

THE LORD'S PARABLES IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

- 1) The Old Garments and Old Bottles (Luke 5:36-39; Matt. 9:16, 17; Mark 2:21, 22).
- 2) Three Parables in One:
 - a) The Blind Leading the Blind (Luke 6:39-42; Matt. 15:12-14).
 - b) The Good Tree and the Corrupt Tree (Luke 6:43-45; Matt. 7:15-20; 12:33).
 - c) The Two Houses (Luke 6:46-49; Matt. 7:21-27).
- 3) The Two Debtors (Luke 7:41-43; the full text: vv. 36-50).
- 4) The Sower (Luke 8:5-8, 11-15; Matt. 13:3-8, 18-23; Mark 4:4-8, 14-21).
- 5) The Lamp (Luke 8:16-18; cf. 11:33-36; Matt. 5:15; Mark 4:21).
- 6) The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37).
- 7) The Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5-8).
- 8) The Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-21).
- 9) The Faithful and Unfaithful Servants (Luke 12:35-48). This is similar to what Matthew recorded in Matt. 24:42-51. Luke gives it as it was uttered in an earlier part of our Lord's ministry.
- 10) The Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-9).
- 11) The Mustard Seed (Luke 13:18, 19; Matt. 13:31, 32; Mark 4:30-32).
- 12) The Leaven (Luke 13:20, 21; Matt. 13:33).
- 13) The Proud Guest (Luke 14:7-11).
- 14) The Great Supper (Luke 14:15-24).
- 15) The Conditions of Discipleship (Luke 14:25-33).
- 16) The Savorless Salt (Luke 14:34, 35; Matt. 5:13; Mark 9:50).
- 17) The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:3-7; Matt. 18:12-14).

Our Lord's Parables in Luke (2)

- 18) The Lost Piece of Money (Luke 15:8-10).
- 19) The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32).
- 20) The Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-9).
- 21) The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).
- 22) The Unprofitable Servants (Luke 17:7-10).
- 23) The Unjust Judge (Luke 18:1-8).
- 24) The Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18:9-14).
- 25) The Pounds (Luke 19:11-27).
- 26) The Wicked Husbandmen (Luke 20:9-19; Matt. 21:33-45; Mark 12:1-12).
- 27) The Sprouting Fig Tree and All Trees (Luke 21:29-38).

**VERSES WHERE THE WORD “PARABLE” IS USED
IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE**

Luke 4:23

And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb [parable], Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

(In the verse above we have the only time in the NT where the Greek word παραβολή is translated “proverb.”)

Luke 5:36

And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.

Luke 6:39

And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

Luke 8:4

And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable.

Luke 8:9

And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

Luke 8:10

And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

(The above verse is the only time the word parable is used in the plural in the Gospel of Luke.)

Luke 8:11

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

Luke 12:16

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.

(Continued on page 2.)

Luke 12:41

Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

Luke 13:6

He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

Luke 14:7

And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them.

Luke 15:3

And he spake this parable unto them, saying.

Luke 18:1

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.

Luke 18:9

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.

Luke 19:11

And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

Luke 20:9

Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

Luke 20:19

And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

Luke 21:29

And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees.

“Life” and “Eternal Life” in 1 John

* 1 John 1:1

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of **the Word of life**;

* 1 John 1:2

(For **the life** was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you **that eternal life**, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

1 John 2:16

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

* 1 John 2:25

And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even **eternal life**.

* 1 John 3:14

We know that we have passed from death **unto life**, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

* 1 John 3:15

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath **eternal life** abiding in him.

* 1 John 3:16

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down **his life** for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

* 1 John 5:11

And this is the record, that God hath given to us **eternal life**, and **this life** is in his Son.

* 1 John 5:12

He that hath the Son hath **life**; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not **life**.

See page 2.

“Life” and “eternal life” in 1 John (2)

* 1 John 5:13

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have **eternal life**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

1 John 5:16

If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him **life** for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

* 1 John 5:20

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, **and eternal life.**

* Verses which apply to the study of “eternal life.”

GARMENTS AND WINESKINS -- THE OLD AND THE NEW

Luke 5:27-39

Intro: The word *parable* is a word which belongs to the Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It is never used in the Gospel of John. Only twice is it found elsewhere, and both occurrences are in the book of Hebrews where it is translated “figure.” See Heb. 9:9; 11:19. In the Synoptics it is always translated at *parable* or *parables* with two exceptions: Mark 4:30 where it is translated as “comparison,” and Luke 4:23 where it is translated “proverb” (which is what the Lord saying, so there “proverb” is a good translation). The word “parable” is brought into the English as a transliteration from the Greek: παραβολή.

Lit. it means *the placing of one thing beside another*, and usually this is for comparison, or illustration -- which is its main use in Scripture. It differs from a *fable* in the sense that a *parable* is true-to-life. A fable attributes to people or things that which does not belong to them in nature. The Lord used parables frequently; sometimes it was for the purpose of revealing the truth, and at other times it was used to conceal the truth. Cf. Luke 8:9, 10 where the Lord had just finished telling the Parable of the Sower, and this is what His disciples asked Him, “What might this parable be?” The Lord responded by saying,

Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand (Luke 8:10).

And then He went on to give them the meaning of the parable.

The Lord did not always say that a parable was a parable, but usually we do not have any trouble identifying them. Neither did He always explain what He meant, but that is where we are especially dependent upon the Holy Spirit to help us in our understanding.

Now let us turn to the first parable recorded for us in Luke’s Gospel. It is found in Luke 5:36-38, but to get the whole context we need to go back to verse 27 where we have the call of Matthew, the publican. (Read the whole account.)

Our first point obviously is:

I. THE CALL OF MATTHEW (Luke 5:27, 28).

This account is given in Matt. 9:9-17 and also in Mark 2:13-22, and in

both of those chapters we have this same parable, although the arrangement is slightly different.

Although we do not know of any previous meeting that Matthew (or Levi as he was called) and the Lord had, yet it is only reasonable that there had been some connection. Matthew was a hated tax collector. The publicans were considered traitors to their people because they took advantage of the Jews when they collected taxes. Most of the publicans were well-to-do, but it really was dishonest gain.

We must believe that somewhere along the line Matthew had heard the Lord, and like Zacchaeus, had been saved. On this occasion the Lord called him to become a disciple, and Matthew left everything to follow the Lord.

This was followed soon after with what Luke calls,

II. A GREAT FEAST (Luke 5:29-32).

Matthew invited many of his publican friends to this feast, and it seems from the criticism that was aimed at our Lord, that there must have been either many Gentiles or possibly Jews who were considered by their leaders to be notorious as sinners.

We go from a brief record of the feast that Matthew gave to:

III. THE CRITICISM BROUGHT AGAINST THE LORD BY THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES (Luke 5:30-39).

And so the scribes and the Pharisees complained to the Lord's disciples wanting to know what the Lord would eat with such a crowd. It was not only unthinkable to them that the Lord would do such a thing, but it would have rendered the Lord unclean in their sight for Him to be with such people.

Somehow the Lord got involved with the scribes and Pharisees, and the rest of the passage has to do with the Lord's ministry to them.

We have the Lord's answer to their complaint in verses 31 and 32 (which in a sense is a parable although it is not particularly identified with the parable that follows. In Matthew's account we read that this is what the Lord said:

"They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go

ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Matt. 9:12, 13). He quoted to them from their own Scriptures. What our Lord said is found in Hosea 6:6.

It was apparent that the scribes and Pharisees were just as needy as the publicans and sinners were, only the scribes and the Pharisees did not know they were in need. Why was it that they were so critical of the Lord beyond the fact of their professional jealousy?

We have to say that it was because they did not understand having a feast at such a time. Matthew must have had two reasons for giving this feast:

- 1) He must have been overjoyed with this new relationship with the Lord.
- 2) He obviously wanted his friends not only to hear *about* the Lord, but he wanted them to hear *the Lord* for themselves.

How gracious it was of the Lord to spend time with these men who had no interest in the truth, but were there to disrupt and cause as much trouble as they could!

People who are merely “religious,” but without the knowledge of the Lord as Savior, do not understand what it means to be truly joyful. Look through the Bible and you never find true joy among the unregenerate. Often they had their feasts, but they were times of carousing and sinning of the worst kinds. But the feast that Matthew gave was different, and the scribes and Pharisees could see the difference. And notice that they ignored the Lord when He spoke of calling sinners to repentance.

