

SEED & SOIL

Sunday, March 21

Reading: Luke 8:1-15

Luke 8:11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. **12** 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. **13** 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. **14** 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. **15** 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.

The phrase "in one ear and out the other" has a long history. The first recorded use of this expression is in Geoffrey Chaucer's epic poem *Troilus and Criseyde* (c. 1385) which retells the tragic story of two lovers set against the backdrop of the Greek's siege of the ancient city of Troy. This story would be retold again by Shakespeare in 1602 in his *Troilus and Cressida*. In his version, Shakespeare writes about a friend who tries to give some words of help to Troilus.

But Troilus, who nigh for sorrow died,
took little heed of anything he meant:
one ear heard it, at the other out it went: ¹

Sadly this is how many of us listen to God's Word. Jesus' parable of the seed and the soils shows the various ways people respond when they hear God's Word. Jesus closes the initial telling of this parable with the phrase "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

The seed represents the Word of God and the soils picture how different people respond to it. The primary meaning of this parable relates to salvation through the gospel message. But I believe we can also apply it to how believers sometimes respond to the hearing of God's Word.

The Hard-Hearted person (8:12) does not allow the Word to affect them and Satan can easily come and remove its influence from their lives. The Shallow-Hearted person (8:13) does not let God's Word take root in their life. They understand it but as soon as things get difficult or they don't like what God wants they "wither away." The Choked-Hearted person (8:14) allows the things of this world to "choke out" the Word of God. They would rather follow the world's pattern than live by God's standard. The Fruitful-Hearted person (8:15) is the only one who is truly living as Christ intended. They receive God's Word despite what it might cost them or what persecutions they may face. They take it to heart and apply it to their lives. The results are evidenced by their life which is flourishing with godly works.

If we were honest, we could all tell of times when we responded to God's Word in each of these ways. The more we apply God's Word to our lives the more God will reveal to us (8:18). Are you listening and applying God's Word or are you letting it go in one ear and out the other?

¹ https://www.bookbrowse.com/expressions/detail/index.cfm/expression_number/482/it-goes-in-one-ear-and-out-the-other