

“How to Do What Is Right”

Text: Luke 8:4-8, 11-15

March 15, 2009

Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church (www.pbpc.org)

Oakland, California

Rev. Chris Geline

Story of man I met in England!

- Which soil were you on which the Word of God fell?

Read Luke 8:4-8, 11-15 & Pray!

We continue our series “Journey to Justice” looking at the life of Jesus through Luke’s Gospel. Justice for the Christian means doing what is morally right according to God’s Word, the Bible. This morning I want us to look at “How to Get a Good Return on Your Investment” through the Parable of the Four Soils. What we will see is how investing in the things of God will result in a life that is resolved to doing what is right.

We all are investing in something in life.

- Work
- Stocks and bonds
- Retirement
- Education
- Entertainment
- Materialism
- Making a name for ourselves
- Sports
- Marriage and Family
- People
- Self

Have you ever thought about how much time we spend investing in the things of this world? Will we take any of these with us into eternity? No! We need to reassess how much we give using our time, talents and treasure for the glory of God.

Read the Bible and you will find that there are only two elements in life that will last forever. Do you know what they are? Are you investing in them?

- God’s word
- People

Unfortunately, we spend more time investing in the things of this world than on what God says will last forever. Remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:33 concerning worrying about the things of this world, *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

- We are called by Jesus to seek first the things of God, to invest our lives in those things that will last forever.

- And, as we will see in the Parable of the Four Soils, we can have an excellent return on our investment in seeking first the kingdom of God.

Notice in Jesus' Parable of the Four Soils that there are two constants—the seed and the soil. Jesus interprets this for us in that the seed is the Word of God and the soil is people and their response to the Word of God. The story of the Four Soils is an accurate picture of how people reacted to Jesus' words then, and now. As we look at these four soils, I want to ask you this question, "Which of these four soils are you?"

I. The "Footpath" people.

- A. Luke 8:12, *"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."*
- B. The "footpath" represents the closed mind, the mind that refuses to take in the word of God. They are the ones who hear the word of God but do not believe at all because of the work of the devil.
- C. The devil is working overtime in the S.F./Oakland area. His strongholds are many. 1 Peter 5:8 – *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."*
 1. Canvassing reaction & Monte's evaluation – People are deceived by Satan to think that they don't need God. Self-sufficiency, independent spirit, humanistic attitude (every person can do as they see fit). It's called sin! 90% of Oakland is unchurched. What are we going to do about it?
- D. Our behavior can deprive ourselves and others of the opportunity to hear God's word.
 1. Your life may be the only Bible that anyone ever reads. What's your life saying? What are we saying as a church?
 2. Mormon article & food bank.

II. "Rocky-soil" People.

- A. Luke 8:13, *"Those on the rock 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."*
- B. These are people who follow Jesus, believe his message but never get around to doing anything about it. They only believe in the facts of the Word mentally and then reject it when "the going gets rough." It doesn't mean they lose their salvation, because they had none to lose to begin with.
 1. Judas Iscariot – heard God's word, followed for a while, but in a time of testing betrays Jesus.
 2. People who hear, follow for a while and then blame God for all their troubles (AK) and walk away.
- C. Growing as disciples of Jesus Christ requires that we put down roots in Jesus that will hold us firm in times of trial or temptation.

1. John 15:4 – *“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”*
2. It’s about being in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It’s hearing from Jesus through reading the Word of God and talking to Him through prayer (quiet time). It’s about being in relationship with other Christians (Life Groups) and sharing with unbelievers about your spiritual journey with Jesus. It’s all about a relationship with Jesus. It’s not about you!
3. CLASS 201

III. “Thorn patch” people.

- A. Luke 8:14 – *“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.”*
- B. There are three specific thorns mentioned that may choke the hearer’s life: cares, riches and pleasures of life.
 1. Cares of life include anxiety and worry. These are experiences common to all of us, but if we allow ourselves to give in to them, they consume our lives.
 - Mary chose to listen to Jesus’ teaching while her sister Martha was anxious and troubled about many things.
 2. The dangers of wealth are a common theme in Luke. Jesus grieved the plight of the rich; they had received their prize.
 - Rich young ruler – Prime example of one whose wealth crowded out the Word from his life.
 - Jesus lamented says, *“How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”*
 - I believe wealth is one of the greatest obstacles to people coming to faith in Jesus in our culture today.
 3. The pursuit of pleasure can also take a destructive turn. Jesus’ teachings associate the cares of life with foolish living and drunkenness.
 - How many billions of dollars are spent on the pursuit of pleasure in our country?
- C. Let me summarize it this way: The thorny ground stands for those whose lives are so busy that there is no room for God in their lives.
 1. Recommit your life to Jesus Christ and choose to put Him first.

IV. “Good soil” people.

- A. Luke 8:15 – *“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.”*
- B. God wants a good return on His investment in our lives. He wants us to persevere and produce a crop for Him. That’s the “good soil” people. These people follow Jesus no matter what the cost. The good ground stands for the good heart. The good heart does three things:
 1. First, they listen attentively to the Word of God.

2. Second, they retain the Word by keeping it in their minds and heart and mulling it over until they discover its meaning for themselves. (What does this mean for me?)
 3. Third, they act upon it. They translate what they have heard into action.
- C. Through this process the good soil yields a crop a hundred times more than was sown. Those who are the good soil are to reproduce the Word who became flesh, Jesus, in the lives of others. Up to a hundred-fold. We are born to reproduce.
- D. Luke 6:45 – *“Good people bring good things out of the good stored up in their heart...”* The fruit of the heart resolves to do what is right, what is just.

The Word of God and people are what we are to invest our lives in. It's virtually impossible to read the Bible and not see Jesus' heart for the poor, the sick, the hurting, the blind, the oppressed, the orphans, the widows. These are the people He spent time with. Jesus calls us to be "Good soil" people who follow Him by doing what He did no matter the cost. That means getting involved with the poor, the sick, the hurting, the blind, the oppressed, the orphans and the widows; those who are suffering.

- Canvassing the 21st and 28th & Food Drive
- RAK on March 30th at Ultimate Grounds – Life Group
- Food Drive – April 5th, 12th and collection on the 19th - Deacons
- Easter offering – Goes to help fund backpack giveaway at Glenview Elementary School in August.
- And more to come.

What kind of soil are you? It's a choice.

PRAY!

Loving and merciful God, thank You for the challenge You have given us today to be "good soil" people. We want to be people with good hearts who listen attentively to the Word of God, retain it in our mind and heart asking what does it mean to me and then acting upon it, putting it into action. We confess to You that we tend to be too busy in our lives with cares, riches and pleasures so that there is no room for You in our lives. Forgive us for sinning against You this way and for any sin in our lives that would keep others away from You. Help us to seek first Your kingdom by investing in Your Word and people's lives. Help us to yield a crop, a hundred times more than was sown. Thank You for your love and faithfulness in our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.