And so they brought a second criticism. (Read it in verse 33.) If they could not get to the Lord one way, they would try another way.

Our Lord’s answer is also parabolic in nature. He likened the feast to a marriage feast. He was the Bridegroom. Matthew was one of “the children of the bridechamber,” and he was interested in bringing others in. And the last thing that Matthew would have been interested in while the Bridegroom was there would have been fasting. That was a time for feasting. It was a time for special joy not only because of the calling which Matthew had received, but because so many had come together to hear the Lord. The Lord said that the days would come when the Bridegroom would not longer with them, and then they would fast, presumably as “the children of the bridechamber awaited His return.

We cannot press the details of the Lord’s teaching beyond the main point

that He was seeking to establish with them, so we must leave this where the Lord did.

Again, there was no sign of interest in what the Lord was saying. They did not pick up on anything that the Lord said. And it was at this point that Luke tells us that the Lord proceeded with the main part of the parable. Here he was laying beside His teaching what they all knew was true of garments and wineskins, but unfortunately there is no evidence that the scribes and Pharisees were at all interested in what the Lord was saying.

The first part of the parable has to do with a new garment and an old garment. The old garment needed to be repaired. What if a piece could be cut out of a new garment to repair the old garment? The piece of the new would be too strong for the old garment, and so you would have a worse condition than at the beginning. The tear in the old garment would be worse, and you would have ruined the new garment by taking a piece out of it.

Even we men who know nothing about sewing can understand what the Lord was saying. But then the Lord laid along side of His teaching another part of the parable which actually means the same thing.

They would all have known that you would not store new wine in old wineskins. As the new wine began to ferment, it would burst the old wineskins which had already been stretched to capacity by other wine which had been stored in them. So you put the new wine and new bottles, or wineskins, and both are preserved. This makes sense, and the scribes and the Pharisees should at least have understood the illustration.

But the Lord went on to make a final statement, and you have it in verse 39. (Read.)

How are we to explain what the Lord said?

The scribes and the Pharisees were trying to force the Lord to stay with the old. Even the Lord commented on the correctness of much of their teaching, but condemned the scribes and Pharisees because they did not practice what they preached. However, with the coming of the Lord we have the One Who came in fulfillment of the old order under which the Jews had been living, the legal system given to them by God through Moses. Both the old under Moses and the new under Christ were represented by the garments for a covering, and by the wine and the wineskins

for the inner man, but there can be no mixture of law and grace. “The law was given by Moses,” John said, “but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). It was not the old that was to be repaired to make it satisfactory. Heb. 7:19 tells us this:

For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

The Jews of our Lord’s day had corrupted much that Moses had given by their additions and by their subtractions. Christ had come in fulfillment of the types and shadows in the Law, and by His death He had opened a new and living way by which we draw near to God. The book of Hebrews is the divine commentary on the difference between the old and the new, and the fact that the new is sufficient for the salvation of any sinner who thus comes to God through Christ.

But no questions, no requests for further explanations, were presented by the scribes and Pharisees. Instead, the Lord concluded with a final word of condemnation. (Read v. 39.)

The scribes and the Pharisees were silenced for the time being by what the Lord said, but their actions showed that they had no desire for the new. And the reason they didn’t was because they were saying in their hearts, “The old is better.” Some MSS read, “The old is good,” which would mean that they were entirely satisfied with what they had and felt that it was superior to anything that the Lord could tell them, or anything that the Lord could do for them.

Concl: What a testimony to the depravity of the human heart. Those scribes and Pharisees would rather depend upon their own fastings and ceremonial prayers, their own good works, than to believe that what they had were only shadows, but that the fulfillment of the shadows was standing before them and ministering to them that they might see the light that Matthew had seen, and be saved.

However, religious people are the same today. Tell them about Christ, and they will tell you that what they have is better. They would rather spent their lives trying to patch up the old than to come to Christ to find out what it means to be a new creature in Christ. Religion never saved anyone. It is only by grace through faith in Christ that we can find salvation.

One final word: Let this episode from the life of our Lord on earth be an encouragement to us. Even though the Lord knew their hearts, yet He graciously and patiently presented them with every opportunity to ask for

more light. But as far as we can tell not a single person responded positively to what the Lord was saying to them. He used a parable, or parables, to simplify the truth, but still they went away saying, "The old is better." May God make us just as faithful and just as patient in telling others of the only One through Whom it is possible for men to be right with God. Even the saints of the Old Testament did not believe that they were saved by the works of the Law, but they looked ahead to the coming Redeemer, and like Abraham, rejoiced to see the Lord's day, "and saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). Sinners don't need the Law to tell them what to do; they need the Gospel to tell them that all that God requires, Christ has done! In these dark days, let us be faithful in spreading the true light of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A BLIND LEADER OF THE BLIND

Luke 6:39-42

Intro: In this latter part of Luke 6 we have what we might call three parables in one. The first has to do with the blind leading the blind in verses 39 through 42. The second has to do with the two trees, a good tree and a corrupt tree in verses 43 through 45. The third has to do with a wise man who built his house on a foundation of rock, and a foolish man who did not have a foundation for his house and built it upon the earth. We have this in verses 46 through 49.

Considering all three together we might give them the title, *A Threefold Warning*, because that is what each is: *a warning*.

The setting for the message which the Lord had just given is stated in verses 17 and 18 of Luke 6. The Lord was speaking to “a great multitude” of people who had come from many different places, but it seems that His emphasis was upon His disciples according to verse 20a. Nevertheless, we must assume that the multitude was still there, and listening!

The teaching sounds very much like a brief report of Matthew’s account of the Sermon on the Mount, which it may have been. But we must also realize that the Lord may have given the same messages, in part or the whole, on more than one occasion. Whatever the circumstances were, the Lord’s teaching was very specific and very powerful. William Hendriksen had this to say about our Lord’s teaching:

All this was strange, startling, yet also thought-provoking. It was nourishing food for the soul. It contrasted sharply with the sickly, warmed-up stew which was being constantly ladled to them by their scribes... The people could not help noticing the difference. So Jesus now explains this contrast: these scribes are blind (*The Gospel of Luke*, p. 360).

And so the first point in this parable can be a question:

I. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE BLIND TRY TO LEAD THE BLIND (Luke 6:39)?

Hendriksen translates this verse with these words, remembering that this is a parable:

“A blind man cannot lead a blind man, can he?” The expected answer is, “No, indeed!” The next question is,

“Will they not both fall into a pit?” The only logical answer is, “Yes, they will?”

The word for “ditch” could be translated *a pit, a hole* (in the ground) like *a cistern* which was left uncovered. Such cases were very common in the land of Israel. So the questions would have been very significant to the people of our Lord’s day. If you were blind, you would never want to commit yourself to another blind man to lead you.

Blind meant *spiritually blind*. Although the scribes and Pharisees claimed to be religious teachers who knew the truth, they were just as blind as the people they were attempting to lead. And the Lord wanted the people to realize that just as that would be a dangerous combination in day to day life, it was even more dangerous when it comes to the things of the Lord.

Next the Lord spoke of:

II. THE HOPELESSNESS OF THE SITUATION (Luke 6:40).

Don’t think of the Lord’s disciples when you read this verse, nor of the Lord as the Teacher (although the same principle would apply to the Lord and His disciples). What the Lord was saying here was that whoever your teacher is, you are not going to get beyond what he knows, and if you follow his instructions perfectly, you can have no hope that you will be any better off than your teacher. If you follow a teacher who is spiritually blind, and you are spiritually blind, when you have received and acted upon everything that he tells you, you will still be blind -- and so will he! You don’t get truth out of error. By nature we are more inclined to accept error than we are truth, and so people can go through this whole procedure and be perfectly happy about it not realizing that an ignorant, blind teacher will leave you in a worse condition than he found you.

In the next verse we see that:

III. SUCH A DISCIPLE IS POWERLESS TO HELP OTHERS (Luke 6:41).

It does not take a person of outstanding intelligence to realize that everywhere we run into blind people, spiritually blind people. And even by nature we have our own ideas as to how the needs of people are to be met. And we have a natural inclination to want to help others. But the person who is particularly dangerous is a person like a scribe or Pharisee,

schooled in error, who is sure that he has the answer, while in effect his own problem is greater than the other person he is trying to help. To be trained in error adds to our blindness, but at the same time it makes us more confident that we are specialists who can make others see what we see.

