

UNDERSTANDING THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

(Moerewa CF - 8/4/90 - EKB)

Reading: *Mk 4:3-9, 13-20, 21-25.*

1. This parable of Jesus is about the place and power of God's Word in the lives of the believers.
2. The work that God plans to do in us, and through us, **He will do by His Word** revealed into our heart.
3. As we seek God and read His Word, He sows His Word, as living seed, into the centre of our understanding.
4. The seed of the Word, like a natural seed, may seem a tiny speck, but in it there is:
 - a. **a life force**, that is the life force of God Himself, *Lk 1:37(Amp), Ecc 8:4, Heb 4:12.*
 - b. **a plan or code** to direct growth and development, so that as the Word develops it will achieve a specific objective. (e.g. a lettuce seed produces a lettuce plant).
5. *Mk 4:13* Jesus says that this parable is the key to further understanding. If we do not understand how the Word works in our lives, then we will not be able to make ongoing progress. God works by His Word.
6. However before the seed of God's Word in our heart can bring forth fruit, there are powerful forces of evil, which seek to destroy the Word, and that have to be overcome.
7. **The first enemy of the Word** that has to be overcome is "**hardness**", *Mk 4:4,15*. The ground of the wayside pathway is trodden down and hard. Satan comes and takes away the Word sown in the heart where there is hardness. The seed is exposed on the surface of the hard ground.

Hardness is caused by unbelief, wrong belief, or by believing the lies of Satan.

In *Mk 16:9-14*, the weeping, mourning disciples believed that Jesus was dead. He had previously told them many times that He would be crucified and rise again from the dead, the third day, *14:28, 10:34, 9:31, 9:9, 8:31*. They did not believe Mary, *16:9-11*, neither did they believe the two, *16:12-13, Lk 24:13-35*. They believed the lie of Satan that He was dead. Their heart was hardened by untruth, by unbelief, and they were unable to believe the Word.

When Jesus appeared He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, *Mk 16:14*,

Hardness is also caused by believing man's traditions and legalism, *Mk 3:1-5*.

Heb 3:7-8 tells us that self-will, rebellion causes hardness. So does pride, *Dan 5:18-20*.

We overcome hardness by repentance and making Jesus No 1 over everything in our lives, *Ac 2:38, 3:19, 26:20, Mk 1:15*. Choose this day to give Him your mind, eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet, and heart, *Rom 12:1*. His authority in our lives, sets us free from all hardness, *Ac 26:18*, darkness and Satan's power, *Col 1:13,14*. Read *Ex 29:19-22*.

Secondly we overcome hardness and unbelief, (believing the wrong thing), by renewing our minds with God's Word of truth. *Rom 12:2, Ps 119:11, Jn 8:31,32, 2Tim 3:16, Jn 17:17*. Read God's Word daily and record in your notebook what God says to you. Seek to establish truth and right belief in your heart. Evaluate what you believe. Make sure you believe the truth of God's Word

8. **The second enemy of the Word** that has to be overcome is "shallowness" of soil caused by stones in the ground, *Mk 4:5,6,16,17*. Shallowness prevents the seed of the Word from developing a deep enough root in our heart to enable it to endure through times of testing and trial, *4:17*. Whenever we receive God's Word into our heart times of tribulation and persecution follow, *4:17, Ps 105:17*. This cannot be avoided. The Word in our heart has the potential to destroy Satan's kingdom, to establish the kingdom of God, and Satan does all he can to stir up opposition to God's Word. Shallowness of God's Word in our heart limits our ability to **ENDURE**, *4:17*, in faith, in times of test and trial. Consequently, the Word in our heart shrivels and dies and we stumble and are offended, *4:17*. The stones that cause shallowness in our heart must be identified and removed if we are to be fruitful hearers and doers of God's Word, *Mk 4:20, Lk 8:21, Lk 11:28*.

Some of the major stones causing shallowness **that need to be removed**, are fear, lust, unforgiveness, pride, selfishness, witchcraft, bitterness doubt, anxiety, reasoning, insecurity, rejection, critical attitudes, laziness, immorality, drugs, judging others, inferiority, especially fear. For example let's look at *Mk 4:35-41*. The Word of the Lord was to "cross over to the other side" *4:35*. Then came the testing of the Word in their hearts by the great windstorm that arose and started filling the boat with water. For those professional fishermen this was the worst storm they had ever experienced, and fear, not faith gripped and controlled their hearts, *v40*. The Word that Jesus had given them about crossing the lake was lost and the fear of perishing took its place, *v38*. Jesus had wanted them to use their faith, their authority in Him and His Word, to overcome the storm, to rebuke the wind and the waves and command them to stop, *v39, Mat 8:26*. In *Lk 8:25* Jesus asked them, "Where is your faith?" and someone answered, "Gone with the wind!"

