

## Luke 8B

- Last week we examined the parable of the sower and the four seeds
  - The definition of a good sermon: It should have a good beginning. It should have a good ending. And they should be as close together as possible.
  - But that's why we serve coffee before the service – to make sure you're fully awake when you drive home
  - This week the two ends should be a little closer together
- When we examined the parable last week, we paid close attention to the detail, we interpreted the parable by breaking it down into two halves
  - And each half could itself be divided into two conditions, leaving a total of four conditions
- In mathematics, you would call this breakdown a Latin Square
  - The first half of the parable, Conditions 1 & 2, we said were pictures of the unbelievers
    - One group showed an unbeliever who made no attempt to hide their disinterest for the Word of God
      - They were unbelievers with a hard heart and no interest in changing
    - The second group of unbelievers actually left an impression of being believers, at least at first
      - But after some time, a trial besets them or some test of faith comes upon them, and they reveal the lack of a root and they die – they give up the act and show their true nature
  - The second half of the parable, Conditions 3 & 4, we said were believers based on interpretation provided by Jesus Himself
    - But like the unbelievers, there were two kinds of believer depicted in the parable

- In the fourth condition, for example, you had the strong, mature Christian
  - And their maturity was demonstrated by their ability to reproduce – to bear fruit –
  - Which we called seed, or the ability to spread the gospel or the Word of God and reproduce faith
- But the most troubling condition was Condition 3 – the Condition 3 Christian – the believer who never produces fruit

### Mouse Trap Example

- You may have been wondering what the main point of Jesus parable
  - Was it merely the fact that the Word will produce different reactions among those who hear it?
    - Well, to a degree, yes, but that wasn't the main point
- Last week we read through verse 18, but I only expounded through verse 15. Today we will pick up in verse 16 again, because in 16-8 we learn the purpose of the parable

[Luke 8:16](#) ¶ “Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light.

[Luke 8:17](#) “For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor *anything* secret that will not be known and come to light.

[Luke 8:18](#) “So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him *more* shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.”

- Thought we may not have noticed it or fully appreciated it, Jesus transitions out of the parable to an application in these verses – and ultimately to a warning
- Lighting in Jesus day was nothing like it is today, of course
  - Light came from oil lamps
  - It's like when you go camping, for example, and you're inside a tent at night
  - You light a propane lantern or an electric lantern
  - The light for the room all comes from one concentrated source

- You work hard to find just the right place to put the lamp, hang it high
  - You try to avoid blocking the light or casting shadows
  - Your ability to see your way around in the tent depends entirely on making sure the light is on and unobstructed
- Now in Jesus' day lighting a lamp was not necessarily difficult, but it wasn't trivial either
  - First, the effort to produce a flame was significant – no lighters, no matches
  - Secondly, the oil for a lamp was cheap – so burning a lamp was costly and not done without thought
    - Unlike today when we casually leave lights on for hours in empty rooms without concern
- So when Jesus says that no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container or puts it under a bed – He's really making a bit of a joke
  - The crowd might as well have laughed at this suggestion
  - Jesus says the person would place it on a lamp stand - naturally
- Now we don't have to work very hard here to understand what Jesus is saying in verse 16
  - The imagery is fairly obvious
  - But if that weren't enough, we have Matt's account to help us

[Matt. 5:14](#) ¶ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;

[Matt. 5:15](#) nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

[Matt. 5:16](#) "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- In Matt's account we hear Jesus say that believers - the church – have been elevated, raised up, like a city set on a hill
  - And in that position, you can't help but be noticed
- Just like a lamp that's been lit – and like a lamp, we are the light of the world

- Just like that camping lantern, we are the ones through whom God will shine the light of the truth of His word to the world
- We are the ones who will demonstrate by our lives the power of God to save and transform – or at least that’s supposed to be our purpose
- So why does Jesus feel the need to end his parable by saying that Christians, the light of the world, shouldn’t hide their light under a bed?
  - It’s seems Jesus was concerned that Christians might not want the world to know that they were different
  - And that was the main point of the parable?
    - Don’t be a C3 Christian
  - This is exactly what some Christians, in fact many Christians, are doing and have always done
    - These are the Condition 3 Christians
    - They’re the Christians who are hiding their light – withholding their witness to the world – never producing fruit
      - These are the Christians that hear the Word, and respond with some amount of healthy growth
      - But the cares and riches and pleasures of this world choke off the production of fruit
    - They are distracted by the interests and cares of this world
      - There’s no time to be a mature Christian, no energy, no desire, no commitment
      - The things of this world are just too attractive, they seem too important, too demanding
      - Consequently, there’s little energy left for spiritual development – and what is must be used exclusively for themselves – just to stay alive