But this verse indicates that it is far easier for us to see the problems that others have, and yet to ignore that our problem may be greater than the problems are of others that we would like to help.

What is a mote, and what is a beam?

A mote is a small piece of foreign matter that anybody can get in his eye. It might be chaff which flies through the air. Or it could be something like a twig, or a part of a straw. It is small, but it can keep a person from using his eye, and obviously it needs to be taken out. It might even be a sliver or chip from a beam.

But what is a beam?

A beam, as you might expect, is a rafter, or joist, or large support which would be used in constructing a building. It is very nice to have in a building, but it would be very uncomfortable in a person's eye. In fact, we would know that it would be impossible to get into a person's eye. The Lord was using this extreme example to show how great was the problem of the scribe and of the pupil who had been thoroughly trained under the scribe's direction.

Now the question that the Lord asked here was, why would a spiritually blinded teacher pay attention to a lesser problem in his pupil's eye when he actually hasn't paid the proper attention to the beam that was in his own eye? Now, remember, that the teacher has not yet recognized that he is spiritually blinded. It was the purpose of our Lord's ministry to make him understand his problem, and yet it is extremely difficult to get a false teacher to realize that that is just what he is, a false teacher. How careful we need to be about how we select people to be our teachers! It was normal for the Jewish people of our Lord's day to think that they should follow the scribes and Pharisees, but that is one reason the Lord came to bring people back to the truth.

This brings us to:

IV. THE FALSE TEACHER'S NEED (Luke 6:42).

The Lord made it very clear that we are in no condition to help others when we may have a greater problem than they do. And if we do we are what the Lord called the people who had a beam in their eyes when they were offering to help others who only had a mote in their eyes, small in comparison to a beam. *When we get the beam out of our own eyes, then we can see clearly to help others who have their motes, and not until!*

The world is overrun with those people who claim that they can help others, but they have a bigger problem themselves than do the people that they are claiming they can help. You will find a lot of these beam-in-the-eye people in our churches, churches where the Word of God is not taught, nor in many instances is it believed to be the Word of God. And then we have all kinds of cults. Recently we have been hearing more and more about spiritistic mediums. Psychologists are everywhere, and medical people who have more training than psychologists, but who are just as blind. And I am speaking of the majority of psychiatrists. And then you will always find people who have their own ideas about how to solve human problems, but if you are with them very long you soon discover that they haven't solved their own problems.

Much of what the scribes and Pharisees taught had its roots in the OT Scriptures, but they denied the power, which is the Gospel. A prime example of that was Nicodemus, "a ruler of the Jews," who came to the Lord because somehow the Lord had shown him that with all of the knowledge he had, he still had a big beam in his own eye -- and he didn't know how to get it out. What did the Lord tell him? He told him that he needed to be born again. The Lord told him that he needed to put his faith in the Son of God. And the Lord told him that he stood under the judgment of God, and that only the Son of God could deliver him from the judgment to come. This is what is involved in getting the beam or the mote out. We can't do it for ourselves; *the Lord has to do it!*

Concl: What are the lessons of this parable?

Remember that a parable is a story or a situation in life which is laid along side of some spiritual truth to illustrate what the Lord was teaching, and, by comparison, to help us to understand the meaning of what the Lord had been saying.

Let me suggest some of the lessons:

First, we are all afflicted with spiritual blindness. And this has created other problems for us. We do not possess the ability to understand

spiritual truth. Even the god of this world, Satan, has added to our blindness. And it is often through the training that we have received, or given to ourselves, that we have, could I express it this way, *made a beam out of mote?*

Second, we all have a desire to help others. The fruit of spiritual blindness is to be seen everywhere. It creates the kind of problems that we see running out of control in our generation. Aren't you amazed that otherwise intelligent people can start using drugs? And how can we explain the fact that the disease aids has been linked to homosexual behavior, and yet people keep right on playing with fire and death? And think of the millions and billions that have already been spent on aids, and we are being told that we are going to have to pay more! How do you account for the fact that people come out of home situations that are deplorable in every sense of the word, and yet get married and do the same things to their families that their parents did to them. Our jails are so full that we have to release some criminals who are in jail to make room for others who are coming in. And we are being flooded with ideas as to solutions, but the problem is that the suggestions are coming from people with motes and beams in their eyes.

But there is a third lesson in this parable. It is that if we really want to help people, we have to find the right answer for ourselves. We get that by going to the right Teacher, and that right Teacher is our Lord Jesus Christ. All of the things society is trying to treat are symptoms of the real problem. The real problem is our sin. And sin has made us proud so that we think that we can handle our problems, and that we have handled our problems when actually they continue on.

A fourth lesson: Our Lord indicated in this parable that there is an answer. The beams can be taken out, and the motes can be removed. But we have to find the answer for ourselves before we can possibly know how to help others.

The last lesson I will mention is that when the beams are removed from our eyes, then we can "see" to help others who also may have beams, or who may have motes. Next to having our own sight cleared up, is the joy of passing the message of the Gospel on to others to see the beams in their eyes removed by the power of a gracious and mighty God.

This parable is a strong lesson for those of us who spent our lives ministering to others. How careful we need to be about ourselves! How sincere and honest we need to be with the Lord! Parents, let's be sure

that we are not overlooking our own needs as we seek to minister to the needs of our children. Perhaps the Lord is letting us see the needs that we see in the lives of our children because He wants us to realize that we have a larger problem of the same kind which needs to be removed from our own eyes.

The word that we need to pay attention to in this parable is the word *hypocrite!* A hypocrite is a person who is not what he wants you to think that he is. He is a person who is acting a part, claiming to be more than he really is. The Lord knows us better than we know ourselves. And if sometimes the Lord's teaching seems to run across the grain with us, perhaps the Lord is showing us that we have a beam or we have a mote which needs to be removed if our lives are to be pleasing to God, and if we are to be useful servants in His hands to help others.

May the Lord search all of our hearts by this parable which our Lord taught to His disciples, and which He still teaches us today through His Word.

A MESSAGE FROM TWO TREES

Luke 6:43-45

Intro: (Read Luke 6:43-45.)

This same parable is found in Matt.7:15-20 where it is used as a warning against false prophets. A brief reference to a good tree and a corrupt tree is also found in Matt. 12:33, followed by another warning against evil men. It is from this parable that we get that very familiar expression, "Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). Luke's version of that statement is found at the beginning of Luke 6:22, "For every tree is known by his own fruit."

The parable in Luke begins with the Lord's reference to:

I. A GOOD TREE AND A CORRUPT TREE (Luke 6:43-44).

Never in the teachings of our Lord is the simplicity of His teaching more apparent than when He used parables. For those who did not know the Lord, His parables were only parables, and they did not see anything more than just a story. But to those whose hearts had been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, a parable was like a window giving the people of God a better understanding of what the Lord was teaching.

This parable is not so much a story as it is an illustration of truth that the Lord was teaching. And the Lord began by pointing out a fact in nature that no one could deny. A good tree will produce good fruit, and a corrupt tree will bring forth corrupt fruit. The Lord crisscrossed what he was pointing out about the two trees. He said, in effect, "If you are looking for a good tree and find that its fruit is corrupt, then you know that the tree is corrupt because a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." *It is the character of the fruit which identifies the nature of the tree. The reason the fruit is corrupt is because the tree is corrupt. And so we must realize how important it is to examine the fruit.*

I mentioned a moment ago that our Lord's use of the two trees in His Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew's Gospel, was to help the people to identify false prophets. We know that we can identify a false prophet by his teach *if we know the truth* (which most people in the world don't know), but our Lord was even more discriminating than that. He said that the real test of a man's teaching is the man himself. If the man is good, then his teaching will be good, but if the man is bad or corrupt, his teaching may have much truth in it, but the man himself is not to be

followed.

Our Lord Himself has given us an illustration of what He meant by this parable, and we find it at the beginning of Matthew 23 where the Lord was denouncing the scribes and Pharisees. Let me read the first three verses of that chapter to you:

- 1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,
- 2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:
- 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not (Matt. 23:1-3).

You can read more of that chapter when you have the time, but notice what the Lord said about the scribes and Pharisees who were accepted as the spiritual leaders of Israel. He said that they sit in Moses' seat. That means that they claimed to be the spiritual heirs of Moses, and that they taught what Moses taught. To that extent the Lord told them to do what they said, but he warned them not to do what they did. The reason: because they were very, very different from Moses in the lives they lived.

