

“The Secrets of the Kingdom of God”: the Parables of Jesus in Luke
Luke 8:4–15: The Parable of the Sower

Introduction: What Are Parables, and Why Did Jesus Use Them?

“A parable is an expanded analogy used to convince and persuade.” (Klyne Snodgrass)

Two reasons why Jesus used parables:

1. Reveal
2. Conceal

Lesson #1: Threats: There Are Real Threats to Believing the Gospel

“In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:4)

“This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.” (Mark 9:29)

“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” (Matthew 6:24)

Lesson #2: Perseverance: The Test of True Faith Isn't Whether or Not Someone Initially Responds to the Gospel with Excitement; It's Whether or Not They Hold to the Gospel Over Time

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.” (1 John 2:19)

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Timothy 4:7)

Lesson #3: Fruit: Christians Bear Fruit

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:12–13)

Notes

Discuss

- What can you learn from the two purposes of the parables (revealing and concealing)?
- What are some specific examples (from your life or the lives of others) of how demonic forces, testing and trials, and the anxieties, riches, and pleasures of life can interfere with believing the word of God?
- What is the yield/fruit that followers of Jesus who truly believe the gospel should be expected to produce?
- How can Christians put effort into responding to the word of God rightly while still relying on the power of God to do it?

Read

Isaiah 6:1–13; John 15:1–17

Pray

- That the Holy Spirit will reveal the secrets of the kingdom of heaven to you through the parables of Jesus.
- That God will empower you to resist threats to believing the gospel, persevere in faith, and bear fruit.
- That God would use you to spread the gospel to those who have not heard it.