

Parable Of The Sower, The Seed

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

[0 : 00] The same way the seed of the Word of God and the faith of man come together and life begins. And that's the whole principle of life on which the kingdom of God is established and on which the church of Christ is built.

It's built on that interaction. If that doesn't happen, then the whole thing is just plastic. It doesn't mean anything.

So that's what Christ says, that the seed is the Word of God. And then he goes ahead and tells you what happens. And he gives you the four illustrations.

And he says that some seed fell by the wayside and the ground was so hard that people came and tramped on it. And then the birds came and picked it away. Now, the importance of, you know, there's a lovely picture of the church in the New Testament when it says that it's like a grain of mustard seed which grows and becomes one of the greatest of the trees.

And then the birds come and nest in its branches. And that is a picture of how the church works.

That it becomes a great big tree and the birds come and nest in its branches.

[1 : 18] Now, the birds aren't part of the tree. They're not the fruit of the tree. They just take advantage of the tree. And, of course, that's what happens in a parish like St. John's.

You get a tree growing there and there's all sorts of birds come and land in the branches. It's dirty birds. And to sort of foul up the place.

Well, that's a... No, no. I'm not responsible for that because you... I didn't think of that.

Anyway, that's what happens, you know. And they don't do much for the life of the tree, I contend.

But... So that here again, the birds represent evil as coming and snatching away the seed.

And in the Greek, it talks about diabolos is the one that does it. And in the three parables in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the same parables, in one he's called Satan, in one he's called diabolos, and in the other he's called the adversary.

[2 : 23] So that it's this evil which is wanting to snatch away what God is wanting to do. What God wants to put in, the devil wants to snatch away.

And all that means is that at that point, that's the critical point. Where the seed comes in, Satan is smart enough to know that the thing you've got to do is get that out of there as quickly as possible so that it doesn't get established, it doesn't find root.

It has to be taken away. And the consequences of it are very significant because you'll find that the reason he takes it away is because they may believe and be saved.

Now I know a whole lot of people that don't want to be saved. And that is, if you went up and asked them, are you saved? They would resent the question, and probably quite rightly.

And there's a very old story about it, about an Anglican bishop who was confronted by a Salvation Army lady lastly on a train in England. And she came up to him and said to him, are you saved?

[3 : 39] He took his Greek nest in the Testament out and he said, do you mean have I been saved, am I being saved, or am I going to be saved? And that's generally the way Anglicans avoid the question.

They start a discussion, you know. Well, the big difficulty with the word is, I think, that it's in the passive tense.

It's something that happens to you. It's not something you do. And that really is one of the real problems of religion. If God asks you to do something, you would do it.

But if God asks you to allow something to be done to you, who needs it? And that's really pretty fundamental, because this is the activity of God doing something to us.

You are being saved. Now, if you look in the New Testament, it has all sorts of lovely meanings, apart from the connotations that we usually have with it, and that is that you were drunk and in the

ditch on a Saturday night.

[4 : 49] You had beaten your wife, kicked out your kids, lost your job, and there you were in defiance, and somebody came along from the rescue mission and picked you up and got you saved.

There's another old, old story, isn't it? About the Salvation Army. Yes, what is it? Well, it's about an Anglican who gets drunk and then gets in trouble, and moral failure and all the rest compounds, and then the Salvation Army comes and picks him up and establishes him again, and then the Presbyterian Church comes and teaches him theology, and then the Anglican Church comes and introduces him to society.

And then the Salvation Army comes and the process starts all over. Well, it's that, the difficulty is that that's the kind of connotation we have with the word.

But if you were to look in the hymn book, you'd find that salvation is in fact that awareness which takes over people's consciousness of an activity of God that brings joy into their hearts and allows them to give full expression to that joy in worship because they have seen the process or the activity of God saving or bringing salvation.

And it's the joy of the prodigal son who was lost coming home. It's the joy which comes from the person who was sick being made well again.

[6 : 51] It's the joy of someone who having, in a sense, lost what it means to be a human being being restored to what it means to being a human being to become human again in the fullest sense of the word.

But the difficulty is that it's God's action and God achieves this action in this very simple way by his word.

That's what it says here and that's why it's important for the devil to snatch the seed away.

Otherwise, the word has its impact and the person is going to be changed by it.

That's what's going to happen. It is going to affect the whole of your life unless you get rid of it, unless Satan gets rid of it. And so, the hard ground is that kind of ground.

And the issue at stake is whether God is allowed to do in your life what he wants to do and to say to you and to do for you what it is his purpose to do.

[8 : 07] Being saved is not as strange a word as you may think because it's the same word which we use when we say when we talk about a salutation.