We sometimes laugh at the expression, "You had better practice what you preach." But that is really not a laughing matter. The only perfect teacher that there ever has been was our Lord. Even Moses as great as he was, was not perfect. But no one in Israel could ever say that Moses did not seek to live according to the will and word of God. Speaking of fruit (and when we speak of fruit, we are speaking of character), listen to what we read about Moses in Num. 12:3:

(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

We would all do well to pattern our lives after Moses. He was a man who loved God, who obeyed God, and we see him again and again in Scripture to have been a man of prayer. Plus he appeared with the Lord and Elijah in the Mount of Transfiguration. Moses taught the truth, but we can also say that he lived the truth--and that is what validated his teaching.

In the Tuesday Bible Class we just finished the pastoral epistles. Those were letters written to two young men: Timothy and Titus. And if there is one thing that stands out in those epistles it is that Timothy needed to be an example to all believers. The same was to be true of Titus. And since both of them were involved in appointing leaders for those young churches, no one should be able to miss the fact that they were to look for men whose lives revealed that they not only knew the Word, but that they were living the Word. If we really love the Lord, our love will be seen

not only in what we say and in what we teach, but in what we are! This is not to minimize the importance of the truth of the Word of God, but it is to say that it is by godly lives that a teacher shows his credentials most of all. So look for good fruit.

Now perhaps you have gathered from what I have already said that “fruit” in this parable represents, not how many people you have been able to lead to the Lord (as one commentator I consulted suggested), but we are talking about character, “the fruit of the Spirit.” Look at a man’s experience, but experience alone in the work of the Lord does not qualify a man as being a good tree. Look at his training. This also is important. But there have been many men with excellent training who have gone astray. And this is not something that can be decided at one time in a person’s life, and never examined again. A good tree will produce more and more fruit just as a good man will manifest more and more of the fruit of the Spirit the longer he really walks with the Lord.

What is the fruit of the Spirit? “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal. 5:22, 23a). And notice that Paul said “fruit,” not *fruits* (plural). The Spirit of God does not produce one or two of them; He produces all of them. You will only find them perfectly in our Lord, but they should be evident in the life of all who teach the Word, and, in fact, in all of the people of God.

The Lord put His finger on the heart of the matter when He said, “For every tree is known by his own fruit.” That is one of the most significant statements our Lord ever made, and it is tragic that we don’t pay more attention to it. And it ought to solemnize all of us permanently who teach the Word of God. Those who teach the Word are to be examples of Biblical morality.

This same principle applies to everything and everybody in the world. A man may be a good mechanic of some kind, but, at the same time, he may do things for you which don’t need to be done, and charge you exorbitantly for doing what he does. We have been made keenly aware in Portland that a man may have trouble with the law, and yet if he is a good basketball player, we will close our eyes to his character because we want the money he can bring in for us. And we see the same thing in our political leaders. People close their eyes to wrongdoing and coverups because they want a leader who will give them what they want government to give them.

But among those of us who know the Lord, we must not forget this most

important teaching of our Lord. Paul brought a series indictment against the Jews in his epistle to the Romans, but I am afraid that we Gentiles are just as guilty as the Jews ever were. But listen to what Paul wrote in **Rom. 2:17-29**. (Read.)

You see, the Jews had the truth, but their failure was that they failed to apply it to their own lives. And so that which should have been “good” turned out to be “corrupt” because of their failure to practice what they preached.

Going back to our text, look at the latter part of verse 44. (Read.) What does this mean? It means that if you are looking for figs, you don’t go to some thorny bush; you go to a fig tree. And if you are looking for grapes, you don’t go to a bramble bush; you go to a grape vine. So if you want good fruit, if you want to know the real secret of the blessing of the Lord, don’t go to the hypocrite, the one who says good things, but lives otherwise. God to one whose life is an illustration of what he is teaching.

As I have said, this is a solemn parable for those of us who teach the Word because none of us would say in our right minds that we are all that we should be. The Lord knows this better than we do. But if we are seeking, by God’s grace, to be what the Lord wants us to be (and it can only be by His grace), this is what God wants, and this is what God blesses. But you can see why James said what he said about teachers and teaching. I am reading this from the NASB; the verse is James 3:1:

Let not many {of you} become teachers, my brethren,
knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.

Now I have been doing some interpreting as I have gone along, but let us look at how the Lord explained this parable.

II. THE EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE TWO TREES (Luke 6:45).

The Lord was not really talking about trees; He was talking about *men!* He was just using trees to illustrate His teaching. The good tree represents good men, and the corrupt tree represents evil men. And in both cases the Lord traces the reason for the goodness or the evil *to the heart!* And so in the final analysis, a man is qualified to teach by the good character of his heart, or he is disqualified and condemned by the evil character of his heart. It is out “of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.” This is the reason that we all need to give attention to the condition of our hearts. King Solomon gave us a good word that would

certainly apply here. Those of you who have done our memory work memorized this verse last year. I am referring to Proverbs 4:23. Listen to what Solomon said,

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

By the heart Solomon was speaking of our inner man. We don't really see each other when we look at one another. You see my earthly tabernacle, and I see your earthly tabernacle. The only way I can see what you are is by listening to what you say and by observing the way you live. And that is how you can tell what I am. We may be able to fool people for a while, but, if we are hypocrites, if we are not what we pretend to be, sooner or later the truth will come out.

Now only God can change our hearts. And only He can cleanse our hearts. We need the word in our hearts, not just on our desks. This is what the Psalmist said in Psa. 119:11. As the Lord was talking to the disciples just a short time before He went to the Cross for you and for me, He said to them, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). But there can be no cleanness in our naturally unclean hearts unless we know the Lord and are saved. Cf. Rom. 10:9, 10.

The word for "evil" which the Lord used here is a Greek word which stresses the fact that a false teacher, or even a true believer who is out of fellowship with the Lord, will always have a bad effect on others even though much of what he is saying might be true. Your heart and my heart are the heart of the matter.

The word "good" is, as you know, one of the most prominent of the characteristics of God. Over and over we read in the Psalms that the Lord is good. So a good teacher is a godly, a God-like teacher. He will manifest in his life those qualities of life which are found in perfection in God, but which will also appear in an ever-increasing way in the lives of His people regardless of what their station in life might be.

Concl: What I have been saying certainly applies to those who teach the Word, but, as I told the Tuesday Class repeatedly, the standards that the Lord has set for those who teach and lead in the work of the Lord, is the standard that God has set for all of His people. Both Paul and Peter emphasized that leaders are to be examples, and one who is an example is one others can safely follow, not only in what they believe, but in the way that they live. May God use this parable in all of our hearts, not only to help us to examine the teachers we hear, but in seeing to it that we

practice what we preach. Remember that I have told you repeatedly that God has saved us, not because He needs workers, nor because we can make a special contribution to the work of the Lord. No, He can get along just fine without us. But He has saved us to make us like the Lord Jesus Christ. And so what we are always must take precedence over everything else. When we are seeking to be what the Lord wants us to be, this is what brings the blessing of God upon our lives, our families, and our church. Then we can be real instruments in the hand of the Lord to minister to a world which as lost its way, and which is moving farther and farther from the Lord every day that passes. May we live by God's grace so that we can be instruments of eternal blessing to others.

THE TWO FOUNDATIONS

Luke 6:46-49

Intro: We come tonight to the third and last part of this “parable” (Luke 6:39). It occupies the last four verses of Luke 6 (vv. 46-49). This same part of the parable was given by our Lord at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. Cf. Matt. 7:21, 24-27.

We can see from the three parts of this parable that the same problems we have in the church today were present during our Lord’s ministry here on earth, as they were even in OT times. Each part served as a special warning to the people in our Lord’s day, and they have been appropriate warnings for the professing church up to the present day.

The first, the case of the blind leading the blind, shows exactly that danger. One person will try to help another person who has a problem, and yet will ignore that his own problem is greater than the problem of the person he is trying to help. The Lord Himself identified the problem in that first part of the parable. It was *hypocrisy*. See Luke 6:42. Many so-called Christian counselors, and often even pastors, are trying to help others when they have not found out what the solution to their own problems is. If we are going to give people real help, we have to get rid of our own blindness and self-deception first.

