, basically. But, remember, without any explanation, any explanation of the heavenly meaning, the earthly story might be interesting, as I think this one is interesting, very vivid and visual.

It might be interesting, but it really has no value. Just by itself. And this is why Jesus' disciples would often come to him in private after he told the parable or Jesus would actually take the initiative and come to them and say, now, understand the meaning of the parable.

But he always did that in private and that was the case here. In verse 9, the disciples asked him, saying, what does this parable mean? What does it mean?

Now, we can make some conclusions about the parable without really knowing the meaning of it. We can make some conclusions, just initial conclusions about the parable that I think will help us understand the explanation that's going to come a little bit later.

[15:59] There are three identifiable parts to the parable, right? And very conveniently, we can list them all beginning with the letter S.

There's the sower, there's the seed, there's the soil. Those are the three parts to the parable. The sower, the seed, the soil. The sower, Jesus said, the sower went out to sow. The seed, he said, he went out to sow his seed.

And it says the soil because as he sowed the seed, some fell by and then several conditions of soil are described for us.

So the sower, the seed in the soil. Now, I would ask you this, what element of the parable is the most important? Now, forgetting about the explanation of the parable, the divine truth, the truth that the parable is attached to, has been brought alongside of.

Forget that for a moment, just take the parable and what is the most important part of it? And we can answer that without knowing the explanation. What is the main focus of the parable? Is it the sower?

[17:09] No. It's not the sower. Nothing is said about the sower other than the way he sowed, his method of sowing. It's *spiro*. It means to broadcast, to spread out, to scatter.

That's the one thing said about the sower. So the most important part of the parable is not the sower. So maybe it's the seed. I mean, the seed is pretty important, isn't it? Is the seed the main focus of the parable?

Well, no, it's not. Because Jesus says nothing about the seed. Nothing whatsoever. Not in the parable itself, that is. And so is it the soil?

Yes. The whole idea of the parable is the soil. That's the focus. The soil. Because Jesus gives clear descriptions of the various types or conditions of soil upon which the seed falls.

All right, so that's the most important part. Now, that's the simple parable. Now, if as you read this text, if you're paying attention, and you all are, right?

[18:24] Okay. Got it. If you're paying attention, and you are, then, listen, it is at this point in the text that we come face to face with a dilemma.

You say, well, maybe I wasn't paying attention. I don't know if I see that. You come face to face with something that doesn't line up in your way of thinking. something that, quite frankly, makes us feel uncomfortable.

You say, what is it? Well, Luke tells us that a great multitude had gathered there to hear Jesus.

A great multitude. I mean, he uses language to convey this idea. We're not just talking about a small gathering or even a large gathering. We're talking about a really large gathering.

A great multitude. In fact, one of the other accounts in one of the other gospels says that it was such a huge multitude of people that Jesus had to get into a boat once again and go out a little bit away from the shore so that he could speak to everyone so that everyone could see him and hear him.

[19:38] A great multitude had gathered. All right? And it says here, he goes even further, he says, and they have come to him from every city.

That's not every city in the world. Take it in its context. We're talking about all of the principal cities of the region of Galilee. This was during Jesus' Galilean ministry. But they had traveled from various cities in that region, some near, some far.

And so can you imagine this? Here is a huge, huge crowd of people and they have come from near and far and all of them have come for one purpose and that is to hear Jesus teach, to hear Jesus preach and so this is a prime opportunity to preach the gospel.

Right? And Jesus tells them a parable and then he ends it without so much as an explanation.

Do you find that a little strange? I mean the only thing he said was he who has ears to hear let him hear. And I think some of them are probably saying well hear what?

[20:54] I haven't heard anything yet but a story about a commonplace thing that we see all the time at certain times of the year. There's nothing profound about that. Hear what?

When I was in seminary I took several courses in homiletics and that's just simply methods on how to preach to communicate clearly and to apply accurately the word of God and so I took a number of homiletics courses and homiletics was my primary focus in my doctoral research and studies. My PhD pertains to my dissertation pertains to the field of homiletics and my one desire as a pastor I hope you know is to communicate clearly and to apply accurately the word of God through exposition explanation illustration application even invitation because every sermon ought to expect some kind of response.

I work very hard at that. I would say that it seems that Jesus could use a few courses in homiletics. I say that very respectfully because preachers are supposed to clarify the word of God.

Are they not? I hope that's what I'm doing this morning. But Jesus is doing the exact opposite. Do you understand that?

[22:18] In fact instead of revealing the truth Jesus is concealing the truth. And this is the second thing that I want you to see in the text.

