

The Impact of God's Word

Intro:

1. The affect the word of God has on a person's life depends upon the condition of their heart!
2. When you witness to someone & they don't respond, does that mean you are a failure?
3. This passage explains why the same word of God has different affects on different people.

Luke 8:4-8, 11-15

4. ILL: The Explanation of the Field.

I. v5 & 12 - The Hard Heart

A. v5 - The condition of the ground.

1. What was the condition? The path between the fields was made hard by people continually walking on it. ILL: Grass in front of the Field House.
2. How did that affect the seed? As the farmer sowed the seed, some fell on the path remaining on top of the ground.
3. The birds would come & eat the seed. ILL: Dad trying to seed our lawn in Reseda.

B. v12 - The condition of your heart.

1. Do you hear the word of God with a closed mind or an indifferent attitude?
2. Are you too proud to be taught something new?
3. Are you so loyal to what you were taught in the past that you automatically reject any information that might be different?
 - a. After all, what would your old teacher say?
 - b. Would you still be accepted by your friends or relatives who believe the old way? This is the reason some scientists can't tolerate the idea of Creation!
 - c. Would you rather reject what would require you to change your life than to give up what you're used to?
 - d. Why do you suppose Nicodemus came to Jesus at night?

II. v6 & 13 - The Shallow Heart

A. v6 - The condition of the ground.

1. What was the condition? In Palestine there is hard Limestone rock just a few inches beneath good dirt.
2. The seed penetrates easily & germinates fast because the ground is warmed by the sun.
3. How did that affect the seed? When the seeds try to find moisture they can't penetrate the rock - so the plant becomes scorched & dies.

B. v13 - The condition of your heart.

1. Are you quick to accept new ideas, but don't think things out first?
2. Do you quickly accept every new idea that comes along but then quickly drop it for something else?
 - a. ILL: Pliable in Pilgrim's Progress.
 - b. ILL: Interviews with Conscientious Objectors.
3. Sometimes people get an emotional high when they are baptized but when feelings calm down they get discouraged with their faith. ILL: Ministry in Long Beach.

III. v7 & 14 - The World Oriented Heart

A. v7 - The condition of the ground.

1. What was the condition? Tilled ground along the edge of the field, next to the rock wall, looks deceptive because the seed falls next to churned up grass, weeds & old roots.
2. How did that affect the seed? Old weeds germinate faster than the good seed & choke out much of it in the process.

B. v14 - The condition of your heart.

1. Do you allow some of the world's interests to crowd out the word of God in your heart?
 - a. **Life's worries** (μέριμνα) = care, anxiety. But the Lord told you not to be anxious about food (ILL: Birds) or clothing (ILL: Lilies) - **Matt 6:26-30**.
 - b. **Riches** (πλοῦτος) = wealth, the focus of life is geared to obtaining money.
 - c. **Pleasures** (ἡδονή) = lust, sensual ideas, trying to get as much pleasure out of life as possible.
ILL: Annie Denver: "John lived his life to the fullest".
2. These interests do not have to be bad ones - just be of more priority than the Lord is to you!
 - a. ILL: Mary & Martha (Lk 10:38-42).
 - b. If you're too busy with good things to pray & study your Bible - your too busy!
 - c. Too many good & worthwhile things can crowd out the best & most worthwhile!

IV. v8 & 15 - The Receptive Heart

A. v8 - The condition of the ground.

1. What was the condition? The good ground was deep, clean & fertile.
2. How did that affect the seed? The seed that grew there multiplied a hundred times!

B. v15 - The condition of your heart.

1. Do you listen with an open mind & a willing heart?
2. Are you willing to learn or do you already know it all?
3. Are you prepared to hear?
 - a. Studying your Bible throughout the week prepares you to receive what you get on Sundays more.
 - b. Are you ever too tired, too busy or too proud to really hear?
4. Do you understand & put into action what you hear? **Jam 2:14-17 - What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**

C. You have no idea how much good your witness can be!

1. Obviously most of the good seed fell into the fertile ground prepared for it or the farmer wouldn't have bothered to do it.
2. So - tell the good news anyhow, even if many people don't respond.
 - a. Some will.
 - b. All will be affected somehow by your prayer saturated witness. **Is 55:10-11 - As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.**