In the second part of the parable we learn that there are two kinds of people in the world--the good and the corrupt. Those who are good we know have been made good by the grace of God, and that this involves a transformation of the heart. As long as a person’s heart is bad, he cannot produce good fruit. But when his heart has been transformed, then he can produce good fruit. So the need is not for outward reformation but for an inward transformation. Only God can make such a change.

In this third part we have a situation where people claim that Jesus Christ is their Lord, but they do not obey the Lord. We were considering this kind of a situation in 1 John 2:3-6 this morning--people who claim that the Lord is their Lord, but they do not show it by their lives. Let us examine what the Lord had to say about the two foundations, but first we must begin with:

I. OUR LORD’S QUESTION (Luke 6:46).

Many commentators in explaining the Gospels will take a question like we have in this verse, and say that the Lord was teaching a salvation by

works. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Lord never taught salvation by works. When He emphasized works it was always to stress the importance of looking for the effects of salvation in a person's life.

When the Lord said that people were calling Him, "Lord, Lord," He was indicating that they were making a strong statement that the Lord was their Lord, their Messiah, and even their Judge. In other words, they were claiming that they were saved, and claiming it very positively. But the Lord responded by asking them how that could be if they did not do what He told them to do. Obedience to the Lord is evidence of a changed life, not an occasional obedience, but a continuous obedience. It never is a perfect obedience, but it is a life characterized by obedience--consistently and increasingly. And if obedience to the Lord and to His Word is not to be seen in a person's life, it means little that he addresses the Lord as, "Lord, Lord."

So the Lord was not saying that we are saved by what we do, but He was saying that we show that we are saved because we seek to do what He wants us to do, and what He has told us to do in His Word.

This is the way that Matthew recorded what the Lord said in the Sermon on the Mount:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

And then our Lord followed those words with these:

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt. 7:22-23).

So this is not a minor problem among those who profess to be the people of God; *it is a major problem*. Notice that our Lord said, "Many." It is relatively easy to do good works but without a change in heart and character and life! They do not profess to be holy, nor to love the Lord, but only to be busy, and successfully busy. How important for all of us to learn the distinction between the two.

Now this question led to:

II. OUR LORD'S ENLIGHTENING EXPLANATION (Luke 6:47-49).

The Lord spoke of two men, two different kinds of life, two houses, and two foundations. And, like so many other passages, it seems that all professing Christians fall into one or the other of these two categories. We can expand what the Lord said to include all people on the face of the earth. That was apparent in the second part of this parable. There are not even three categories of human beings. There are just two. There are people who know the Lord, and those who do not know the Lord. But this part of the parable deals with those who do not know the Lord, but claim that they do.

Let us look at:

A. The first person the Lord mentioned (Luke 6:47, 48).

I trust that we are all represented by this first person. He has come to the Lord, He has heard the Word, and He does what the Lord says for him to do. We can assume that in coming to the Lord, his heart has been changed, and he has really trusted Christ as his Savior. Notice we are not concerned here with a man who talks about what he has done, but one whose life has undergone a real transformation.

Then the Lord said, "I will show you to whom he is like."

And then we have the story of a man who was building a house. To prepare for the house he went deep into the earth, and laid the foundation for his house on a rock. That was the first thing that he did. And then he build his house. The house is not described, but the foundation is.

Then, true to life, the weather is not always good. There was a flood (indicating that there was rain), it filled the streams, the water beat against the house, but the house stood because of its foundation. As the Lord said, "It was founded upon a rock." Again let me say that the Lord emphasized, not whether it was a large house or a small house, nor did He try to describe what the house was like. He was concerned with the foundation.

Now let us look at verse 49 where we read about:

B. The second person the Lord mentioned (Luke 6:49).

All that the Lord said about him was that he had heard the Lord; he had heard the Word. It does not say that he came to the Lord. He definitely was responsible because he had heard the Word, but the significant thing

about him is that the Word had no effect upon him. It did not change his heart in any way.

But he built a house, too. Only he did not take the time to dig down to find a rock where he could lay his foundation. He felt you would be all right wherever you built your house. So he just let his house sit on top of the ground. Then the same thing happened to him that had happened to the first man. A storm came. It beat upon his house. And the house fell, and the Lord said that “the ruin of that house was great.”

One house stood; the other house fell. The houses may have looked exactly alike--I don't know. But what we do know is that the main difference between the houses was the foundation. In one way we could say that the second house had no foundation at all; the first man made sure that his foundation was laid upon solid rock.

III. THE APPLICATION.

In Matthew's account of this parable he reported that the Lord said that the first man was “wise,” and that the second man was “foolish.”

The first man, the wise man, took the Lord seriously, and did what the Lord told him to do. We can say that the foundation was the Word of God, but we can also say that the foundation was Christ. He is the Rock. The written Word and the living Word, our Savior, are inseparable. Take Christ out of the Bible, and you no longer have a Bible. But neither can we know what we need to know about the Lord except from what we have in the Bible. I am sure that by now most of you are thinking about what the Apostle Paul had to say about the foundation. Listen to his words in 1 Cor. 3:10-11:

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

But let me say that you can't build on Christ unless you are building upon the Word. If this parable teaches us anything it teaches us the primary importance of the Word of God. And yet there are “many” who profess to be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who pay little or no attention to the Word of God. And often if they do pay attention to the Word, to what they may call *the Golden Rule*, it is to live a life without Christ, a life where He is not the foundation.

What can we say about the storms?

Well, we can say that everyone faces storms in this life. We have our trials and tribulations. We face temptations of all kinds. Life in this world always has its stormy times, and this is where the reality of our faith in the Lord is tested. And it is only the Lord Who can keep us when the storms comes.

But let me go back to what I said at the beginning. Expositors point out that the expression, "Lord, Lord," means not only that those who said this were acknowledging the Lord as their Messiah, *but also as their Judge*. And most people don't realize it, but the greatest storm that will ever hit anyone is the storm of eternal judgment which comes when men stand before the Lord as their Judge. And we will all be there--probably not at the same time, but shall all face the Lord. How wonderful it will be if we can face our Judge with, as we have been learning in 1 John--with the Lord Jesus Christ as our Advocate.

For those whose house is built on the earth, or the sand, the ruin will be as create as it possibly can be when, in spite of all of their claims, the Lord will say, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23).

Concl: I didn't plan that we would be where we were in 1 John this morning, and then at this point in the parables of Luke tonight. Maybe the Lord has had a hand in this because He wants us to make sure that we are building our house, our lives, upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and upon the solid Rock of the Word of God. This passage, like what we have been considering in 1 John warns us against making claims about our relationship with Christ which are not true. They were making such claims in our Lord's day, and there are many in the professing church who are doing the same thing today. We would do well to take heed to what the Apostle Paul told the Jews of his day who had been scattered from their homes by persecution. He had just been writing about adding to their faith, virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love. And then He said this:

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:8-11).

It would be interesting to know how many got their lives straightened out as a result of hearing the Lord's teaching. Remember that **obedience is the key**--obedience to the Word. Let us joyfully recognize that Jesus Christ is our Lord, and back up our profession of faith by doing what He has told us in His Word that He wants us to do. We can't do it on our own, but by His grace we can!

THE TWO DEBTORS

Luke 7:36-50

Intro: The parable that we are considering tonight was given by our Lord while He was having dinner with a Pharisee named Simon. The incident includes not only our Lord and Simon, but also a prostitute, who remains unnamed, and a brief reference to others who were sitting at dinner with the Lord and Simon the Pharisee. Luke does not tell us *why* Simon had invited the Lord, but evidently there was some interest in his heart because of what the Lord had been teaching according the verses which precede this section. Simon may have been attracted to the Lord in much the same way that Nicodemus was, although it seems that *the works of the Lord* were what had attracted Nicodemus. But let us begin with verse 36, and look at this section from start to finish. This event is found only in Luke's Gospel.

I. THE LORD'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE PHARISEE'S INVITATION (Luke 7:36).

We can only guess at Simon's reason for inviting the Lord to dinner. But since this was something for which he might be sharply criticized by his fellow Pharisees, I believe we are safe in assuming that his heart had in some way been attracted to Christ. How deeply we do not know. But he was willing to run the risk of criticism from his friends, and the possibility that he might be ostracized by them. There seems little doubt but that he would have faced censure from his superiors.

But he invited the Lord, and the Lord accepted. We learn from verse 49 that there were others at the dinner also, and they, too, whether Pharisees or not, must have had some interest in our Lord even though with some of them it may have been no more than curiosity.

