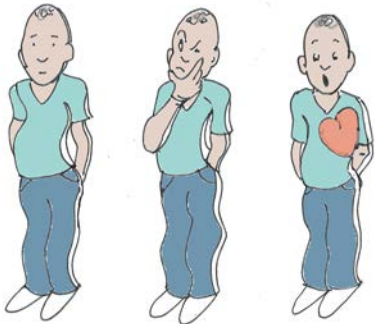


The power of words

- Sometimes words seem very powerful. Examples?
- Sometimes words seem rather powerless. Examples?
- What is the difference?
- What about God's Word?
 - "Hearing God's speak each morning..."
- We pray for His Word to be powerful in our hearts and in our church today

1



When Good Seed meets Good Soil

Luke 8:1-15



bib.ly/Luke8.NIV
tiny.cc/cmchandouts

2

Encounters with Jesus in Luke 7

- Centurion's faith: "I have not found such great faith even in Israel."
—His servant was healed **POWERFUL!**
- Crowd when Jesus raised the widow's only son:
—"A great prophet has appeared among us." **NOT CLEAR...**
- John the Baptist's struggling question: "Are you the one?" **NOT TOLD...**
—Jesus: "Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."
- Pharisees and experts of God's law **NO EFFECT...**
—rejected God's purpose for themselves
- Sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet: **POWERFUL!**
—"Your faith has saved you; go in peace."
- Simon who watched this woman's transformation:
—he loved Jesus little **NO EFFECT...**

3

Encounters with Jesus in Luke 7

- Centurion's faith: "I have not found such great faith even in Israel."
—His servant was healed **POWERFUL!**
- **WHY WAS JESUS' WORD SOMETIMES SO POWERFUL,
AND SOMETIMES IT SEEMED TO HAVE NO EFFECT?**
- Sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet: **POWERFUL!**
—"Your faith has saved you; go in peace."
- Simon who watched this woman's transformation:
—he loved Jesus little **NO EFFECT...**

4

Luke 8:1-3

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

Twelve = the Apostles whom Jesus appointed

5

Luke 8:4-8

While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown."

When he said this, he called out,
 "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

yielded a crop = produced fruit

6

Luke 8:9-10

His disciples asked him what this parable meant.

He said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that,

‘though seeing, they may not see;
though hearing, they may not understand.’

parable = an ordinary event with a deeper meaning

7

Luke 8:11-15

“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

8

Luke 8:1-3

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

Twelve = the Apostles whom Jesus appointed

9

*Luke 8:1-15***1-3: The Twelve (men) and many women are with Jesus**

- In that day:
 - Not unusual for women to have control of money and to give it to a teacher
 - What was radical (even scandalous): for women to be among the disciples
 - being disciples → learning from Jesus with Jesus
 - traveling in an unrelated mixed group
- Women: emphasis on transformation & generosity
 - Mary & Joanna also mentioned at the cross

4-8:

- Joanna had social and financial power

9-10:

- They are presented as ideal disciples

11-15: • The only pattern: **all kinds** of people joined Jesus

10

Luke 8:4-8

While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some **fell along the path**; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. Some **fell on rocky ground**, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed **fell among thorns**, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed **fell on good soil**. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.”

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yielded a crop = produced fruit

11

Luke 8:1-15

1-3: The Twelve (men) and many women are with Jesus

4-8: Jesus teaches the large crowd a parable: seeds in soil

- Perhaps Jesus and the disciples had invited people to this event (town after town)
- Jesus decides to teach the large crowd through a ‘narrative analogy’ that must be ‘unwrapped’
- Common experience: scatter seed, then plow it in
 - **Path:** land animals and birds prevent any growth
 - **Rock:** lack moisture, so it withers
 - **Thorns:** choked, so fruit doesn’t mature

9-10: • **Good soil:** abundantly fruitful

11-15: • Jesus’ command: **learn from this story!**

12

Luke 8:9-10

His disciples asked him what this parable meant.

He said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that,

‘though seeing, they may not see;
though hearing, they may not understand.’

13

Luke 8:1-15

1-3: The Twelve (men) and many women are with Jesus

4-8: Jesus teaches the large crowd a parable: seeds in soil

9-10: Disciples ask for help. Jesus: not everyone gets answers

- A combination of the Twelve and women
 - like Mary listening at Jesus’ feet
- They take Jesus’ command seriously → Ask for help
- This is Jesus’ answer (not an aside)
 - Only some benefit from Jesus’ teaching (‘secrets’)
 - Power and blessing of God’s Word
 - Knowledge and experience of the Kingdom of God
 - Yet for some, it is just a story

11-15: • This variable benefit is by God’s design → a puzzle

14

Luke 8:11-15

“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then **the devil** comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the **time of testing** they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by **life’s worries, riches and pleasures**, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who **hear** the word, **retain** it, and by **persevering** produce a crop.

15

Luke 8:1-15

1-3: The Twelve (men) and many women are with Jesus

4-8: Jesus teaches the large crowd a parable: seeds in soil

9-10: Disciples ask for help. Jesus: not everyone gets answers

11-15: Fruit from God’s seed only comes in ‘good soil’

- What happens when people encounter God’s Word?
 - **Path:** the **devil** works to stop the Word of God
 - **Rock:** “**time of testing**” stops people
 - **Thorns:** “**life**” gets in the way
 - **Good soil:** they hear, retain, and persevere
 - Not path ➡ hold on to the Word (hold tight!)
 - Not rock ➡ hold fast in trouble, don’t let go
 - Not thorns ➡ stay focused on it in life
 - Generate good and abundant fruit!

