

## THE SECRET OF A FRUITFUL LIFE

I. Text – Luke 8:4

II. This parable shows that Jesus knew what life was all about. Senior citizen to friend: “I survived WW II, three auto accidents, two bad marriages, two depressions, 13 company strikes, three mortgages, and the government farm policies – and a fresh teenager tells me I don’t know what life is all about!”

“Life needs a purpose.” Booker T. Washington said, “There is no power on earth that can neutralize the influence of a high, pure, simple, and useful life.” This parable teaches that the word of God has power to produce fruit in the life of a believer. The results of the word of God depends on the condition of the heart into which it is sown.

I. An Unfruitful Life

A. The wayside or hard path represents the closed mind. The word of God is ineffective unless it is received with an open, honest mind. How many are there who have been listening to the preaching of the gospel all their lives and yet have never really opened their heart to it. The heart has been hardened by the traffic of secular interests continually tramping across the path of their hearts.

B. The Stony Ground represents those who accept the Word but who never consider its consequences. When difficulties arise they fail because they have no strength. This is the type of emotional hearers, who are superficially

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touched by the gospel, but do not understand what is involved. The gospel has not really touched the depths of their natures, their wills, their reason, and so they shrivel up when they have to face the toil and self-sacrifice inherent in a Christian life.

C. The thorny ground represents those whose lives are so busy that the things of God get crowded out. Not only does the Word need to be taken into the heart, but the weeds need to be cast out. When the two are allowed to grow together the weeds will choke out the good seed. The cares of life are spiritual weeds that stifle spiritual growth.

## II. A Fruitful Life

A. The good ground represents those who receive the Word of God into their hearts and it produces fruit in their lives. How does this work?

1. He listens attentively and receives the Word into his heart. Jesus warned, "He that hath an ear let him hear...."
2. He keeps what he hears in his mind and heart. Joshua said, "This book of the law.... (Joshua 1:8)"
3. He translates what he has heard into action. When Jesus told Zacheus that He was going to his house, he immediately began doing something to prepare for the Lord's coming.

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B. Horatius Bonar wrote:

Oh send me light to do thy work!  
More light, more wisdom give!  
Then shall I word thy work indeed,  
While on Thine earth I live.

### Conclusion

The prophet Hosea cried out, “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy: break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” Hosea 10:12