



LESSON 59 - MARK 4:1-2

1And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. 2And he taught them many things by parables,

Jesus left the house and went to sit by the shore of Galilee. (**Matt. 13:1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. 2And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.**) In order for all to hear, Jesus chose to teach from a fishing boat. Acoustically speaking, the shore breeze coming in off the water made an excellent situation for everyone to be able to hear Jesus clearly.

Jesus began to talk to them in parables. What is a parable and why did He choose to use it for teaching the people?

A parable is a short, simple story used to impart a spiritual truth. It uses everyday knowledge or experiences to teach something of deeper meaning. Jesus was not the first to use parables to impart truth. There are a number of examples of parables in the Old Testament scriptures, such as the one used by Nathan the prophet in 2 Samuel 12:1-15 to confront King David. Another is found in the writings of Isaiah in chapter 5, verses 1-2.

Jesus used parables many times and a rich and rewarding study can be done of all the ones that are recorded in the gospels. Here is a list of most of them, in case you would like to read and study these on your own:

Matt 5:15-16, 7:24-27, 9:16,17, 12:25-29, chapter 13, 18:10-14,21-35, 20:1-16, 21:28-32, 33-41, 22:1-14, 24:32-35, 25:1-30

Mark 4:26-29,13:32-37

Luke 7:40-47, 10:25-37, 11:5-8, 12:13-21, 12:35-48, 13:6-9, 28-30, 31-32, 15:8-32, 16:1-13, 17:7-10, 18:1-14, 19:11-27

John 6:32-58, 10:1-18, 15:1-8

Jesus taught using parables for several reasons. It was an easy way for people to understand a central spiritual truth, because it was based on something they already understood. Secondly, those seeking the truth could find it by listening carefully. Remember the people listening to Jesus didn't have the Bible with them. They weren't reading along in the scriptures as He taught. The principles He taught were understood by listening carefully.

The parables at times also expressed the character of God, the character of man, the principles of kingdom life, salvation and the future events. Sometimes parables revealed things that had been hidden before the coming of Jesus. (Mk 4:11). The parable in Mark 4:3-8 which we will study in the next lesson is the key to understanding all other parables (Mk 4:13).

LESSON 60 - Mark 4:3-9,14-20

2And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

3Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: **4**And it came to pass, as he sowed, **(1)** some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. **5**And **(2)** some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: **6**But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. **7**And **(3)** some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. **8**And **(4)** other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. **9**And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear...

(In the next verses the Lord Jesus explains to the disciples more about the parable.)

14The sower soweth the word. **15**And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. **16**And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; **17**And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. **18**And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, **19**And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. **20**And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Let's analyze each of the 4 soils/hearts that received the seed/ Word of God (v 14)

a. What characterized the soil/person's heart by the wayside?

It was given the word of God. The person heard the word. Now look at what Luke's gospel adds to the description of this soil: **Luke 8:5 A sower went out to sow his seed:**

The sower represents Jesus when He was here on earth, and now, the Holy Spirit working through a preacher, evangelist, you, anyone that speaks, writes, or sings the Word of God.

And as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

The word was "trodden down." It sounds as if some trampled on it over and over making a path through the field instead of nurturing it, trampling it down until the ground of the person's heart was too hard for the Word to root and bring forth life. We always need to be careful to honor and not distract from the Word of God that is being given or spoken to anyone.

We also need to live lives of integrity before others, so that when the Word of God comes to them, their hearts have not been calloused by our bad testimony.

Let me give you an example of that. A minister was seated next to a businessman. They struck up a conversation and were enjoying their discussion. The minister asked the businessman what he did and, in turn, the man asked the minister what he did. When the minister said that he worked for the Lord, the businessman immediately turned away. When the minister asked what was the problem, the man said that in his company he had had an employee that was born again. That

employee spent hours of her work time preaching to other workers of their need to be saved. By doing so, she interfered with and decreased their work and hers. She eventually left the company, in the process taking things that didn't belong to her and leaving an eight thousand dollar overseas phone bill of calls to a relative in Europe.

This woman should have been the businessman's best worker. Instead, she preached when she should have been working. (She could have witnessed to her co-workers outside the workplace, or called them at home.)

She should have been the employee that could be trusted the most, yet she stole from the company. She brought reproach on the name of Christ and Christians by her actions. She trampled down the heart of this businessman, so that he didn't want to have anything to do with Christianity and would not accept the Word of God from others.

We can intercede for those who might be wayside ground.

Before the Word is given, we can pray that God will send those who will plow up the soil of the person's heart in the right ways, that they will help the person become a heart that wants to hear the Word and believe it, that the person will have a hungry heart, desiring to hear the good news of God's Word to them.