16

Luke 8:1-15

- 1-3: The Twelve (men) and many women are with Jesus
4-8: Jesus teaches the large crowd a parable: seeds in soil
9-10: Disciples ask for help. Jesus: not everyone gets answers
11-15: Fruit from God's seed only comes in 'good soil'

17

The Big Idea

**The blessing of encountering Jesus
comes to those who
hear and hold tightly His Word
and persevere in following Him
with courage and faith**

18

Application

Be convinced: God works through His Word

- “The seed is the word of God” *Luke 8:11*
 - The Seed=The work of God communicated and enacted in our hearts through the Word of God by the Spirit of God

19

Blessed is the one who does not
walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
but
whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.

That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which **yields its fruit** in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do **prosper**.

Psalm 1:1-3

law of the Lord = God's revelation of Himself, His ways, and His values

20

Application

Be convinced: God works through His Word

- “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be **thoroughly equipped for every good work.**” *2 Timothy 3:16*
- **Where do you want the presence and fruitfulness of God in your life?**
 - The seed that brings fruit is **the Word of God**
 - Nothing else is promised to bring this good
 - God can use other things
 - Only the Bible with faith is guaranteed

21

Application

Hear, hold tightly, persevere with courage and faith
Head ❖ Heart ❖ Hands

- “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve [do] what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” *Romans 12:2*
- Using **all our abilities** to understand:
 - Read, watch (The Chosen: studios.vidangel.com/the-chosen), listen (www.biblegateway.com), see, imagine, go, do, ...

22

Prodigal Son by Rembrandt
Such joy for father and son
Except for the people
in the shadows...



23

Application

Hear, hold tightly, persevere with courage and faith

Head ❖ Heart ❖ Hands

- Memorize & meditate & communicate & write & draw & act & move & sing & ...
 - <https://app.crosswaymchurch.org/Memory/>
- Together
 - Life Groups, family & friends, ...

24

Application

Hear, hold tightly, persevere with courage and faith

Head ❖ Heart ❖ Hands

- Open our hearts to hear the Spirit speak
 - Especially: hearing **what I don't want to hear**

25

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; **it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.** Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. **Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.**”

Hebrews 4:12-13

26

Application

Hear, hold tightly, persevere with courage and faith

Head ❖ Heart ❖ Hands

- “But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying [speaking God’s Word to people], they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, **as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare.**”

1 Corinthians 14:24-25

- “Come, see a man **who told me everything I ever did.**”

John 4:29

27

Application

Hear, hold tightly, persevere with courage and faith

Head ❖ Heart ❖ Hands

- Jesus said: “Whoever has my commands **and keeps them** is the one who **loves me**. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and **show myself** to them.” *John 14:21*
- “But the one who hears my words and **does not put them into practice** is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, **it collapsed and its destruction was complete.**” *Luke 6:49*

28

Application

Hear, hold tightly, persevere with courage and faith

Head ❖ Heart ❖ Hands

- **It takes faith:** hearing the Word of God without faith does not bring the fruit of God
- **It takes courage:** God's Word is powerful, and it will do a powerful work in 'good and noble' hearts

29

Serotiny: Cones of the Jack Pine Tree

Seeds that are only released by a fire

- Resin seals the seeds
- The resin needs high heat to melt
- Some then need one or more wet-dry cycles to release the seeds

In the same way, some of God's seeds are fruitful only over time and after trials

It is critical to persevere!

Yet the devil, and difficulties, and the distractions of life often stop the process



UGA1218038

30



**Without the Word of God,
we live a flat existence**

**We miss the genuine relationship with
the God who created us, loves us, and
has come to rescue us**

The Word of God brings 3D life!

**Yet engaging the Word of God
brings some challenges!**

31



**Exploring the Word with our minds
can be puzzling, or confusing**

It can be offensive

**It can seemingly claim
what seemingly cannot be true**

**Yet exploring the Word brings
deeper understanding of ourselves,
each other, and our world**

32



Digging into the Word with **our hearts** can bring some frightening things about us to light!

It can show us things that bring grief and shame and even fear

Yet digging into the Word brings life to our lifeless hearts

33



Engaging the Word with **our bodies** can stretch muscles we didn't know we had!

It can call us to go places and do things that are frightening or very challenging or risky

Yet engaging the Word also brings purpose and value to our physical being

34



**Engaging God's Word
with our whole being is stretching!**



**Engaging God's Word
adds depth to our being**

**Engaging God's Word
brings deep joy to life!**

**Engaging God's Word
takes courage and faith!!**

35

The Big Idea

**The blessing of encountering Jesus
comes to those who
hear and hold tightly His Word
and persevere in following Him
with courage and faith**

**When Jesus had taught these things, he called out,
"Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."**

36

What about God's promise?

“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.” *Isaiah 55:10-11*

37

What about God's promise?

God has the power to speak and bring things into being
 without any human response

We do not

God's words are not a magic incantation:

→ a series of sounds that makes miracles happen

His Word is guaranteed to be fruitful

when planted in a human heart that has faith:

hear, retain, and persevere

38

Dawson Trotman
founder of the Navigators



39

GROWING
in **Christ**
together
through all of us



**Where do
fruitfulness and
growth come from?
The Word of God
by the Spirit of God
in hearts that hear,
retain, and
persevere
Through each of us
Together**

40

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—**continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.**”

Philippians 2:12-13

41

**When Jesus had taught these things, he called out,
“Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”**

**What are you going to do today, tomorrow, this week
to hear ❖ to hold on tight ❖ to persevere?**

- **Memorize** a verse...or a book
- **Sign up** to get a daily text for a chapter of the Bible
 - 517-917-0498
- **Join with someone** else to help each other put into practice what God reveals in His Word
- **Engage more deeply** with head, heart, and hands

**Believing that God’s Word is powerful in hearts
that hear, hold fast, and persevere**

42