Fear is the source of doubt, *Mat 14:25-33*. Peter received the word, "Come" from Jesus and so he walked on the water to Jesus, but on seeing that the wind was boisterous he was afraid and began to sink. Jesus said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Fear had opened the door to doubt. Anxiety - *Mat 6:30*. Reasoning - *Mat 16:8*.

We overcome shallowness in our heart by recognising and removing the stones of fear, doubt etc. This enables the Word of God in our heart to be deep rooted so that we can endure every test and trial and keep believing the Word. God's Word is the Hammer that breaks the rock in pieces, *Jer 23:29*.

The "stones" belong to the old life of self with which we were born. The old nature of self is corrupt, *Eph 4:22*. The new nature of Christ in us is righteous and holy, *Eph 4:24*. *Romans 6* tells us that the old nature of self was crucified with Christ, *v6*, and we are now dead to sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ, *v11*. Speak out *Rom 6:6, Rom 6:11*, claiming your total deliverance and release from the old nature of sin, e.g. "I know that the old nature of 'fear' was crucified with Christ, so that the stronghold of 'fear' might be destroyed, and henceforth I do not serve 'fear'. I believe I am dead to 'fear' and alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord". This has been accomplished by our water baptism into Christ, *Gal 3:27, Rom 6:3,4, Ac 2:38, Col 3:3,10*, and the power of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, *Rom 8:2, Ac 2:38,39, 2Tim 1:7*.

Rom 8:2 says that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death. God's Word breaks the "rocks" or "stones", and the power of the Holy Spirit sets us totally free, to be deep soil for the Word of God, *Jer 23:29*.

Recognise the "stone" of "shallowness".

Renounce and choose against it,

Claim and believe God's promises. He will set you free, *Rom 6:14,22*.

Faith overcomes fear	<i>Mk 5:36</i>
Love overcomes fear	<i>1Jn 4:18</i>
Anointing overcomes fear	<i>2Tim 1:7</i>
Trust overcomes fear	<i>Ps 91:2,3,4,5</i>

9. **The third enemy of the Word that has to be overcome** is the enemy of **distraction**, that is caused by **the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the pleasures of life**. *Mk 4:19, Lk 8:14*. Jesus calls these the thorns that choke the Word and prevent fruitfulness.

Cares, concern, worry, anxiety occupy our thoughts, and distract us from focusing our faith on the fulfilment of God's Word in our lives. Jesus said to busy, busy Martha, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." *Lk 10:41,42*. In *v40* it says "Martha was distracted by much serving," and in *v39* it says "Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened to his Word." In *Mat 6:25,27,28,31*, Jesus instructs us to be rid of all anxiety, worry, concern, and to trust God for every need we have, while we seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, *v33*.

The deceitfulness of riches, possessions and money in the bank, can be a snare if we trust in them for security, provision and the future. Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth..... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." *Mat 6:19,20*. Some live their lives seeking after wealth and material provision, but Jesus said, "Only a fool lays up treasures for himself and is not rich towards God." *Lk 12:20,21*. Money and wealth are sought after to give security, position, happiness, prestige, power and honour among men, but God's Word says, "Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition, (eternal death). For the love of money is the root of all evil," *1Tim 6:9,10*.

Seeking after money before God, will guarantee that God's plan and purpose for your life **will never be fulfilled** and that His Word for you will bring forth no fruit.

The pleasures of life can also be a distraction that chokes the Word in our lives and prevents fruitfulness. Entertainment, sport, excitement, pleasure, recreation, games, travel, hobbies are all right in their proper place and order, but the Word says, "She who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives," *1Tim 5:6*.

We overcome the distractions of cares, riches and pleasures by frequently declaring that, "Everything I have, and everything I am, belongs to God." "I release ownership of all that I have to God, who has given to me all that I possess." *1Cor 4:7*.

Recognise that you are a steward of all that God has given you. Pastors' Notes No 135, which deals with our "Time", "Treasure", and "Talent". Even our own body belongs to the Lord, *1Cor 6:19, Rom 12:1*.

The words "**finished**" and "**passing away**", *1Jn 2:17* are written across the world of riches and pleasures, *2Cor 4:18*. As we see this, their grip on us is broken and we willingly give up what we cannot keep, to gain eternal riches that we will never lose. **HALLELUJAH!**

So now we do all things as unto the Lord, for His glory, *Col 3:17*. We use our time, treasure and talent for the Lord's work and the extension of His Kingdom, *Mat 6:33*.

As you overcome these three enemies of God's Word:

hardness, shallowness, distraction,

you will be good soil for the Word of God, and you will bring forth fruit to God's glory, thirty fold, sixty fold, or an hundred fold.

In conclusion we say, listen to God's Word and to the rhema Word God sows in your heart. Treasure it beyond gold or silver, *Ps 119:162*. Daily live to believe, confess and act on that Word which will produce in you much fruit to God's glory and praise, *Jn 15:8*.