We can also pray that the offended person will learn to forgive, not condone or approve what was done, but to forgive and get unattached from that offender, so that he will be out of the way of the Lord working on that other person.

When the Word is given out, we should pray a shield around it, a wall of protection and ask for holy angels to guard the Word in this person's life, until the person has understanding and belief in it.

Back to the scripture passage: **"the fowls of the air devoured it."**

Have you ever seen a scarecrow in a newly planted garden? The farmer put it there to scare the birds away from stealing his seed, when he couldn't be there himself. He valued the seed that was planted and didn't want to lose it, so he guarded it all the time. But the seed of the Word of God was not guarded in this person's heart, represented by the wayside soil. What God said to them was not valued, nurtured, remembered, thought upon, and treasured. Mark's account plainly says that the fowls represent Satan's work as a thief to steal the Word from the person it comes to.

This can be true in the person who hears the gospel of salvation and dismisses it, but it can also be true in Christians' lives. Anytime the Word of God comes to a person, be he saved or lost, there is a need to treasure the Word, and to guard it from being stolen, so it won't become seed by the wayside. We do not want any of the Word to be unfruitful in us or anyone else.

Lord, if I at any time have been responsible for trampling the ground of people's hearts, so that they became hardened to the receiving of Your precious Word, please forgive me and wash me clean from this sin through the blood of my Savior, Jesus Christ.

I receive Your forgiveness and cleansing for this and I thank You for it. I pray for any that I might have hurt, Lord, that You will send people of Your Word and integrity to those trampled hearts. Plow that ground again and send them more seed, Lord, that they may be able to hear Your words of life to them and to receive them in their hearts, to become good ground that will bring

forth a magnificent harvest of fruitfulness in their lives to Your glory.

LESSON 61 - Mark 4:5-6, 16-17

...some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: 6But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away...

Luke 8:17 they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

Mark 4:16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

Luke 8:13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

The seed fell on a layer of rock without much soil. It warmed quickly in the sun. This warmth caused the seed to sprout up but the rocky layer beneath would prevent downward and necessary development of the root system. The ground was insufficient to provide what the seed needed. The rootless seed had no way of taking in nutrients and moisture, so it could grow properly. It also had no root to provide it stability and foundation.

What kind of heart was illustrated by the stony ground?

The stony ground is representative of the person who does not oppose the Word of God when he hears it, but responds to it "with gladness." He is glad to hear what the gospel offers him. The Word is accepted by his mind (soul), yet it does not get deep into his spirit so that the person can be rooted properly in Christ. He gets busy, doing "churchy" kinds of visible works, but he never develops a real friendship and fellowship with the Lord.

Christianity is not outward religious actions. It is a deep, abiding faith, born of a relationship with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which does not fade away, but grows stronger, especially in times of adversity. Being rooted in Christ allows the seed of the Word to grow properly being nourished from the "water" of the Holy Spirit and of the Word. The root/relationship in Christ grows stronger and deeper, as the upward growth, which is visible to others, develops. There are these two aspects of the Christian life: a growing relationship with the Son of God, and works of faith and love. Some spend much time on doing, while spending no thought or time on knowing the Lord Jesus or developing a relationship with Him. They are like stony ground.

This stony heart could also be characterized as stubborn. He doesn't let Jesus be Lord. He wants Jesus to be his Savior, not his Lord. This person wants to be lord of his own life. It makes him feel good to do religious things, however the stubbornness of his stony heart will not develop the relationship with Christ that he needs, in order to be strong when the winds of adversity blow.

Jesus must be accepted as Lord of your life. He must be King, not you.

What evidence is there in your life that Jesus is Lord?

Through the apostle Paul in Philippians 3:8-10, the Holy Spirit indicated that the relationship with Jesus is of primary importance.

Paul wrote in **Philippians 3: I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, ... 10that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death....**

Perhaps you know the chorus: "knowing You, Jesus, knowing You/ There is no greater thing/ You're my all/ You're the best/ You're my joy, my righteousness/ And I love You, Lord/ I love You, Lord..."

My version has a second verse: "Loving You, Jesus, loving You/ There is no greater thing/ You're my life, You're my light/ You're my song in the night/ and I love You, Lord/ I love You, Lord..."

When there is a strong root system, adverse circumstances don't cause scorching. Tribulation, affliction, bad news, distressing events, or a negative diagnosis won't cause a person to fall away or stumble in his faith, if he is rooted and grounded in Christ. He will know that Jesus loves him and will take care of him through it all. His relationship with the Lord Jesus anchors him.

Psalm 112:7 He will not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.