First a simple parable and second a sovereign prerogative or choice.

A sovereign prerogative. That is to say that within the bounds of his divine sovereignty Jesus and I know this is disturbing but Jesus chose to conceal the truth from certain people so that they would

not believe and be eternally lost.

And at the same time he chose to reveal the truth to certain ones so that they would believe and be eternally saved. Verse 9 makes that very clear.

Verse 9 and following. It's disturbing but it's very clear. Then his disciples and by the way that's not just his twelve apostles. This is the larger group of disciples.

[23 : 30] The disciples asked him and they asked him in private Mark 4 10 tells us that when he was alone and so they asked him saying what does this parable mean and this is what he said to you you specifically you disciples my disciples my chosen ones to you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God in short to know the gospel the full gospel that was a mystery in the Old Testament but now has been fully known it's to you that these things have been made known but and here it is to the rest this great multitude it is given in parables it's given in parables why why why would Jesus do that he tells us in verse 10 so that seeing they may not see and hearing they may not understand even his answer is a little disturbing isn't it this was deliberate on his part a divine choice a sovereign prerogative of the

Lord of glory to conceal the truth so that certain ones would not believe and be eternally lost and so this marked a major shift in Jesus' approach to preaching something has now changed a marked change has taken place from this point forward in his ministry Jesus spoke only in parables to the crowds and that's not just conjecture on my part that's exactly what Matthew 13 34 says Matthew 13 is an account of this same event in Matthew 13 34 says from this time on he spoke to them the crowds in parables that was his approach why why did he conceal the truth from the crowds well the only plausible answer apart from his sovereignty which is enough of an answer really but apart from that the answer is judgment judgment his divine judgment on persistent rebellion and unbelief you see

Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 6 in this passage Luke gives us just a snippet of it Mark in his account of this same event gives us a little bit more Matthew gives us even more of it but listen to the whole passage Isaiah 6 verses 9 through 10 is where where Jesus is quoting and he said this is God speaking to Isaiah go and tell this people people the Jews keep on hearing but do not understand keep on seeing but do not perceive Isaiah he's saying make the heart of this people dull and their ears heavy and shut their eyes lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and return and be healed Isaiah said how long do I do that he said until there's nobody left this judgment clearly this is judgment see

Isaiah chapter 6 is all about Isaiah is commissioning as a prophet God is calling him and commissioning him as his holy prophet and God had already sent many prophets to the nation Israel and all of them were rejected and their message rejected and so Isaiah is commissioned is not so much a call to repentance as it is a confirmation of judgment his prophecy sealed Israel's doom that's what you need to understand about Isaiah the prophet and so now we're into the New Testament and John the Baptist the last of the Old Testament prophets has already come and gone and he was rejected and his message God's message was rejected and now Jesus has come God's

Messiah has come and he too has been rejected by the Jews instead of them believing his message they are now plotting to have him killed so Jesus changes his approach in preaching he now speaks only in parables and so instead of revealing the truth to the Jews the crowds he is concealing the truth and so those who would not believe now they cannot believe now I don't know what you do with that I'm sorry if that makes you feel uncomfortable but this is exactly what is happening it's condemnation it's judgment now let's make an application you may not like it very much either Jesus spoke in parables as judgment upon the

[29 : 32] Pharisees primarily specifically but upon the Jews the nation of Israel he he spoke parables to the masses to the crowds because of their persistent unbelief it was a form of judgment but I believe that there are many today who are under this same judgment I don't know who they are I'm not privy to that that's not my business my business is to be a sower that's your business too and as a sower I broadcast the seed I don't know if the seed is falling on a rock hard path or a shallow bit of soil of a rock or if it's falling on soil that has thorns in it I don't know these things it's not my business but I believe that there are some today even members of

Baptist churches like ours who sit in the pew Sunday after Sunday and they listen to God's word preached and yet that word does not reveal it conceals that word does not save it condemns now that ought to break our hearts but this is the reality for those who are persistent in their rebellion and

unbelief God has hardened their hearts just like he did with Pharaoh by the way 2 Corinthians 2 verses 15 and 16 I think speaks speak these passages speak to this for we are speaking of believers we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing to

God we're the fragrance of Christ to both lost and saved unbelieving and believing to the one and he reverses the order to the one we are the aroma of death death leading to death and to the other the aroma of life leading to life meaning the gospel that we proclaim through life and through lip through words is received two different ways to the persistent unbelieving the rebellious it is the aroma of death to death it's almost the smoke of it to those hearts that are open and prepared for the gospel and fertile ground for the gospel seed it is life unto life and then he concludes by saying and who is sufficient for these things that is who can figure that out who's up to that a simple parable a sovereign prerogative and third a serious problem and this is what it really comes down to in

