

Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

The Parable of the Sower

¹ Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. ^{2a} He taught them many things by parables,

Q1. In the last chapter, we discussed “parables”. What is a parable?

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Q2. Why did Jesus speak in parables? Why didn’t he just speak plainly?

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^{2b} and in his teaching said: ³ "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed.

Q3. Who is the “farmer”?

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Q4. What is the “seed”?

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⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

Q5. What are the characteristics of a “path”?

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Q6. What might “birds” represent?

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⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.

⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

Q7. From this passage, what are the characteristics of “rocky places”? What is the condition of the “soil”?

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Continued

⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain.

Q8. What might “thorns” represent?

Q9. What are the characteristics of the soil?

Q10. Is it important that a “plant” bears “grain”?

⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times."

Q11. How would you describe “good soil”?

⁹ Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Q12. What did Jesus mean by this warning?

Continued

Day 2

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Jesus explains the Parable of the Sower

¹⁰ When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. ^{11a} He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you.

Q13. What did Jesus mean by the "secret of the Kingdom of God"?

^{11b} But to those on the outside everything is said in parables ¹² so that, " 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!' "

Isaiah 6:9-10 [The Lord to the prophet Isaiah] He said, "Go and tell this people: " 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' ¹⁰ Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

Q14. How would you answer an unbeliever, who asked "Why did Jesus speak in parables?"

Q15. If you and I lived in the time of Jesus' ministry and we not a part of Jesus' inner circle of disciples, did we have a prayer of understanding Jesus' teachings?

Q16. If I were Jesus, wouldn't I want people to turn to me and repent, so that I could forgive them?

¹³ Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?"

Q17. To whom was Jesus speaking?

Q18. Does He sound frustrated?

Continued

Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

¹⁴ The farmer sows the word.

Q19. What does the "word" represent?

Q20. Who is the "farmer"? (Is your answer the same as the one you gave for question 3?)

¹⁵ Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

Q21. Who is the "bird" (in verse 4)?

¹⁶ Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

Q22. How does a person develop "root"?

Q23. Why would "trouble or persecution" come upon a person "because of the word"?

Q24. Why would a person then "quickly fall away"?

¹⁸ Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹ but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Q25. How can the "word" be made "unfruitful"?

Continued

²⁰ Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop -- thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

Q26. What does Jesus mean by "seed sown on good soil"?

Q27. How can there be such a deviation in plant production, so that different plants can produce 30, 60, or 100 times? Is that what Jesus meant?

Q28. What kind of "soil" are you?

Q29. How can you become more fertile "soil"?

Day 4

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A Lamp on a Stand

²¹ He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand?"

Q30. A lamp gives light. Is there significance to our Lord's reference to light?

John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 1:4-9 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. ⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John [the Baptist]. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

Continued

²² For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.

Q31. What is Jesus referencing? What is hidden? What is concealed?

Q32. If we want something hidden, we certainly do not want it “out in the open”, do we?

²³ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

Q33. What does Jesus mean? Hear what?

²⁴ "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you -- and even more.

Q34. Okay. We have considered carefully what we have heard (read). What does “With the measure you use” mean?

Q35. What “will be measured to you” mean?

²⁵ Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."

Q36. What does “more” represent?

Q37. If someone doesn't have something (or very little), something will be taken from them. What will be taken from them?

Q38. How does a person attain “more”?

Continued

Day 5

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The Parable of the Growing Seed

²⁶ He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground.

Q39. From a previous session we talked about another one of Jesus' parables. To what does "seed" refer?

²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain -- first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

Q40. What does "soil" represent?

Q41. What does "grain" represent?

Q42. In this parable, what does "harvest" represent? Is this a good thing?

Q43. Can we participate in a "harvest"?

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³⁰ Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it?"

Q44. What is the subject of Jesus' teaching?

Continued

³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. ³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade."

Q45. These parables seem to all talk about "seed". When God has thoughts repeated in the Bible, we are to see the emphasis. Is "seed" important? Why?

Q46. In a past parable, "birds" that swooped down and ate the "seed" represented evil. Are the "birds of the air" from this parable evil?

Q47. Why might Jesus have used a parable about a "mustard seed"?

³³ With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. ³⁴ He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

 NOTE: From these verses, it can be assumed that much of Jesus' teachings were not recorded. How awesome it would have been to listen to Jesus' teachings... to sit at His feet and hear Him teach!

Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

Jesus Calms the Storm

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

Q48. Was Jesus tired?

Q49. What was the vocation (occupation) of four of the disciples (i.e., Simon Peter and Andrew his brother; James and John, the sons of Zebedee)?

Continued

Q50. Do you think the disciples were frightened? Is this reasonable considering the vocation of the four?

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

Q51. How would you have reacted to this miracle?

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

Q52. Jesus asked, "Do you still have no faith?" In whom should the disciples have "faith"?

Q53. Is this a promise we can use in our world, today? Could our troubles be similar to a "furious squall"?

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Q54. Who is this Jesus?

Q55. Is Jesus someone we can call upon in our times of trouble?

Q56. Can we trust this person?

Q57. If we do not seem to get an answer to our beseeching request, does that prove that Jesus does not care about us?

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