Why does this person trust the Lord? Because he knows Him. He knows His character. He knows Jesus loves him and that Jesus proved it by taking his place on the cross. He is confident in his Lord, because he knows Him.

Notice in Mark 4:17, affliction and persecution come because of "the Word," (Mt 13:21, Mk 4:17). That means that it is the Word of God in you that is the reason for the attack of the devil, who brings the affliction or persecution. He doesn't want the Word to become productive in you. He doesn't want you to be rooted and grounded in Christ Jesus. He wants to stop your growth and your spiritual prosperity.

The devil doesn't want you to be the overcomer, the victor. He wants you to be defeated and to be his slave.

So how do you develop your relationship with Christ...so that you will have a strong root system in Him...so you will be able to survive and even thrive in the midst of these attacks?

You get to know someone by spending time with him, talking to him, expecting him to talk to you, reading his letters, meditating on them (going over and over it), thinking about him. That's how you begin to develop your relationship with the Lord. You tell Him you want a deeper relationship with Him. He wants that for you too. He will do everything necessary to bring that about. You must do your part, too. Focus on the Lord Jesus, spend time with Him, think on His word, pray His Word back to Him, etc.

Lord Jesus, I don't ever want to be stony ground to the seed of Your Word. I don't want to be a stubborn heart that opposes Your will. I want to be so rooted and grounded in You, so deeply established in You, that nothing can ever move me or cause me to fall away from being with You. I want to be Your friend, Your companion forever.

I don't want anything to diminish my fellowship with You. I want to bring honor to You by being good ground for Your Word to lodge in and by producing fruit that would please You. Holy

Spirit, lead me in a stronger, deeper relationship with my Lord Jesus Christ. I know that the right kind of works will come from that, as a natural result of Your work in me and through me. Thank You, because I know this is a prayer that will always be answered with "YES."

LESSON 62 - Mark 4:18-19

18And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, **19**And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Luke 8:14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

In the previous two lessons, we studied the hardened heart (wayside) and the shallow heart (stony).

In this part of the parable, the seed of the Word of God is sown in the heart that contains thorns.

According to the scripture, the thorns represent: cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things or the pleasures of this life.

What do these things do to the Word? These things choke the Word and steal from it until it is unable to bear fruit unto harvest. Its potential goes unrealized.

Let's look at each thorn closely.

"Cares of this world" ...The Greek meaning for "cares" is anxieties or distractions. They are things which take away the focus from believing the Word of God and from doing the will of God. They are things associated with doubting God's goodness and His promises to take care of His children, thus producing anxiety. Focusing on the cares of this world will divert the attention from trusting God and center it on worrying about circumstances and problems, as if the person were an orphan and had no heavenly Father to take care of him.

God says in Phil 4:6, "Be anxious about nothing..." **6**Be careful (full of anxiety) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

The Living Bible (TLB) paraphrases it this way: **6**Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers. **7**If you do this, you will experience God's peace, ... His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.

Pray about everything, turning all your cares over to the Father. (**1**Peter **5:7** Cast... all your care upon him; for he careth for you.)

Another thorn that chokes out the Word of God in a person's life:" the deceitfulness of riches"

"Deceitfulness" has to do with giving a false impression, beguiling or cheating. Why would God refer to riches as having a deceitfulness to it? People who are rich can fall into the trap of thinking that their money can solve all their problems, and they may become self-sufficient. **Proverbs 8:18** The rich man is wise in his own eyes....

They may view themselves as invincible, immortal, that nothing can touch them and that there is no problem that their money can't solve. They are beguiled, deceived in this kind of thinking. God gives warning to the person who trusts in riches. **Psalm 52:5-7 God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living... the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches....**

They are being cheated of the real riches, those of eternal weight and everlasting value. **1Cor 4:17-18 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh (produces) for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

(TLB) **17These troubles and sufferings of ours are, after all, quite small and won't last very long. Yet this short time of distress will result in God's richest blessing upon us forever and ever! 18So we do not look at what we can see right now, the troubles all around us, but we look forward to the joys in heaven which we have not yet seen. The troubles will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.**

Having riches is not wrong, but trusting in them rather than God is wrong.

Mark 10:22-24 But (the rich young ruler) was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.23Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" 24And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!

Luke 12:21 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17" And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18" So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19' And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." ' 20" But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' 21" So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

1 Tim 6:9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Rev 3:17 "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17" Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'-and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-

Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20" but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21" For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to

trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

All people, rich and poor alike, are to be rich towards God, rich in faith, rich in good works. Every one of us is rich compared to most of the people in the world. So these words are for us, to be sure that we are trusting in the Lord for our welfare, not our possessions.