Jesus explanation of the parable to his disciples Jesus of course identifies the real problem here the real problem behind persistent unbelief he identifies that and it and it's an important answer for us those of us who are sowers there's a problem with this persistent unbelief is it the sower no after the first day of sharing the gospel during our reading glasses ministry in Ukraine Jerry where's Jerry oh well Jerry bless his heart he came to me and he said pastor I just feel like I have just blown it today I mean he just really came with such regret over the what he called the weakness of his gospel presentation

I thought to myself Jerry that's all of us that's every one of us but you see praise God it's not about the sower it never is about the sower even your most feeble what you would call your most feeble attempt to share the truth of scripture the truth of gospel as it is the truth by the way can't make up your own gospel even in the most feeble of attempts just you know just not even hardly putting sentences in proper grammar and incoherent have you ever been there where you just couldn't get it out and you felt afterward that boy I just botched that so and how in the world could anybody be saved with that kind of a gospel presentation I tell you it's not about the sower never about the sower that's not the answer to persistent unbelief or so maybe it's the seed how could it be that the seed is the word of

[35 : 27] God is perfect and so because it's perfect don't add to it in your gospel presentation thinking somehow that it will enhance and maybe sweeten up the presentation don't add anything to it that doesn't belong there and also don't subtract from the gospel to make it more agreeable you know and also like some I think today don't jettison the whole thing and come up with your own kind of gospel so that it will make it more attractive to this post modern world that we're living in today it's ridiculous the seed is perfect there's nothing wrong with it don't change it just present it just sow it nothing wrong with the sower nothing wrong with the seed and so what about the soil of course it's that isn't it it's always about the soil and what is the soil the soil is the human heart your heart your heart your heart it's the human heart and that's why you've heard it said the heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart it's always the heart and that's this gives us a good answer this answers one of those burning questions for us

I mean what is the answer to persistent unbelief and rejection of the gospel what's the answer to that I mean we share the gospel of Jesus Christ and we think who wouldn't want that I mean who wouldn't believe in that who wouldn't want salvation who wouldn't want forgiveness of all of their sins and all the guilt of sin lifted and condemnation who wouldn't want that who wouldn't want eternal life and yet most people do not seem to want it there it is it's presented there's the why don't people just believe it I can't understand it can you well this gives us the answer fans haven't used to say who wouldn't trade dirt for diamonds and yet many do will not rather do we blame the sower do we blame the seed you better not no it is all about the soil all about the heart the condition of the heart so

Jesus describes the conditions of the soil the heart he describes four heart conditions three of them are heart conditions that that are not conducive for the gospel to take root four kinds of unbelievers persistent unbelievers three types of heart or heart conditions the first one verse 12 look at it those by the wayside again that's the path along the path are the ones who hear they hear it it goes inside the ears they hear it they know what it is but then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts lest they should believe and be saved so immediately he just snatches that gospel away that is alright they hear the gospel with two ears stuck on each side of their heads and they

hear it and they know what it is but their hearts are hard they're beaten down like a path that has been trodden by thousands of people and so it's become packed down and it's hard as concrete and this is a description of a certain and it's very serious isn't it take this description one preacher offers he said the heart of this kind of person is a thoroughfare crossed by the mixed multitude of iniquities and traverse that traverse it day after day after day after day and it's not fenced so it lies exposed to all the evil stampings of every sin that comes along it's never broken up never plowed by conviction it's never cultivated by self searching self examination contrition honest assessment of guilt repentance this heart is callous it's callous to the sweet reasonings of grace and it's callous to the fearful terrors of judgment what a description that is exactly what

Jesus is getting at I believe the gospel then cannot penetrate this hard heart and the devil comes along like some wicked looking crow and snatches the gospel away now how does he do that well he does it through false religion false doctrine and false teachers of false doctrine he'll snatch away the little bit of gospel that a person has received or he'll do it through fear fear of what man thinks or he'll do it through doubts doubts about God doubts about the word of God he'll do it through pride he will snatch it away through I think primarily through our love a person's love for sin it's a hard packed down hard as concrete super hard heart and the gospel cannot take root and so what little that person receives the devil quickly snatches away the second one in verse 13 but the ones on the rock are those who again this is just rock right under the surface of the soil so there's just a little veneer thin veneer of soil when they hear receive the word with joy and these have no root how could they there's rock under the surface who believe for a while a short while and in time of temptation when things really get tough they fall away so this is not a super hard heart this is a superficial heart superficial the hardness is just under the surface and so the soil may look good the heart may look good and may look receptive

The gospel hits that heart and it quickly sprouts up but there's not enough soil no nutrition no moisture and so it just quickly dies away that that's the picture of this and so this describes a person who hears the gospel and immediately embraces it with joy I mean they're all joyful you've you've seen this happen they may walk down an aisle you know and talk to the preacher and they may be weeping and crying and and then there's just such a release and then for a week or so they're just so excited about the Lord Jesus Christ and then suddenly you look around and they're gone you see they believed!