- That's the key to understanding the C3 Christian – it's self-centered Christianity...they are self-focused
  - Think about it like the plant surrounded by weeds
    - The plant produces no fruit because all it's energy is devoted to its own existence as the weeds taking so much of the plants energy – the sunlight and water
    - A C3 squanders their time, resources and energy on the cares of this world, so when it comes time to devote time and energy to the things that truly matter – spiritual things, they have nothing left to give.
    - They're selfish because they only have enough spiritual energy for themselves
    - This is like a field planted by the farmer, but all the plants it produces lack fruit...what a wasted harvest
- So spiritually speaking, here's what a C3 Christian might look like
  - First, they aren't necessarily devoid of any Christian-like behavior
  - They probably do many Christian like things
    - They go to church when it fits the schedule
    - They attend a Bible study now and then
    - They tithe when the budget allows
    - They volunteer when they have spare time
  - These are good things, fine things – necessary things
    - But these activities are not fruit
- So what's the point of the parable
  - First and foremost, we can't allow ourselves to be content with being a Condition 3 Christian
    - We all start there, to be sure, with our light hidden
    - But don't be satisfied to remain a closet Christian or a self-centered one

- And it begins by recognizing that as a culture we devote too much time to the wrong things, including the wrong spiritual things
- And there is a price to pay for neglecting our responsibilities in this area
- Jesus presents a warning in verses 17 & 18 for those who neglect to hear this message

[Luke 8:17](#) “For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor *anything* secret that will not be known and come to light.

[Luke 8:18](#) “So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him *more* shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.”

- If we are content to leave our witness buried, to fail to produce fruit, to remain a C3 Christian, Jesus warns us that there will be no secrets one day to come
  - All things will be known
    - The unbelievers will be known for who they are
    - And the Christians will be have their work tested

[1Cor. 3:9](#) For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.

[1Cor. 3:10](#) ¶ According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

[1Cor. 3:11](#) For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

[1Cor. 3:12](#) Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

[1Cor. 3:13](#) each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work.

[1Cor. 3:14](#) If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

[1Cor. 3:15](#) If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- Pauls reminds the Corinthian church that you though they were saved by their faith and not their works – to be sure - but much is still riding on their works
  - Today we live in an existence and an age where everything has a beginning and an end
  - We can’t begin to comprehend eternity

- But when we reach the other side of this life – we enter into a time and age where we come face to face with eternity
- No more death, no more transitions...just endless time
- And Jesus says that what we experience in that immense time is dependent on what we do with this handful of decades
- And here's the rule: whoever has, to him more will be given
  - Have? Have what?
    - Fruit, or more specifically, reward
  - And what will he be given? More opportunity to serve, to have responsibility and honor and perhaps other kinds of privilege in some form – we can't be sure of all that is to be handed out
    - Paul just calls it a reward
- But to the one who has nothing, even what he thinks he has will be taken away
  - What is it that this person has nothing of? Fruit.
    - What does he think he has...fruit
  - You see, the C3 Christian is living a life of fooling himself
    - He thinks since he's a mainstream Christian
      - A regular guy –he's just killing time on Earth waiting for his reward when he reaches heaven
    - The C3 Christian is self-deluded because he never took time to understand what the Word says about the expectations for fruit
      - So when the fire reveals the quality of this person's work, he will be found without fruit
    - He was too busy pursuing what this life offered –
      - It looked like he had everything but he sacrificed an eternity for it
- And just to be clear, there is another, complimentary meaning for these verses