And what it means really to go up to somebody and say are you saved is to go up and say to them how are you?

What is the condition of your health? And it's as simple as that kind of daily greeting that we have to one another.

How did you sleep? How are things at your house? Is salvation come to your house? Is there health and wholeness and restoration and renewal taking place?

That's all it means. But again, it's not taking place because of what you're doing. It's taking place because God is at work through his word in your life achieving what it is he wants to achieve.

[9 : 09] So it becomes important that Satan snatches the word out. Well then, the second one is falling among rocks and the difficulty here is that you come to times of temptation where there are doubts and arguments and seductions and moral failures and the seed which responded very well in the beginning and grew quickly suddenly fades, droops, and dies.

And it doesn't come doesn't produce anything. And of course, lots of people have had that kind of religious experience. immediate, quick response but no sustaining or persevering power whatever. In fact, if you wanted to what you could say about life is that most of us go through these four stages. One stage where we're too hard and sophisticated to even allow it to find entrance into our life.

Another stage where because of a particular tension in our life we may have admitted it for a short while but soon everything balanced out again and it was forgotten.

And then the third stage when you really sort of wanted to do it but there were so many other things in your life that nothing ever came of it. And then the fourth stage where you come to the point where your heart has been broken enough that the seed can get in and grow and bring forth fruit.

[10 : 41] and many of us go through that and part of the ministry that we have to one another in a congregation like this is to deal with one another.

To deal with the people on whom who are so hard that the seed can't break in or to deal with the people who've made a fast response but it hasn't kept going or to deal with the people in whom undoubtedly the word of God is established but nothing ever comes of it in terms of their life because they're too busy with other things.

And to be with people to the point where receiving the word things can the purposes of God can begin to work out.

So I want to just sort of commend that to you as one way of looking at this parable. Well that's what the rock does and it's the time of temptation that falls away when you come up against these devils. And then the third is the weeds which Luke describes as the cares and riches of this world the pleasures of life. And the interesting thing about this is that it doesn't say that anything dies it just says that nothing comes to maturity.

[12 : 02] That it's a there's a process going on but it's like an apple farmer who goes out in October and finds his orchard full of hard sour green little apples.

And there's nothing that's full and red and the product of the process. Because there were too many other things taking away the life of the seed and living off the life so that nothing was brought to fruition.

It just never came through. And of course I suppose for our parish that that's one of the most telling parallels isn't it? The most telling dimensions of this parable because of the problem that religion is a good thing but too much of it's dangerous and I agree with you.

I mean I but the fact is that it's nothing at all if it doesn't produce if it doesn't produce a harvest if there isn't something at the end which makes the whole process meaningful and in this case that's the problem it's that there is nothing comes to maturity and it's a sad thing that when you come to the point where you measure your days and they're almost done and nothing has been brought to maturity then you recognize the problem of why Christ goes on and says the word in an honest and good heart and it talks about good soil and a good heart and it's the same word and that with patience it brings forth fruit one hundredfold the other gospels say thirty fifty sixty and a hundred but Luke says a hundred period he's going for the top well that's that's really what I think is is what is the process that we see going on around us and it's this that Christ describes as the mystery of the kingdom these are the secrets of the kingdom and if you want to understand how the kingdom is developing then this parable is to give you glasses with which to see it to see what's happening in our parish to see what's happening in our lives

I thought of other ways of looking at this parable I thought supposing we as a congregation regarded ourselves as soil and God sent somebody to us as a newcomer to the parish what would happen to him there would he find the parish was so hard and impenetrable that he couldn't get into it would he find the parish was so enthusiastic and emotional that it had no staying power would he find the parish so concerned with busynesses of one kind and another that there wasn't the opportunity for spiritual growth and maturity or would he find the parish a place where he would grow and really find all that there was of him to find in Christ and I think that's the responsibility that we have to one another that that's the kind of parish we want to be so that it can be looked at the stages in our own spiritual growth it can be looked at the nature of our parish as a community receiving the seed of the word of God and the word of God may come to us through preaching it may come to us through companionship it may come to us in terms of a person or a stranger in our midst the word of

[15 : 37] God may come to us in many different ways and what happens to it when it comes is it not break in does it respond quickly I mean by the end of the first month they really feel that they belong by the end of the first year they're not sure if they belong by the end of the second year they move to another parish I mean that happens too much well or do they find that the parish is so busy with other things that there isn't time for spiritual growth and maturity or is this a place where a person can come to all the fullness of what God wants of us in Christ well those are the kind of pictures that are put in front of us and that's the kingdom that God is establishing and that's the process the very simple process by which he does it which we have to work with now you're to get a cup of coffee and we'll come back and if you have any questions you can either write them down or ask them to me ask them of me in the next session and we're not going to have very much time for it but do that anyway and get your coffee and come back and then we'll have you again to the talk on that about his son he securely he stands forever hallelujah let's all try together my heart

Our souls the weakest, our bonds the greatest, who trust He surely hath built security, He stands forever, hallelujah.

