**By The Word Alone**

Based on [Luke 8:4-15](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk8.4-15)

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The curiosity of children is charming. A child can ask the question “why” over and over again until you don’t have any more answers to give. *Why is there a rainbow?* Because it rained. *Why*? Because the water in the air separates the colors in sunlight. *Why*? Because light consists of 7 main colors, ROY G BIV. *Why is light that way*? Because that’s how God made it when he said “*Let their be light*.” But why did He? … He just did.

We are children of the heavenly Father. We also have such probing questions for Him. And he gives us all the answers we need, but not all the answers we ask for. Today’s parable is an example of where Jesus gives us an answer to one of the most fundamental questions of the faith…”Why do some believe and others do not?” Jesus says, it’s not because God’s word is defective, it’s because of the soil. Regardless of the soil, the Word of God is a Holy Seed, that always has the potential to create faith.

Jesus tells a parable about a sower who goes out to sow. He scatters the seed aimlessly. Some lands on the path and gets devoured by birds. Some fell on the rock and withered away with no moisture. Some fell in the thorns, and grew until it was choked. And some fell on good soil.

The seed is the Gospel, God’s Word. And the soil is different people. And so the moral of the story is simply this. Just as a seed always has the potential to grow, and if it doesn’t, it is because it couldn’t find purchase in the soil, so too God’s Word. God’s Word always has the potential to create faith, but sometimes it will not find purchase in people. The reason Jesus tells this parable is to comfort his disciples and his church. We see many people hear the word and not believe. We see many people who had believed and fallen away. And our flesh thinks “what went wrong.” Jesus is saying, nothing went wrong with the word. The word is always ready and doing what it was sent to do. When we see people accept the word and produce fruit we are to praise God. When you see people who seem dull to the word, or who fall away from the faith, don’t panic...Jesus said this will happen...but it says nothing about the quality of his gospel, only of the quality of people who recieve it. Don’t lose heart because others don’t believe; rejoice, rather that you do believe.

This parable explains nicely ***how the unbelief of some in no way discredits the word of God, nor your own faith in it.***  But, some aren’t content to simply rejoice that they have faith. Instead, like children, they want to probe further into the mysteries of God. What this parable doesn’t explain, is why some soil is different than others. It is tempting, then, to speculate about the soil. This parable is an example of where that can lead to false doctrine.

It is common for the undiscerning to be obsessed with the soil. After all, the parable seems to be about the soil. The difference between creating a faith that persists to eternal life, and a faith that falls away is the type of soil. And Jesus says the type of soil are types of people. “The ones along the path are those [people] who have heard.” All this sets up those who don’t hold straight the mysteries of the faith to get it wrong.

If the soil makes all the difference, then that means that this parable is about how salvation is in the person. If so, then one preacher may preach that this parable is a warning to warn you not to be bad soil. And if you are bad soil, cultivate your heart, purify your soul, seek God and become good soil. You have been given a chance in this life, use it wisely to prepare yourself to receive the grace of God. So pray, fast, do good works, give to the poor, hold to traditions all of these things you can do to prepare yourself to receive the word.

This is false doctrine. We confess that we cannot by our own reason or strength, intelligence or effort believe in Jesus Christ or come to him. We cannot prepare ourselves. Those who would teach that there is some strength inside of an unbeliever to make himself more receptive to the seed of the word is false doctrine. For we are naturally blind and dead in spiritual things, and by nature enemies of God and children of wrath.

At the same time, if a person cannot prepare himself to receive salvation, then surely God must prepare him. And soil is soil. So another preacher may preach that God created the soil, and he created certain people to receive the word and be saved; and he created other people to reject the word and be condemned. God created some to be saved and others to be damned. So you can’t help it, what kind of soil you are.

These respective false teachings are common mistakes that are promoted in the name of Christ. The problem is that they don’t deal with the parable on it’s own terms. Jesus doesn’t tell the parable to explain how soil becomes good or bad. It is not about how some soil became good and other soil becomes bad. The parable doesn’t say how the soil got to be in the condition it was. It just is.

No, the parable is not about the soil, but about the Word. The word of God will not return void but will accomplish the purpose for which it was sent. God scatters his word, regardless of the quality of the soil. So don’t lose heart when people reject it.

Jesus doesn’t tell us this parable so that we can understand why some people fall away and others don’t. He tells it to us as if to say, “You see all this troubling rejection of the word and unbelief. You heard the word and received it with joy, yet you see many more people reject it and fall away. Well know this, God sees it too. God sees it too. So when you are tempted to think, “Maybe the church is going to fall”, maybe the christian faith is phasing out. Maybe God is losing, because his Word is being so disregarded.” No, God knows the fate of his word. He allows it to be cast on all kinds of soil. It is not a miscalculation that his word falls on some, and sprouts a faith that withers and dies. His word will accomplish the purpose for which he sent it.

And he sent it into the word so that those who do hear it have something to rest their hearts upon, the salvation won by Jesus Christ.