

The parable of the sower



Luke 8:4-15

In the parable of the sower, the Lord Jesus explains about a man who sows his seed in various kind of soil. The seed which falls by the wayside, on stony ground, or among thorns, bears no fruit. But the seed which falls on good, fertile soil, flourishes and brings fruit abundantly.

With this parable the Lord Jesus illustrates that, in the hearts of some people, God's word never germinates, and in others its growth is stunted. It is a matter of faith and one's attitude whether the word of God brings forth fruit.

The children perceive how important it is to be receptive to God's word.
They marvel at the rich harvest which comes about when seed is sown on fertile ground.

Manuel stands looking at his flowerpots and is very excited. Small, green shoots have appeared above the soil. He counts them: one, two, three, four, five tiny shoots are already showing.

Manuel loves to play outdoors. Some days pass before he remembers his plants again. When he goes to check on them, he finds to his dismay that they are looking very poorly. The soil is bone-dry and cracked. No other seed has germinated and the shoots are lying limply on the cracked soil. Manuel wails: "Why didn't the Lord make them grow?" Mother comes to see what the matter is. When she has calmed Manuel a little, she says: "I can understand your disappointment, but what has happened here is entirely your own fault. You are responsible and must see to it that your plants get everything they need."

1

After Manuel has given his plants some water, his mother suggests that he go and fetch his Sunday-school book. She explains to him: "Look here, these pictures show you where plants cannot grow. Do you know the story to which these pictures refer?" Manuel shakes his head. He asks his mother to tell him the story.

"A farmer went to his field to sow. As he was sowing the seed,

some fell by the wayside. The birds that flew by pecked them all up.

"Some of the seed fell on stony ground which was covered by a thin layer of soil. These seeds germinated rapidly and soon little green shoots showed above the ground. But when the sun rose high in the sky and burned down from the heavens, the young plants withered and died. They could not find sufficient hold, water or nourishment in the thin layer of soil.

"A portion of the seed fell among the thorny undergrowth which stifled and choked the seed.

"Some of the seed, however, fell on good ground. Their roots went down deep into the soil and lovely stalks grew. Eventually the corn ripened. The stalks bent under the weight of the ears. Some bore a hundredfold, some sixty- and some thirtyfold."

2

Manuel, while listening, has been trying to ascertain which picture fits each description. Now he calls out in surprise:

"That much corn grew out of a single seed? That's almost unbelievable!" Mother smiles and then explains: "That is only possible thanks to the blessing of God. This story really fits in very well with what we have discussed. It shows that the dear Lord is generous and gives enough of everything. But whether we can harvest or not, depends on us."

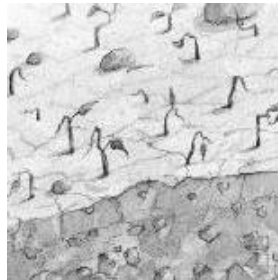
The Lord Jesus told this parable to point out something of great importance. However, a parable is not always easily

Jesus Christ is our teacher

understood. The disciples did not even understand it straight away. They asked the Lord Jesus what it meant. He explained to them that the seed was the word of God and the field the heart of man. Mother and Manuel look at one picture after

another and discuss each one.

3/4



*The Lord Jesus taught: "A farmer goes to his field to sow. Some of the seed was eaten by birds, other seed was choked by thorns or was stunted in its growth. But the portion which fell on fertile soil, brought forth fruit in abundance."
Our hearts should be well-prepared ground to receive God's word.*

- 1 What do plants need to grow? (soil, light and warmth, water, air and nutrients.)
What did Manuel's plants lack?
- 2 We look at and describe the pictures. The children try to relate the parable in their own words.
- 3 The children try to guess the significance of the various pictures. The teacher adds: The seed is the word given by the Lord. His word and will is proclaimed anew each time through the Holy Spirit. But the response to his word is not the same in everyone.
 - Many hearts are as hard as a firmly trodden path. The good which God wants to give disappears before it can take root.
 - Sometimes one accepts the good and it grows quickly. But the patience to care for it is lacking. Thus it quickly withers.
 - When too many other things (daily cares, worldly concerns) take up room in the heart, the divine life in us cannot flourish.
 - But when the heart is prepared to accept the good, it will grow and flourish and bring abundant fruit. Patience and care are rewarded thirty-, sixty-, even a hundredfold.
- 4 How do we prepare our hearts for the good which God wants to give us?
We attend Sunday-school and the church services as often as possible. There we hear the word of God. We pray that we may be able to be attentive. Then we can assimilate the word and act accordingly. We all want to be prepared and worthy on the day of the first resurrection after all!