If you see that there are thorns in your life, choking your fruitfulness, stealing from you, hindering you from being like Christ, keeping you from having fellowship with Jesus, get rid of them now. Follow the example that Moses set. **24It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be treated as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25 He chose to share the oppression of God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He thought it was better to suffer for the sake of the Messiah than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the great reward that God would give him. (TLB)**

LESSON 63 - (Continued from Mark 4:18-19)

18And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, 19And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Luke 8:14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

Another thorn, besides the ones stated here, is mentioned in Matthew 13, and is described as lusts of other things or pleasures of this life.

Lust means a strong desire. It is only a wrong desire or passion when it is in opposition to the Word and will of God. It places something or someone in a higher position than God and becomes an idol to the person. It could be a person's business or work, ungodly ambitions or coveting what others have. It could be the craving for worldly pleasures, in any of the many forms that could take. It could be lust towards something in the past, or something in the future with the desire to obtain it, no matter what, without regard to what God's will is.

Lusts of other things so focus a person that he becomes blind to the eternal and makes him think that this is the only life. He chooses to place all his time and energy on this life, rather than the things of the Spirit and doing the will of God.

His potential for godly fruitfulness is affected by these things, and he becomes unfruitful. His life has been wasted on things that did not count when evaluated with God's standard. He brings no fruit to perfection (maturity).

He who lets himself be deceived by riches or becomes entangled with the cares of the world and the lusts of other things produces no fruit of the Holy Spirit. **Gal 5:22-23 the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control.**

There is no fruit of righteousness in him. **Phil 1:9-11 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10that you may approve**

the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

The thorny soul has no evidence of the fruit of light. **Eph 5:9 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness**

There is no fruit in him that honors Christ. **John 15:2. "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.**

A person who has thorns in his life must recognize that he is trusting in things, desiring things, or worrying about things rather than trusting God and putting the Lord first.

He is keeping his thoughts on earthly things and circumstances, believing in his own sufficiency, rather than depending on the Lord. **Luke 8:14 "Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity."**

The Holy Spirit says in **1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For all that is in the world- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-is not of the Father but is of the world. 17And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.**

LESSON 64 - Mark 4:20

20And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Luke 8:15 "But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

Remember that the seed represents the Word of God (Luke 8:11)? The four grounds or conditions of the soil represent people and their heart conditions, because Luke 8:15 uses words like "they" and "in their hearts."

Jesus was teaching how people receive the Word of God when it comes to them. He's saying that whatever condition a person's heart is in, that will determine his reception of the Word of God and what results or what "harvest" it has in his life. In the previous lessons, we have seen 3 conditions of hearts:

- the hardened heart that needed to forgive, so that the Word of God would not be blocked from reaching his heart
- the shallow heart that needed a relationship with Jesus ,not just religious works ,
- the strangled heart which let the things of the world choke out its faith and works.

Now we will study the good ground of the surrendered heart.

The good-ground person hears the Word and receives (believes, lives by it, follows it, obeys it--all incorporated in a definition of faith) and therefore brings forth those things visible to the rest of the world that testify of the good seed that was sown in him, the Word of God living in him.

The good ground is a heart that is all that the others were not. It is receptive to the Word. It is responsive to the Word and it does not hinder what was sown in it. It held on to the Word and didn't forget it or ignore it or dismiss it. Do you hold on to the Word of God?

The good heart understood the importance of being rooted and established in a relationship with Jesus, not just as Savior, but also as Lord. He surrendered himself and his past to the Lord. He gave his present and his future to the control of the Lord. He made the Lord first in his life. He inquired of the Lord as to what was the next step he should take. He looked to the Lord for instructions and help.

This person also did not provide space for the things of the world in his life. The things of the world were choked out of his life by his being in the Word of God and being obedient to what it said. Good ground plus good seed produce good fruit.

"bear fruit with patience"

What does that mean? One thing it implies is that time is involved. It will take patience to produce a good harvest. **Heb 12:11 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

3For consider Him... lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

James 1:4, 5:7 let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

There is a progression to becoming a fruitbearer. **Mark 4:28 "For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. (TLB) 28For the soil made the seeds grow. First the stalks pushed through, and later the heads of wheat formed, and finally the grain ripened for harvest,...**

If you look at your life since you've become a Christian, you should be able to see a progression of spiritual growth in it. When you made a profession of faith in Jesus, you chose Him as Lord and Savior. Therefore, there should be evidence that Jesus is Lord in your life. You should be able to tell that He is Lord in more areas of your life today than He was when you first came to know Him and there should be a moving closer to Him, not farther away.