Our hearts are piling to see Thy shining, dying or living, to Thee our cleaving, not can us ever, hallelujah.

I think that just we have time to do the first verse, that one verse, one more time. If we just sing the first verse again, we know the words a bit now, and it'll be a bit more familiar. So let's just do this song once more through it. It's full of the joy and the happiness that we find in Christ.

The words, as well as the melody, really try to spell that out. So let's just do it one more time. In Thee is gladness, and in all sadness, Jesus, Son, I know my heart.

[18 : 44] By Thee are given the gifts of heaven, Thou the true Redeemer are. Our souls the weakest, our bonds the greatest, who trust He surely hath built securely, He stands forever, hallelujah.

Our hearts are pining to see Thy shining, dying or living, to Thee our cleaving, not can us ever, hallelujah.

Great, thanks a lot. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[20 : 43] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[23 : 15] Thank you. Where's Matthew Allen? From a whole bunch of PewDiePie. Thank you.

Thank you. This is to Will. This is to Will. And this is to Matthew.

Matthew 8. Thank you. Another one. Another one.

And Dave Gibson. There he is. Oh, I think he's got one. And to Clint. And to Clint.

Pat. Pat. Pat Patterson. He's up there. Pat. Pat. Pat.

[24 : 20] Pat Patterson. He's up there. Uh-oh. This is in another language. It says from Rosie. I'll get a little bit.

I'll get a little bit. I'll get a little bit. You better take another song. I'll get a little bit. I'll get a little bit. I'll get a little bit. I'll get a little bit. I'll get a little bit. I'll get a little bit.

I'll get a little bit. Okay. We're going to do our next song. Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Sorry. I don't have the words for that. But I don't think I need it. I think everybody knows that. Seek ye first the kingdom of God.

And his righteousness. And all these things. I'll give it unto you. Allelu. Alleluia. And after we've sung the verse. We start with the four times the hallelujah. No, starting at five.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Okay. Let's just do the verse and the alleluia. Open to it in D. Alleluia.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

[25 : 15] Seek ye first the kingdom of God. And his righteousness. And his righteousness. And his righteousness shall be added unto you.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Alleluia. Okay, so why but divide up in two groups.

and then when we've done it through once we'll switch around. Okay? Maybe we can have time to be able to read that. Okay? We'll start off with Seek ye first, and you people come right in with the Alla Nui at the same time, okay?

[26 : 16] Okay? Yeah. And. Seek ye first, that our kingdom of God, our kingdom of God, our kingdom of God, our holy strength shall be ever come to you.

Hallelujah! Now switch around. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Great. Now, a couple more quickies there.

Deidre, nothing beats you. I think we should do yet. We didn't sing the grace this morning, but I don't think that this can need only to be sung at mealtime.

I think that we can be really thankful for the times that we've had together up until now and especially yesterday was a great day and ended off really marvelously with that film.

[27 : 24] I think we can sing the thankful part of that song together now. Do we all remember how the words go? And the music? Oh, give thy son. Oh, Lord, for he is so gracious. Lord is well and mercy.

Oh, give thy son. Oh, give thy son. Oh, for he is so gracious. Oh, for he is so gracious. Oh, for he is so gracious. For his worth of mercy endureth forever. For his steadfast mercy endureth forever. Okay, let's sing it through once and we'll just divide it through one, two, three, four. Add it. Oh, with thanks unto the Lord.

For he is so gracious. From his steadfast mercy endureth forever. For his steadfast mercy endureth forever. Okay, let's sing it through once and we'll just divide it through one, two, three, four.

Add it. thanks unto the Lord, for he is so gracious, from his steadfast mercy endures forever.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is so gracious, from his steadfast mercy endures forever.

[28 : 38] O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is so gracious, from his steadfast mercy endures forever.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is so gracious, from his steadfast mercy endures forever.

John Cartwright, where are you? O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is so gracious, from his steadfast mercy endures forever. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is so gracious, from his steadfast mercy endures forever.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is so gracious, from his steadfast mercy endures forever. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is so gracious, from his steadfast mercy endures forever.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is so gracious, from his steadfast mercy endures forever. They shall come back to their land.

[30 : 09] Oh, hallelujah, oh, hallelujah, hallelujah, praise the Lord. Oh, hallelujah, oh, hallelujah, hallelujah, praise the Lord.