

The good intentions of religious enthusiasm (or the fear of sinful loss)

- Pastor, I want to join the church...
- I'll never fall for that sin again...
- I'll be a good member this time...
- I'm really serious this time...
- I've changed!, really!!

Surely Jesus' ministry should be successful

- He's the Son of God
- He's without sin
- He's got miraculous power
- He's a cultural insider
- He's willing to go to any length

Jesus speaks in parables!

Luke 8:4-8 (NRSV)

When a great crowd gathered and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold." As he said this, he called out, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

the open secrets

Luke 8:9-10 (NRSV)

Then his disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to others I speak in parables, so that

'looking they may not perceive,
and listening they may not understand.' (Is 6:9)

Luke 8:11-15 (NRSV)

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.

How we hear it

- Fatalistically
 - “I’m one of the soils, I’m doomed/saved...”
- Moralistically
 - “I’ve got to work really hard to be good soil because I want to be faithful because I want to go to heaven (or to have a good life, or to get something, or to be seen as good, or to see myself as OK...)”

Multiple senses for Jesus

- Jesus was talking about the place in history of his ministry
- Jesus was explaining fruitlessness
- Jesus was inviting his hearers into his life and telling them of God's great saving work embodied in himself.

Luke 8:11-15 (NRSV)

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.

Hearts

- Unbelieving
 - Satan intervened negatively
- Fallen Away

Luke 8:11-15 (NRSV)

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. **The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away.** As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.

Hearts

- Unbelieving: Satan intervened negatively
- **Fallen Away**
 - Initial acceptance but in a time of trial they fell

Luke 8:11-15 (NRSV)

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. **As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.** But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.

Hearts

- **Unbelieving:** Satan intervened negatively
- **Fallen Away:** Initial acceptance but in a time of trial they fell
- **Unfruitful:** choked by anxiety and fear

Luke 8:11-15 (NRSV)

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. **But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.**

Hearts

- **Unbelieving:** Satan intervened negatively
- **Fallen Away:** Initial acceptance but in a time of trial they fell
- **Unfruitful:** choked by anxiety and fear
- **Fruitful:** produced abundantly

Luke 8:11-15 (NRSV)

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.

Isaiah 55:10-11 (NRSV)

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:12-13 (NRSV)

For you shall go out in joy,
and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Isaiah's Vision

- This was the same Isaiah who was told he would be a failure and Israel destroyed
- God's plan will not be thwarted
 - The earth will be restored, renewed, made right, God's plan will be accomplished and nothing can stop it. Justice will be done and the healing of the world will come
- Is this inconsistent?

Jesus tells us how it is...

- Unbelieving: Satan intervened negatively
- Fallen Away: Initial acceptance but in a time of trial they fell
- Unfruitful: choked by anxiety and fear
- Fruitful: produced abundantly:
 - And how it will be

History of Redemption

- Unbelieving: Satan intervened negatively
 - Satan in the garden bringing unbelief
- Fallen Away: Initial acceptance but in a time of trial they fell
 - Israel's failed kingdoms
- Unfruitful: choked by anxiety and fear
 - Israel under the control of empires
- Fruitful: produced abundantly: Jesus

The Usual Three Enemies

- Unbelieving: Satan intervened negatively
 - The Devil
- Fallen Away: Initial acceptance but in a time of trial they fell
 - Our sinful natures
- Unfruitful: choked by anxiety and fear
 - “The world” that lures

Lord's Prayer

- Unbelieving: Satan intervened negatively
 - Deliver us from the evil one
- Fallen Away: Initial acceptance but in a time of trial they fell
 - Keep us from the time of testing
- Unfruitful: choked by anxiety and fear
 - Daily bread, forgive debtors
- Fruitful: produced abundantly:
 - Your kingdom come, your will be done

Under which have you not fallen?

- Unbelieving: Satan intervened negatively
- Fallen Away: Initial acceptance but in a time of trial they fell
- Unfruitful: choked by anxiety and fear

What is this picture?

Luke 8:11-15 (NRSV)

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. **But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.**

Good soil

- ἐν καρδίᾳ καλῇ καὶ ἀγαθῇ
 - Heart: “noble, beautiful, generous, good”
 - This phrase in Greek is the epitome of what a human being can become
- κατέχουσιν καὶ καρποφοροῦσιν ἐν ὑπομονῇ
 - Holding fast and bearing fruit in patient endurance

Hold Fast



To each we say

- To the fatalist
 - Jesus is making an invitation
 - Holding fast to the seed in patient endurance brings the beautiful, noble heart
- To the moralist
 - The strength to do this is itself a gift, so you can't look down on anyone else
 - In the end the power is from God because his word will not be fruitless

What is Jesus saying?

- God is acting (has acted) in Jesus, the promise has come, the secret revealed
- You will be assaulted by: the devil, your sinful nature, the world
 - So HOLD FAST to God
- The abundance is coming, you have but to wait for it, it is sure!

Isaiah 55:12-13 (NRSV)

For you shall go out in joy,
and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.