In the time that you have been a Christian, you should be able to see a pattern of growth in yourself, because of your obedience to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Not only should there be spiritual growth within you, but it should also be seen in your actions.

John 7:38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39... this He spoke concerning the Spirit,... Are you a thoughtful, loving person to those around you? Do you let the Holy Spirit lead you into doing good works and into being a blessing to others? Is the work of the Holy Spirit in you and through you a trickle, a rivulet, a stream, or a river? None of us are what we need to be, but there should be a

progression, a recognizable pattern of spiritual growth in your actions.

When good seed is planted in good soil, the soil does not worry about what growth will occur, it simply responds to the presence of the seed and provides all it has to nourish the seed, so the seed can grow to its fullest extent. So, too, must we simply allow the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to work in us, to deepen our relationship with the Lord and, as we increase our yieldedness to the Holy Spirit's desires, we will see the river of God flow through us to others in a greater way than ever before.

LESSON 65

20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Of those who bear fruit to the glory of the Father, some produce 30 fold, 60 fold and one hundred fold. This shows that there are different measures of results when the Word of God is sown in the good ground of a person's heart.

In John 15, three measures are mentioned as well. The branches (those who are believers) of the vine (Jesus Christ) bring forth (1) fruit 15:2, (2) more fruit 15:2 or (3) much fruit 15:5.

This passage in John also explains what governs how much fruit is produced. Jesus encouraged His disciples to stay close to Him, and to obey His Word, so that they would be very fruitful in the eternal things that would glorify the Father. **John 15:4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.**

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples..

Verse 16 refers to eternal fruit that will bring glory to the Father and to you when God gives rewards for our service. **John 15:16 I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17 "These things I command you, that you love one another. (See how fruitbearing and love are connected?)**

Every believer will receive rewards for the quality of his fruitbearing in this life. **1 Corinthians 3:13,14 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.**

What kind of fruit will be produced? The fruit will be that which speaks of God, His character, the worship of Him, love for Him.

Matthew 22:37 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul,

and with all your mind.'The second is a result of the first: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**

Romans 13:8-13 Owe no one anything except to love one another (you can never love enough), for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. **9**For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **10**Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

11And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. **12**The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. **13**Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

Jesus also commanded Christians to love each other. **John 15:17** "These things I command you, that you love one another.

30 fold, 60 fold and one hundred fold are the results of good ground responding to the Word of God. Obviously they responded in different measures.

How do we become 100 fold ground? In Judges 7:1-7 Gideon was chosen by God to lead a company of men against a marauding army of Midianites. (Judges 6:33) God told Gideon to put out a call to some of the Israelite men to go to war against this enemy. Gideon did and 32,000 men answered his call. God said this was too many. He told Gideon to tell all those that were fearful to go home. 22,000 left. God then gave Gideon a test for the 10,000 that remained, in order to get an even smaller fighting group. By the manner in which the men drank from a spring, they were separated into 2 groups, one containing 9,700 and the other 300. God told Gideon that He would deliver the Israelites from the enemy by the smaller group of 300...and He did. (Read about this in Judges 7:8-25.)

What does the story of Gideon's 300 have to do with 30,60, 100 fold? All of the 32,000 Israelites who originally showed up for the battle answered the call of Gideon, but their fear would have hampered their performance. Perhaps we could equate them with the 30 fold Christians, who have answered the call of God, but who are hampered in their life for Christ by their fears (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

To them God has said, 10Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. **11**Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. **12**Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. **13**For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. (Isaiah 41:10, 13)

The second group wasn't fearful, but they didn't drink the water wholeheartedly. They weren't very thirsty. These could be compared to Christians who have the water of the Word (Ephesians 5:26) available, but who aren't applying it much in their lives. They are not thirsty for the things of God. Remember the verse in **2 Timothy 2:15? Study to shew thyself approved unto**

God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The 100 fold Christians are those who have answered the call of God to fight the enemy, and who are using the Word of God to sustain them, to strengthen and change them, and to refresh and invigorate them. Those who guard and actively apply the Word in their lives are those who love the Lord. **John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings...**

The Spirit knows the best paths, the right words, the correct decisions, and the best choices to make. It doesn't make sense not to consult Him and to obey Him.

The 100 fold person is he who doesn't quench the Holy Spirit, who doesn't let fears and doubts control him, who allows the Holy Spirit to lead him without opposition, who makes love for God, his brethren, and his fellowman the purpose of his life.

Certainly the conclusion to this lesson is that we can all be 100 fold Christians. Nothing limits us but ourselves. It is our choices, our yieldedness to God or the lack thereof that is the deciding factor and that determines the measure of a God-honoring, God-glorifying harvest in our lives.

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