Let us take a lesson from the fact that the Lord agreed to go to such a dinner. We do not have the insight that the Lord had, but we can at least learn to be responsive when there appears to be some interest in the Gospel. We can be sure that the Pharisees were among the people who were considered to be the hardest to reach, and yet the things which are impossible with us are possible with God. Cf. Luke 18:27. It does not seem that Lord ever accepted social invitations just to be sociable; it was always with the purpose of ministry. And so, if a door was open, He went in.

Next let us look at:

II. THE SINFUL WOMAN (Luke 7:37, 38).

For her to be described as “a sinner” means that she was known in the city as a particular kind of a sinner, and it is generally taken to mean that she was a prostitute.

She was not an invited guest. By what Simon thought to himself later on in this account, she would never have received an invitation to his house. How did she get in? Well, it seems that homes were not as closed up in those days as our homes are today, and so she was able to go in off of the street to the place in Simon’s home where he and his guests were dining. Luke tells us that she went there because she knew that Jesus was there.

What did she do? Verse 38 tells us. Remember that people reclined at the table in those days. She came behind the Lord whose feet were apparently on the floor. She washed His feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, kissed his feet, and then anointed His feet with the ointment she had in the alabaster box. The box was made of compact gypsum, and may have been transparent. But it was considered to be the best place to preserve the fragrance of costly ointment.

From Luke’s account it would seem that we are to notice that she did not anoint the Lord’s head, but just His feet. This in itself was an expression of her humility and the feeling of unworthiness that was in her heart. It must have been a very touching scene, and, in the providence of God, was ordained by God to cause an even greater awakening in the hearts of the guests who were present.

What happened next?

III. SIMON’S REACTION (Luke 7:39).

Notice: Simon didn’t say a word, but there was plenty going on in his mind. He evidently had come to the place in his thinking where he considered the Lord a prophet. A prophet was supposed to have been a holy person, and usually with special insight, special wisdom. From his thoughts this all made him think that the Lord might not be a prophet after all, or he would have known that this was a sinful woman. In his heart he was questioning if the Lord were truly a prophet.

This brings us to:

IV. THE LORD’S MINISTRY TO SIMON (Luke 7:40-47).

Although Luke did not make much of a point of it, we see here evidence of *the omniscience of the Lord*. Although Simon did not utter a word, yet the Lord knew what he was thinking. And so He said, "Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee." And Simon replied by saying, "Master, say on." Simon called our Lord, Teacher. This is an indication that he had not abandoned altogether the former confidence he had had in the Lord. He seemed ready to listen to the Lord. This is where the Lord told his parable. It reminds me of the way Nathan the prophet approached David when he called David to face his sins with Bathsheba and Uriah.

THE PARABLE: The parable tells of two men who were indebted to the same creditor--one owed him five hundred pence; the other, fifty. One denarius was considered to be a day's wage. And so one owed his creditor almost two years of wages, while the other, about two months. We don't need to know the exact amount a denarius was worth. We could say that one owed five hundred dollars, and the other fifty dollars. The one owed ten times more than the other.

Since neither one could pay his debt, the Lord said that the creditor forgave both of them what they owed him. Now the question that the Lord asked was this: "Which of them will love him the most?"

Simon answered the Lord's question when he said, "I suppose that he, to whom he forgave the most." The Lord then told him that he had answered the question correctly.

But then came the application of the story. (Read vv. 44-46.)

Why Simon had not done what was considered common courtesy for a host to do for a guest, we do not know. Probably he thought that it was risky enough to have the Lord in his home without making it appear that He was a guest of honor. But the fact was that He did not do any of those things--*but the sinful woman did!*

We have in this application that the Lord made of the parable, a very, very interesting point that the Lord was making.

In Simon and this sinful woman we have two people at the opposite ends of the spectrum of society. Simon was very self-righteous (being a Pharisee); the woman was a sinner, *and she knew it!* Furthermore, since the Lord knew the heart of Simon, we can safely assume that He, being God, knew the heart of this woman. Augustine called her tears *the blood of her heart*. Simon, as far as we can tell, wanted more information. This sin-

ner who spent her time at the feet of our Lord in the deepest humility, was far beyond Simon spiritually. She knew that she was a sinner. And she knew that she needed forgiveness. And she was convinced that only the Lord could give her the forgiveness which she needed. She showed her faith by the display of her love for the Lord. According to the record here, she didn't say a word, but the Lord knew her heart. And so the Lord said to Simon the words that we have in verse 47. (Read.)

Obviously the woman was represented in the parable by the man who owed five hundred pence, ten times more than the other. But let me raise a question which Archbishop Trench raised in his article on this parable. Did this mean that she was actually ten times the sinner that Simon was, and that Simon could never love the Lord as much as this woman did because he was not as great a sinner as she was.

It is true that Simon was not guilty, as far as we know, of the same sins that this woman had committed, *but he was a sinner!* And he stood in need of salvation just as much as she did! What, then, must have been the Lord's purpose in speaking of one person's debt before God as compared with another person's debt. God is the creditor, and if you are in debt to Him, as we all are, it makes not difference how big the debt. A debt is a debt, and it has to be taken care of.

I believe that Archbishop Trench was right when he said that we have in this parable an illustration of our own awareness of our sins. The more we see that we are sinners, and that awareness usually increases throughout our lives, the more we will be amazed, as the hymn says, that Jesus could love us, sinners condemned and unclean. Isaiah had written long before this event what we find in Isa. 64:6, but Simon, if he knew the verse (and he probably did), had never applied it to himself. Listen to what the verse says:

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

You see, even our so called good works are unclean and filthy in God's sight for two reasons:

- 1) They assume that we can earn our own way to heaven.
- 2) They ignore the terrible nature of our sins before God.

Do you remember what the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy about himself and his own sin? And this was toward the close of his ministry when he was probably in his 60's. This is what he said:

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (1 Tim. 1:15).

This meant, among other things, that Paul was more amazed that the Lord would save him than he was that the Lord would save that sinful woman who came into Simon's house that day, with all of her sins, expressed her faith by showing her love, and went out forgiven and cleansed.

When Dr. Mitchell came to Portland back in 1931 he came to work with Dr. B. B. Sutcliffe who was then the pastor of the Calvary Presbyterian Church in downtown Portland. The church occupied what is now known as Portland's historic church, the church where unfortunately for a time a group of gays met, calling themselves a church. But Dr. Mitchell told me many times that when Dr. Sutcliffe was dying, he told Dr. Mitchell, "Jack, I have never seen myself to be as great a sinner as I do now." Dr. Sutcliffe would say that he was that "five hundred pence" debtor. You and I should be saying that about ourselves, too--not just in a self-humbling way because it is expected of us, but out of a deep sense of our own sinfulness coupled with our amazement that God would love and save us and forgive us all of our debt of sin. Is that the way we feel about ourselves? If not, we should.

Our passage closes with:

V. OUR LORD'S WORDS TO THE SINFUL WOMAN (Luke 7:48-50).

In verse 47 we see what the Lord said to Simon *about* the sinful woman; in verses 48 and 50 we see what He said *to* the sinful woman.

Do you know what it means that she was forgiven? It means that God had released her permanently from the debt she owed Him because of her sin. I think it was Spurgeon who used to say that the word *forgiven* is the sweetest word in the English language--or any other language for that matter--if it is God Who is doing the forgiving. It is His forgiveness that we need. But He does not forgive us just because He feels sorry for us. *He forgives us because Jesus Christ, Who was at dinner that day, came to suffer and die in your place and mine.* As we have been learning on Sunday mornings, it is "the blood of Jesus Christ" that "cleanseth us from all sin."

In verse 50 we see that the Lord made it clear to the sinful woman that she had been forgiven because of her faith, faith which God Himself gave

to her. She showed her faith by her love expressed in what she did to the Lord. Consequently she could “go in peace.”

Concl: Do you know what I believe we can say about this sinful woman.

I believe we can say that she was saved when she made her way into Simon’s house that day. She was already trusting the Lord, and although she was not invited to the sinner, she came because she was driven in her heart to show her love for the Lord Jesus Christ. What she needed was assurance, and the Lord gave her that before she went away.

