

Not losing what we think we have

Luke 8:16-21

“There is a way that **appears to be right**, but in the end **it leads to death.**” Proverbs 14:12

- How might this be true?
- What if this is true for me today?
- What if this is true for you today?
- What if this is a risk for everything we think we know?

“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 3:16-17

Luke 8:1-15

Jesus' genuine followers

Apostles & women: healed and financial backers

With many apparent followers, Jesus tells the parable of the 4 soils

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Path: birds eat it | → Disciples hold the Word tightly |
| Rocks: no roots, so they dry up | → Disciples put the Word deep in their hearts |
| Weeds: choked so fruitless | → Disciples protect the Word from life's distractions |
| Good soil: fruitful! | → Disciples persevere in following the Word |

Disciples ask what it means, and Jesus says:

Understanding of God is given to genuine followers, and not to others

Jesus explains:

Fruitfulness comes in people of “noble and good hearts”
who hear and retain God's Word, and persevere to produce fruit

Luke 8:16-21

16-18: Hear God's guaranteed Word well, or we will lose it

Lamps: intended to give light

Elsewhere: Christians are to shine their light

Here: hearers are warned to listen well, or else...

God's Word (the seed, the light):

May start out concealed or misunderstood

Will be fully known

Will make things fully known (including our hearts)

Will be enacted (promises and prophecy fulfilled)

God's Word is the one thing we had better know!

Knowing God's Word leads to greater knowledge

Not listening well leads to increasing losses

19-21: Hearers and doers are closer to Jesus than family

Jesus' mother and brothers

Probably stood for Jewish people

Today probably stands for people who assume association with Christ

The appearance of connection with Jesus without the reality will lead to losing even the appearance of connection

The opportunity to know Jesus might also be lost

In a collective society, this is a shocking statement!

Yet it was wonderful news for 'outsiders'

Luke 8:1-21

Jesus' genuine followers

With many apparent followers, Jesus tells the parable of the 4 soils

Disciples ask what it means, and Jesus says:

Understanding of God is given to genuine followers, and not to others

Jesus explains: fruitfulness comes in those who hear & retain, and persevere

Further explanation: Hear God's guaranteed Word well, or you'll lose it

Hearers and doers are closer to Jesus than family

The Big Idea

God's Word

**though sometimes hard to understand and sometimes seemingly not reality
will one day be fully known and will one day be fully experienced
so God's true family genuinely hears and follows it**

Application

Conviction: God's Word is already true, even if we can't understand it yet or sense it yet

The 'effectual' Word of God: it enacts the thing it says even if we don't sense it yet

How God works

When God wills to save and to love, it is as real as history

The determined will of God cannot fail to happen

The promise of God is as real as if it were history!

Then He promises that which cannot fail to happen

We live most of life between the promise & the experienced fulfillment

"For we live by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7

"I tell you, God will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8

Later we experience the fulfillment of that promise

Revelation 20:12-14; John 5:24-27, 29; 1 Peter 5:8-11

As real as if it were history

The 'effectual' Word of God: enacts the thing it says even if we don't sense it yet

His judgment of those who are not in Christ

His steadfast love for those who are in Christ

The new heaven and the new earth, where there is no more death or mourning or crying or pain

All these things are as real as if they were history!

God tells us what is true, and vital, yet not apparent

Do we fully trust Him?

Really HEAR God's Word

"We have been taught to come to the Bible for solace.... we have no wish to be disturbed."

If this is our purpose, we are not listening for God

We are using God to reinforce OUR view of the world

"We have to open our minds wide enough to risk hearing what we do not want to hear."

"There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death." Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25

"All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the Lord." Proverbs 16:2

It is so hard to hear...

what we assume is not true or we assume cannot be true

what we don't want to be true

either consciously or subconsciously

"Of course *I* am not supposed to sell all my possessions and give them to the poor to follow Jesus!"

"Of course *I* am not supposed to give up my time or my freedom or my career or my family to follow Jesus!"

what my community conditions me not to hear

"In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross-examines." Proverbs 18:17

Yet the seed is lost if it isn't genuinely heard!

Together

Listen together, especially across differences

We have different blind spots

There is potential for stronger courage together

When Jesus' words were so hard that many disciples left, Jesus asked the Apostles if they would leave also

Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God." John 6:68-69

Really DO God's Word

I can let uncertainty about the step after this step be a great excuse for not taking this step = disobedience

Initial obedience very often sheds more light and grows our faith for the next steps of obedience

"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

Jesus replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice." Luke 8:21

Together

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Hebrews 10:24-25

Genuine Christian fellowship spurs us toward God

Life Groups

Mentoring

True friendship

Superficial friendship just reinforces our blindness

Conclusion

What seems right to us may be killing us!

Father, open our ears to hear, our eyes to see, our hearts to believe, and our hands to do your Word

How is God speaking to you right now?

Are we not really listening to God's Word like it matters

Are we not actually believing what God's Word says

Are we not letting ourselves be confronted by God's Word

Are we not doing what God is asking us to do

Delaying / Distracting / Arguing / Rebellious

Don't ignore the Spirit's effectual voice!

Find a genuine friend who will help you follow

Jesus said: "Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they think they have will be taken from them."

Reflection Questions

1. What has the Spirit been saying through His Word today?
2. What parts of God's Word are you tempted to question or doubt?
3. What action is God calling you to do in obedience to His Word?
4. Who is helping you genuinely hear and do the Word of God? If you don't currently have this, what steps might you take to pursue it?