Frisco First Baptist Church

THE PARABLES OF JESUS
STATE OF THE HEART
LUKE 8:1-15
10/11/2026

MAIN POINT

The state of our heart has great impact on how we respond to Jesus' message.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

> **When you were growing up, were there times you knew it was best not to ask your parent(s) for something you wanted? What were your cues in knowing when your parents would be receptive or not receptive to you?**
>
> **What about now? Are there times you are more receptive to what other people have to say than others? When do you tend to "check out" of a conversation (or sermon)? What factors contribute to your being fully engaged?**
>
> **Why do you think so many of us seem to go from one message or sermon to the next, without ever practically applying those truths into our lives?**

We all understand that circumstances sometimes distract us from receiving truth. In Matthew 8, Jesus told a parable about a factor that is far more important than circumstance in determining how we'll respond to gospel truth—our hearts. Those with open hearts will receive the truth of the gospel with gladness and implement this truth in their everyday lives.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 8:1-8.

> **What do you know about some of Jesus' followers from verses 1-3? Why do you think of the thousands of people who had heard Jesus' message (5:1, 15), only a handful are identified as having left their lives to follow Him?**
>
> **Taking verses 3-4 into consideration, why do you think Jesus decided to tell this parable?**

What were the characteristics of each kind of soil included in the parable?

In an agricultural society, everyone would have understood what happened when a sower went out into a field to sow his seed. At least one path ran through most fields, and much of the terrain in Israel was rocky under a thin layer of topsoil. Dropping seeds along such paths was futile. Many fields had thorn bushes along the perimeters. Seeds falling there had no chance to grow and survive until harvest time. Others, however, did fall on fertile soil and produced a bumper crop (100 times what was sown). There is a difference between hearing and listening, and between receiving and accepting. The 12 disciples and the women who supported Jesus' ministry with their finances had listened and accepted the Word of God to the point that it impacted their lives. The crowds heard and received what Jesus gave them, but their lives were largely unchanged.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 8:9-10.

What does it tell you about the disciples that they asked Jesus to explain the parable?

What does it reveal about the state of our hearts when we don't desire to dig deeper into challenging spiritual truths?

What do you think Jesus meant in verse 10?

Jesus' disciples could not understand the point of the story, and they wanted to learn all they could from Him, so they weren't afraid to admit ignorance and ask Him its meaning. Quoting from Isaiah 6:9, Jesus explained that He used parables—stories that give new meaning to familiar objects or scenarios—as a way to reveal the truths of the kingdom of God to believers, but that the story by itself actually concealed the meaning from unbelievers. This should not be viewed as deception on Jesus' part, but that He truly understood the hearts of men, as made evident in verse 9, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Jesus wanted His listeners to carefully consider the story and its hidden meaning and practical implications. Many people either hear only what they want to hear, or they refuse to understand what they do hear. Far worse are those who hear and understand, but do not act on what they hear.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 8:11-15.

Based on Jesus' interpretation, what character traits might be representative of each kind of soil?

Which of the soils produce similar results? What do these results portray? Which soil is unique, and how so?

In His parable, Jesus described four types of soil, with soil representing people who hear the gospel. The first three refer to people who are not saved but who have varying responses to the seed of the Word of God. Then Jesus contrasted those types of people

with people whose hearts are good soil. The same good seed fell on all four types of soil, but only this last example referred to the person who truly received the Word.

> **When we share our faith with others, we are being used to spread the seed. What help do you get from this parable about sharing your faith?**
>
> **According to verse 15, what are the characteristics of a person who has been born again?**

First, the person hears the Word of God with an honest and good heart. The second characteristic of people whose hearts are good soil is that they hold on to Christ's teaching. Finally, Jesus said the seed in the good soil would bear fruit with endurance. True believers make a faith commitment that endures to the end. Their lives are spiritually productive, and they consistently live in obedience to Jesus Christ and His Word.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

> **What inherent warning is there for each of us in this parable?**
>
> **What active ways can we till the soil of our hearts to make us ready to receive the Word of God? Before worship? Before our group? Before our personal time with God?**
>
> **How does Christian community help till the soil of our hearts in a way that wouldn't otherwise happen? How can we make the most out of our engagement in Christian community? How can we invite those not yet believing into this community?**

PRAYER

Thank God that He loves us enough to continue teaching us and that He longs for us to hear Him. Invite Him to speak to you and let you hear Him like never before. Ask Him to bear fruit a hundred times what was sown in your group this week.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 8:1-15

8:1-3 As Jesus was traveling and preaching in Galilee, He was accompanied by the Twelve and several well-to-do women who, out of gratitude for being healed by Jesus, financially supported Him and the apostles. Mary Magdalene (i.e., of the town of Magdala), who became a well-known follower (Mt 27:61), is introduced here. Joanna, who is also mentioned in 24:10, was married to a man who held a responsible position under Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee. Nothing else is known about Susanna.

8:5-8 From this point forward, Jesus used the parable approach much more, the purpose of which is explained in verses 9-10. In an agricultural society, everyone would have understood what happened when a sower went out into a field to sow his seed. At least one path ran through most fields, and much of the terrain in Israel was rocky under a thin layer of topsoil. Dropping seeds along such paths was futile. Many fields had thorn bushes along the perimeters. Seeds falling there had no chance to grow and survive until harvest time. Others, however, did fall on fertile soil and produced a bumper crop (100 times what was sown).

8:9-10 His disciples, probably indicating the Twelve, inquired of Jesus what He meant. The introductory then suggests the disciples were motivated by the parable to know more about its meaning. Jesus complimented the disciples because they asked about His teaching. Others did not want to understand, did not put their faith in Jesus, and did not understand. Thus, they fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 6:9, which Jesus quoted. After calling for the crowd to listen responsibly to His parable, Jesus explained that some harden themselves to the gospel but those who are willing to trust Him can understand its truth.

8:11-12 In explaining the parable to the Twelve, Jesus focused on the one consistent aspect, the seed. While different types of soil are described, the sower did not discriminate as to where he sowed. He distributed the seed—the word of God—all along the way. Jesus described four types of soil. The first three refer to people who are not saved but who have varying responses to the seed of the Word of God. The hard soil of the path represented people whose hearts were hardened. In the agriculture of Jesus' day, fields were crisscrossed with paths where people normally walked from one place to another, wearing the soil into a compacted state, making it resistant to the seed strewn by the hand of a sower. This soil rejects the seed. It represents those who allow the Devil to take the Word from their hearts. Jesus was not saying that the Devil had the power to take the gospel out of the hearts of those who had been saved. Instead, the phrase comes from the Greek word that means "from" or "away from" as opposed to "from within."

8:13 Referring to the seed falling on rocky soil, Jesus depicted people who liked what they heard but who did not receive His message or teaching into their hearts. Many people hear the good news of Jesus and welcome the idea of being saved but do not receive Jesus by faith into their lives. When a time of testing comes, the proof of their lack of receiving Christ is shown by their departure.

8:14 The thorny soil represents people who are not committed to Christ, even though they have heard the Word of God. Instead of making a faith commitment to Jesus, they merely add their thoughts of Christ to the periphery of their lives. Other matters, such as worries, riches and pleasures of life are more central to their concerns. Consequently, such people do not produce mature fruit that would denote seed that actually had taken root in their lives.

8:15 Lastly, Jesus contrasted the first three types of people with those whose hearts are good ground. The same good seed fell on all four types of soil, but only this last example refers to a person who has been born again. Only those who genuinely commit

themselves to Jesus Christ will be saved, and they will live consistently in obedience to Him and His Word.