What did Simon’s guests say to all of this? They said, “Who is this that forgiveth sins also?” Do you think any of them found the answer that day? And what about Simon? We’ll have to wait until we get to heaven before we can answer those questions, but it could very well be that Simon and some of his guests found the answer to their hearts’ needs on that day, not through what the sinful woman said, but what she did, and what the Lord Jesus said.

May the Lord help us to see that we are in this parable as the five hundred pence debtor, but that God sent His Son to pay a debt we could never pay so that we might be forgiven.

THE SOWER, THE SEED, AND THE SOIL

Luke 8:4-15

Intro: There never was a greater teacher than our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the Master Teacher, the One Whom all other teachers should learn from and follow. It would seem from the Gospel records that many were attracted to the Lord by the miracles which He performed. He made the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the diseased to be healed, and He raised the dead. But the Gospels show that people also came to hear the Lord as He taught. We should all remember what the officers of the Jews said to the chief priests and the Pharisees: "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). After the Lord had completed what we call, The Sermon on the Mount, we read this:

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes (Matt. 7:28-29).

Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, firmly believed that the Lord Jesus was "a teacher come from God" (John 3:2). Even today people who do not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, will without hesitation acclaim Him as one of the great teachers of all time. So our Lord's reputation as a teacher is firmly established.

We have been learning that one of the methods that He used was teaching by parables. The account before us is especially important because not only did the Lord speak by a parable, but He explained its meaning to His disciples. The story itself, which was taken from real life in those days, would serve to help the people remember what the Lord had to say. It was a simple way of expressing the most profound and important truths.

On this particular occasion we are told that "much people were gathered together," and the Lord began to speak to them "by a parable." The divisions are very clear:

- 1) The parable (Luke 8:4-8).
- 2) The Lord's answer to the disciples' question (Luke 8:9, 10).
- 3) The parable explained (Luke 8:11-15).

The parable would serve a twofold purpose:

- 1) It would cause the people who were present to search their own hearts for the meaning of the parable.
- 2) It would prove to be very helpful to the disciples in their future ministry.

Often in the ordinary circumstances of daily life, lessons are to be learned

that are very illustrative of the truth of God.

Let us think, then, first about:

I. THE PARABLE (Luke 8:4-8).

We need to remember that farming in those days was not the sophisticated business that it is today. The work of farming was very simple, and the farmers made use of all of the land that was available to them. Consequently, they would sow their seed everywhere, and hope for the greatest possible harvest.

The sower went out to sow his seed, and some fell by the wayside. This would have been a beaten path through the field. Before the seed could take root, the birds came and ate it.

Other seed fell upon a rock. This probably means a rock that was just under the soil. But there was not enough soil to support the seed. The seed began to grow immediately, but because there was not enough soil, nor enough moisture, it died.

A third part of the seeds fell among the thorns, and the thorns choked it out.

Finally, we read about the good seed in the good soil, and the harvest was plentiful--"an hundredfold."

The Lord concluded the parable by saying, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Everyone listens to a story as it is being told. Some few may be interested enough to wonder what the Lord meant by the story. Others, like the disciples, would want to know what it means. But it is the Lord who gives us ears to hear. A good example of this is Lydia in Philippi. This is what we are told about her in Acts 16:14:

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

We never know when this is going to happen, but people who read the Word, or who hear the Word preached, should be told to ask the Lord to open their hearts to the truth, and to ask Him to give them ears to hear. Many times, perhaps most of the time, the Lord does this without being asked. But it clearly shows that the results of teaching are in the hand of the Lord. How many times have we heard Isa. 55: 10, 11 since Trinity

Bible Church started:

10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

The Word of God is the most powerful instrument we have for reaching people with the Gospel, as Heb. 4:12 plainly declares. (Quote.)

But now let us consider:

II. THE LORD'S ANSWER TO THE DISCIPLES' QUESTION (Luke 8:9, 10).

The question the disciples asked had to do with the interpretation of the parable, but the Lord expanded His answer to include the purpose of parabolic teaching. It served a twofold purpose:

- 1) To reveal the truth of the Gospel.
- 2) To conceal the truth of the Gospel.

Note the words, "unto you it is given." Who would do the giving? Obviously the Lord would. Implied in this statement is the doctrine of election. This does not necessarily mean that the elect would understand the Gospel the first time they heard it, but eventually they would understand it.

To others, to whom it was not given, this would remain only an interesting story--perhaps for the training of farmers. This parable is included in Matthew and Mark, but Mark's account makes it clear that salvation is the issue in the sowing of the seed. We read this in Mark 4:10-12:

10 And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:

12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

So we need to understand that the results of the Gospel are in the hands of

the Lord, but also that there are reasons why, from a human standpoint, the preaching of the Gospel is not effective. This is a very important parable for all of us who are involved in serving the Lord.

But now let us look at the Lord's explanation.

III. THE PARABLE EXPLAINED (Luke 8:11-15).

First,

A. The seed (Luke 8:11).

It is "the Word of God." I have said many times, and I say it again, that no one is ever saved apart from the Word of God. God does not always use the same verse or verses with every person who is saved, but He always uses His Word. And the first lesson all of us have to learn if we intend to see the blessing of God upon our witness, is that we must give out the Word of God. The Apostle Peter understood this well when he said that we are "born again...by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23). The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16).

In our day we have those who are worldly wise, but who understand very little of the ways of the Lord, who tell us that we have to begin with something else. We have to attract people in other ways, and eventually get around to the Word. The Lord clearly indicated here that *we start with the Word!* This is all that we have to sow.

B. The four types of soil (Luke 8:12-15).

1. The wayside soil (v. 12).

There are many obstacles that stand in the way of the ministry of the Word, but one of the greatest is the work of Satan, called here, "the Devil." He does not want to see anyone saved, and, if it possible, as it is with hardened hearts, even though the Word has touched the hearts of people, he will take it away. And he often uses well-meaning people to accomplish his purpose--perhaps with careless conversation after the Gospel has been preached. Or by a person's previous attitude toward the Gospel and salvation.

2. The rocky ground (v. 13).

Notice the response here; it is joyful. It looks as though the person has been saved. It is received with joy, and the person even believes the Gospel. But it has not actually taken root, and when temptation comes, what faith there was is gone. It actually was not saving faith even though this is the kind of a person that people would say was saved.

3. The thorny ground (v. 14).

Some people are made to think seriously about the Gospel, but it is because of cares that they have. At the same time money is important to them, and the pleasures of this life. And all of these tend to choke out the Word of God because the Word is not given the primary place.

4. The good ground (v. 15).

Notice that here the Lord described the heart as being “honest” and “good.” And here, too, we see the evidence of the work of the Spirit. Vine says that the first word has to do with a person’s attitude toward God; the second, with his attitude toward men. They speak of absolute sincerity. But the key word here is “keep”-- “and keep it.” This means that such a person *holds it and keeps it*. And as time goes on there is fruit that gives evidence of genuine salvation. The word “keep” is a word which speaks of *perseverance, the perseverance of the saints*.

Concl: Now what does this all mean?

It means that the disciples needed to be busy in preaching the Gospel.

It meant that they were to expect that there would be obstacles standing in the way--from the Devil, from a person’s own heart.

And it also meant that no one can tell immediately if a person has been genuinely saved. Only time will reveal that as the one who has professed faith in Christ continues to go on with the Lord and shows the fruit of a life which has really been changed by the power of the Gospel. How wonderful it would be if in this day in which we live more of the Lord’s people would act upon these important truths which the Lord introduced to His disciples by means of this parable. It applies just as much to the work of the Lord today as it did then.

A SHINING LIGHT

Luke 8:16-18

Intro: We live in a world that is characterized by spiritual darkness.

This means that we live in a world that is ignorant of spiritual truth. More than that we live in a world where its people are spiritually blind. This means that they are incapable of “seeing,” or understanding, the truth of the Word of God. And we can take it one step beyond that: the people of the world *hate* the truth of God’s Word. Let me give you some Scriptures to back up what I have been saying.

Think of our Lord’s words in John 3:19, 20:

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

When people are confronted with the Scriptures, they will prefer the darkness to the light, i.e., the light of the Gospel.

In 1 John 2:11 we are told this:

But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Paul, in 2 Cor. 4:3, 4, had this to say:

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

So people in the world are in darkness, are naturally blinded to the truth, and Satanically blinded to the truth, and they hate the truth.