- To those in C2, the same comments have a dramatically different meaning
  - To the one who thinks he has salvation, Jesus says what he thinks he has will be lacking on the day of judgment
  - After all, only 2 of the four conditions can learn from this parable
    - C1 is hopelessly and decidedly lost
    - C4 is a mature Christian already leading the class
    - But C2 and C3 are the ones with a need
      - For C2 the need is to stop pretending and start believing
      - And for C3, the need is to stop pretending and begin maturing
- Are we taking this warning seriously?
  - Oh man, I hope so.
  - I hope we're not too proud to stop in our tracks and re-evaluate our lives to see if they measure up.
    - And if they don't, what are we prepared to do about it?
    - If we do nothing, I fear the day to come when we may deeply regret our shortsighted and foolish decisions to favor the needs of this world over those of the next
- To place an exclamation point on Jesus' teaching, Luke inserts a description of a passing moment in Jesus ministry

[Luke 8:19](#) ¶ And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd.

[Luke 8:20](#) And it was reported to Him, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You."

[Luke 8:21](#) But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."



- Matt and Mark place this comment at a different point in Jesus ministry, back when he was confronted by the Pharisees over the disciples gleaning of the grain on the Sabbath
  - Perhaps Luke's careful investigation of the facts led him to conclude that this was the actual place it occurred
    - Or he decided that specific moment wasn't important and chose to insert it here to help make the point of Jesus' parable
  - It's apparent how large the crowds around Jesus had become by this point
    - They have to relay a message to Jesus that his family wishes to see him
    - Matt has Jesus in a house at this point, but either way they are not able to get close to him because of the crowd surrounding Jesus
  - Do you think they came to be His disciples? To hear his teaching? To follow him?
    - We don't know why they are trying to see Jesus
      - But I think it's safe to assume that they are probably amazed at what has transpired around Him since he left home
      - Perhaps they have come to understand what's going on or even be a part of it
- So why did Jesus dismiss his mother and brothers?
  - Well, first He doesn't criticize them – His comment isn't a slight against them
    - He may have received them eventually in fact
    - Really the only reason the event even warrants mention in scripture is because of what Jesus says at that moment
  - He uses their arrival as a teaching opportunity
    - Jesus says those who are in his family are those who hear the Word of God and do it

- Coming on the heels of the parable, we can certainly understand it more fully
- Jesus statement makes even more clear that hearing the Word of God is the one and only means to becoming a part of the family of God
- As Paul says in Rom 10:17

[Rom. 10:17](#) So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

- This statement would have been very surprising to his audience
  - In Jewish culture, family relationships (tribes) were all important
    - So to suggest that a family tie is secondary to faithfulness to the Word of God – as strange as it may seem to some of us now – would have been a radical statement
    - And it still is radical for many people today
  - We can expect that Jesus surely had normal loving relationship with his earthly mother and no doubt He had affection for his earthly brothers,
    - But once His ministry began in earnest, Jesus saw the things of earth with an appreciation that there was an eternity waiting
    - Jesus knew He had existed before Mary and his brothers were even born – before Adam was even created
    - And He knew that the earth and everything in it would end one day while God's children would continue on in eternity
  - There is no one who can say they were born into the family of God – not by the flesh
- I know what this feels like
  - I grew up calling myself a Christian – actually a Catholic
    - I was a Catholic because I was born a Catholic
    - And if you were to challenge that statement, I would get very offended – how dare you say what I am or am not

- Jesus is saying it right here – His family are those who hear the Word of God and do it
  - Hear is “akouo” and it means listen, but in the sense of give heed
    - Not just hear it but receive it and then do it
    - Those who do these things are in the family of God – those who don’t are not
  - Mary and James and the rest of Jesus family may have been related to Jesus in an earthly way,
    - But that didn’t give them any special ticket into heaven
    - They, like every man, had to believe to be saved
    - The only kind of relationship that matters is the one we are given by faith
- Let’s leave the teaching today fully aware of what Jesus – the Lord of all creation – is demanding of us
  - First, join His family or perish
  - And we join by faith in His Word – faith in His claim of who He is and in his provision on the cross for our sin
  - Secondly, we honor that gift of salvation by endeavoring to bear fruit
    - To build the kingdom
    - To spread the seed, the Word of God
  - In each week, there are 10,080 minutes
    - Many Christians spend 90 minutes per week on the things of God and the other 9,990 minutes on whatever interests them
    - Let’s agree we will do better
      - Let’s agree that our reputation as followers of Christ is that we followed him without regard for ourselves

[2Cor. 5:15](#) and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.