[43:15] for a while what happened? well the gospel never really took root joy joy or any kind of emotion is probably the poorest proof of true conversion and that's all they really had and so their response was emotional they had some great emotional release at this time you know maybe you know they say confession is good for the soul that doesn't mean conversion necessarily and or they have their response has been intellectual or maybe it has been just simply a practical response because maybe for the first time they have found a group of people that they feel that they accept them and you know and so very practically or maybe practical in the sense of now now I know that Jesus is going to meet all the needs of my life and fix all the problems in my life people respond to the gospel for a host of wrong reasons

I mean perhaps they've come out of a broken relationship and so they're on the rebound and Jesus is their next relationship or perhaps they've lost their job and they're in a time of great pressure and the tension of their life and then they attend a service and maybe respond in some emotional way and they feel this sudden release of the burdens of life but that's not salvation salvation or maybe they're just lonely looking for belongingness and so they've found a place where they're accepted now they ought to find a place here at the church where they're accepted but that by itself is not salvation so then the first time things get a little bit tough they're gone the first time their expectations are dashed because they have wrong expectations about what it means to be saved born again then they're gone they reject they fall away because the biggest problem is they think that Jesus is going to fix everything that is wrong in their lives get them out of a tough jam or change some some disappointing thing in their life or family life or whatever it is that Jesus is going to fix everything and then when Jesus doesn't deliver so to speak then they're gone gone or when persecution comes instead of good things suddenly happening bad things start to happen I didn't sign up for this and they're gone the gospel quickly sprung up and then it died because there was no real root it's a superficial heart there's been no true acknowledgement of sin no true acknowledgement of God's holiness and righteousness and goodness there's been no true repentance of sin there's been no true faith in Jesus as Lord heart the third condition of the heart is

we might say the opposite extreme verse 14 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 like the previous soil this soil looks pretty good there isn't anything about the soil from the appearance that maybe tips a person off as to its condition it looks pretty good yet it's sullied it's impure it's got things in there that are growing and they're strong stronger than the bit of seed that that person has received that bit of knowledge about the truth of

God it's mixed these other things immediately choke out the life of the gospel that was scattered into the heart of that person some people will hear the gospel and right away they will in an intellectual way they will embrace it but they will not have not and will not abandon all the other gods in their lives and there are many cares of this world riches pleasures of life this is a person who is consumed by the things of the world not willing to separate from it not willing to abandon it it loves of this world sinful pleasures personal ambitions careers money unhealthy relationships and friendships ungodly affections and we could go on and on with the list and so the gospel since these things have not been abandoned and Christ alone embraced then these other things choke out the gospel and finally there is the heart that is prepared for the gospel verse 15 and we'll speak more of this next time but the ones that fell on the good ground are those who having heard the word with a noble or honest and good heart keep it the gospel and bear fruit with patience or endurance continue to bear fruit that leads me to one final thing simple parable sovereign prerogative serious problem and third and finally or fourth and finally a saving purpose

I'm talking about the purpose for which this story this narrative was included in scripture what's the purpose of this I mean when Jesus preached he could separate the unbelievers from the believers he could separate the prepared hearts from the unprepared hearts he was able to do that I'm not him I can't do that you can't either and so we have in this room today we have both believing and unbelieving we have both we have hearts that to this point are unprepared and many of you who are born again believers and followers of Christ

[50:44] God prepared your heart and you received that seed and it took root blossomed in your life but some possibly here this morning were not there so I would ask you this question do you have a super hard heart I mean it's just trodden down by sin every sin that comes along your heart is hard hard to the gospel do you have a superficial heart where there's rock just under the surface do you have a sullied heart polluted impure divided full of the cares and loves of the world if right now where you're seated you suddenly know just exactly what kind of hearts you have and that's not bad news that's good news because I believe now maybe for the first time in your life you have an ear to hear and Jesus said he who has ears to hear let him hear my plea to you is to repent trust Jesus as your Lord and save Thank you.