When Lucille and I came with our family to Portland in 1951, we came because I had been asked to teach at the Multnomah School of the Bible. I had the privilege of teaching for one year on the original campus which was down where the Lloyd Center is now. But during my first year of teaching, the leaders of the school were informed that the Oregon State School for the blind was for sale. As many of us went to see the buildings, we discovered a very interesting thing: there were no wall sockets in the rooms where the students stayed. There was a single light hanging

from the center of the room, but the students did not need those lights, nor did they need lamps on their desks because they were blind. So one of the first things that had to be done was to put wall sockets in every room where our students would be living. People who can see need light, and they need plenty of it.

Into this world Jesus Christ came as “the light of the world” (John 8:12). In His Sermon on the Mount He, speaking to His disciples, said to them, “Ye are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14a). The Apostle Paul was indicating the same when he wrote in Eph. 5:8,

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

Notice that he did not say simply that we were *in darkness*, but that we were the personification of darkness: Ye were once darkness itself.

Now can you think of a more hopeless condition than to get people to see the light who are blind and in total darkness. That is the situation which we face when it comes to preaching the Gospel.

Let me illustrate it this way. Suppose the power were to go off here in the greater Portland area on a dark night when an overcast completely hid the light of the moon and the stars. It would be darkness like that in Egypt which the Scriptures say could be felt! What if you and I decided to take one candle up on Rocky Butte to try to light up the area. You would say that would be ridiculous--and you would be right. But what if every person in this whole area were stricken with blindness, and we tried to do the same thing. You would rightly say that would be more ridiculous than ever. Even if we were to have a large generator and turn on blazing lights, blind people could not see.

This, however, is a picture of the situation that we face in the preaching of the Gospel. Sometimes we feel that the spiritual light in all of this world is like the light of a single candle. We are sent to proclaim the light of the Gospel to blind people who are in darkness and who are not the least bit interested in what we have to say. In fact, they have a natural hatred for the Gospel.

The difference is that we live in a world where people can understand many things, and are continually looking for more information. But they have no idea that the knowledge of God exists, and that it is in a book, knowledge that could change them and the lives they live. And when you try to tell them, they aren't interested, and might even be a little belligerent toward you if you tried to tell them. And so many Christians

never say anything about the Gospel or salvation. They don't want to lose friends, and they don't want to face trouble.

The parable that we are considering in this service follows immediately upon the parable that we had last Sunday night. The Lord Jesus was giving them light. In a sense, He was handing them a lighted candle. What were they to do with it? Let me read the parable to you. Please follow me as I read Luke 8:16-18. (Read.)

All through the OT God was giving light as He revealed Himself to His people, and as certain ones were chosen by God to give a written record of the Word of God. The Psalmist was led to write in Psa. 119:130, "The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple." The Lord Jesus added to that light by all of the teaching that He did. The parable of the sower was light.

I. THE PARABLE (Luke 9:16).

In Bible times, the times when the Lord Jesus lived, you could not go to the wall and flip a switch in order to have light in a room. You would either light a candle, or put oil in a lamp. But when you had done that, where would you put it? Would you cover it with some kind of a vessel? Would you put it under the bed? No, you would put it on a candle holder or a lampstand so it could give light to all who were in the room, as well as to any who would come into the room.

In giving this parable our Lord was indicating that light was given to be seen. Light is given to dispel the darkness.

Paul used several figures of speech writing to the Ephesians to show the work of God in giving us light. Listen to what he wrote in Eph. 5:14:

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise
from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

People without Christ are spiritually asleep, and need to be awakened. They are spiritually dead, and need to be raised to life--eternal life. And they are in the dark, and so they need to look to Christ for the light. So we set the light of the Word on the table, so to speak, and trust the Lord to enable them to "see" what the truth is.

But let us go on to verse 17 in our text (Luke 8). Here we have:

II. THE REVELATION OF THE TRUTH (Luke 8:17).

We speak of the Bible as a revelation? Do you know what we mean by that? We mean that the truth of God had to be revealed, brought down to man by God, because there was no other way that we could ever know the truth of God. Man has made some marvelous discoveries as a result of his investigations since the beginning of time, but there is a whole area of truth, the most important of all, that can never be discovered by man. It has to be brought down. It had to be revealed by God. For example, we would never have known the order of creation if God had not revealed it to Moses. The world was created long before Moses lived. He wasn't there. Adam was created on the sixth day of creation, so he was not present to observe the order of creation. How do we know it? God revealed it. How do we know what sin is? God has revealed it. How do we know that we need salvation? God has revealed it. All through OT times and into NT times God was revealing the truth, giving us an accurate account of history, and predicting things that were to come. The Bible could never have been written by men "on their own." The Holy Spirit moved upon them to write so that the book we call the Bible is *the word of God*.

Now here in verse 17 the Lord was saying that God is not going to hold back anything, He is not going to hide anything, that He does not intend to manifest or make known. Peter said later that while the Bible does not tell us everything that we will know some day, it does contain everything that pertains to life and godliness. It tells us everything that we need to know in order to be saved, and everything we need to know to be able to live lives of godliness. It is all between the cover of our Bibles. The light was given in a small way at first, the light grew brighter all along, and when Christ came, the light that God intended to give us was complete. But it is so marvelous that you and I will never be able to know it all regardless of how long we may live. The important thing is that this light be kept shining. That is where we come in.

Verse 18 brings to us:

III. THE EXHORTATION (Luke 8:18).

"Take heed therefore **how** ye hear." In Mark's account of this same parable, he recorded that the Lord said, "Take heed **what** ye hear." I am sure that the Lord made both statements. We need to make sure that **what** we are hearing is the Word of God, and not the words of some man. But we also need to take heed **how** we hear. And since we are in Luke's Gospel tonight, let's think about **how** we should hear.

The Lord had just finished giving them the parable of the sower, or the parable of the soils as it is sometimes called. The Lord wanted them to consider **how** they had heard that. Did they really get the message? Would it help them in their ministry? It is very important that we get the true meaning of Scripture, not just in this parable, but in all of the Word of God. **How** should we hear? What suggestions can be made which will be of help to each other? It is important that we hear correctly not only so we can pass on the truth to others, but the Lord indicated here that **how we hear** will determine whether we get more, or whether we will lose what we thought we had.

Hearing applies not only to what you are doing tonight, but it applies to what you read when you read the Bible for yourself, or with your family, or at any other time. And it applies to those times when you read what someone else has written about the Bible. That is just like listening to a sermon.

Bishop Ryle gave three answers to this question, **How should we hear?** I am going to give you his answers, and then I want to add one suggestion which Alexander Maclaren gave to his people. With Bishop Ryle's answers I am going to rearrange the order, but these suggestions are his-- and I completely concur.

First, we need to hear, "remembering constantly that the Bible is the book of God." It is not a work of men, but a book written by men under the direction of the Holy Spirit. This sets it apart from every other book that has ever been written. Beware of anyone who tries to pass any other book along to you as being equal with the Bible.

Second, we need to hear "with faith." Don't ever question anything that you find in your Bibles. To do so is to question God, and who are we to reply against God. The Bible is the one book you can read with absolute confidence that you are reading the truth.

Third, Bishop Ryle said that we need to hear "with prayer." I like to see a pastor sit down to pray before he goes into the pulpit. We need to pray that the Lord will guide us in what we say, and that we will not say anything that is in conflict with the Word of God. But it is also wonderful to see people come into church, see them sit down and pray that the Lord will give them ears to hear and hearts to understand what they are about to hear from the Word of God.

To this Charles Simeon added a point with which I know that Bishop

Ryle would agree. Charles Simeon said that we need to hear with humble dependence upon the Holy Spirit. This is why we pray. Pray beforehand that the Spirit of God will teach the preacher in his preparation, and then pray that the same Spirit of God will teach you through the one speaking as he opens the truth of the Word of God.

Concl: But led me add this in conclusion: There are comparatively so few today who are carrying A SHINING LIGHT. So it is extremely important that our lights be shining. This means that we need to talk to people about the Word, and to make sure that there is nothing in our lives that would detract in any way from the light of the Word of God. Don't hide it some place. Don't put it under anything. The Word is light and it is through the proclamation of the Word that the Lord gives sight to blinded sinners, He dispels the darkness and ignorance that has led people astray, and He causes people to love that which previously they hated so that they can be brought to say with the Psalmist,

O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day
(Psa.119:97).

May God enable each one of us to have a growing love for all that God loves, and a growing hatred for all that God hates.