

Session 6

May 30, 2021

TRUST GOD TO WORK

Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23

One of the important principles I teach in my missions classes is “abundant gospel sowing.” That means sharing the gospel a lot of times and in a lot of different ways. No story depicts this better than Jesus’ parable of the sower and the seeds. Picture a man walking along the field with a canvas sack over his shoulder. As he walks, he reaches into the sack and throws handful after handful of seed. Some will fall here and some there. That’s abundant sowing. In His simple, but powerful parable, Jesus teaches at least three principles.

Everyone needs the gospel (vv. 3-8). The Great Commission commands us to spread the gospel message to the ends of the earth. That means sharing the good news of Jesus Christ to everyone we encounter, every chance we get. Notice that the sower’s responsibility ends there. The sower “went out to sow.” That’s what sowers do! Abundant sowing means that we don’t need to differentiate between lost people and their relative “openness to the gospel.” As a missionary strategist, there were times when I did that. But we are not *required* to do that. All that we are required to do is *sow* the gospel message, and let God handle the results. For reflection: *What do you think would happen if everyone in your church mentioned Jesus Christ to everyone they encountered, even for just one day? Now imagine what would happen if we did that every day!*

Not everyone will receive the gospel... (vv. 18-22). Here Jesus explained the meaning of the parable to His disciples. While the gospel is *meant* for everyone and is equally efficacious for the salvation of any and all souls, the truth of the matter is that not everyone will *receive* the gospel. The various categories of soil represent the various conditions of the human heart. Those who toy with the gospel (v. 19) are not moved by it. The devil uses the frivolity of the hearer as an opportunity to snatch away the truth before it can be fully realized. Those who lack spiritual depth and discernment jump at the offer of eternal life (v. 20), only to find their shallow commitment to be powerless in the face of persecution. Those who are distracted by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life (see 1 John 2:16) are far too busy being selfish (v. 22) to produce the spiritual fruit born of discipline and devotion. For reflection: *We all know people who fall into each category. They may respond to the gospel, but then seem to fade away. What might we as a church do to help the gospel truly penetrate the heart? Is that even possible?*

...But some will! (v. 23). The good news is that some people we witness to actually will be saved and will produce fruit. Some will produce much fruit, and some less; but all who hear the gospel, understand it, and respond to it will demonstrate their commitment by bearing spiritual fruit. Again, this is not anything that we (as sowers) can do, but rather what God does. Our job is to sow. He is responsible for any fruit that is produced (see Is. 55:10-11). For reflection: *We have applied the principles of the parable specifically to sharing the gospel witness. That being said, what types of fruit do you believe Jesus is referring to in verse 23? Does this mean that all true believers will produce some kind of fruit? Why?*