

Inspired Letters – Week 1

Intro – Red Letters

- popular man... Jesus... even today most people acknowledge Jesus as most popular, influential man who ever lived... and died... and lived again... leading up to Easter
- Jesus words give life

Luke 8:4 – 8

One day Jesus told a story in the form of a parable to a large crowd that had gathered from many towns to hear him:

- parables – familiar illustration or situation and give it a startling truth

5 “A farmer went out to plant his seed. As he scattered it across his field, some seed fell on a footpath, where it was stepped on, and the birds ate it.

- farmer sowed by hand, personal touch, walking across fields
- goal was to get as much seed as possible in the good soil so that it would grow

6 Other seed fell among rocks. It began to grow, but the plant soon wilted and died for lack of moisture.

7 Other seed fell among thorns that grew up with it and choked out the tender plants.

8 Still other seed fell on fertile soil. This seed grew and produced a crop that was a hundred times as much as had been planted!” When he had said this, he called out, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

- work to see the truth... God opens our eyes and ears
- willing to hear and understand... follower of Jesus... don't = not

9 – 10 His disciples asked him what this parable meant.

- God allows all people to hear the message, experience His good gifts, knowing that all will not accept it...
- Extravagant, generous love

10 He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of God. But I use parables to teach the others so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: ‘When they look, they won’t really see. When they hear, they won’t understand.’

- God is sovereign... chooses some to hear and understand and allows people not to...
- Most would not receive message... and yet God still sent Jesus to point people to Him because some “would receive” the message!
- Many in crowd just wanted a show or to use Jesus for our gain... not truly interested in following/ obeying Jesus as Lord and Son of God
- Why show grace to anybody? Why reveal mysteries at all?
- God's good glory...all about Him...

11 – 15 “This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is God’s word.

- we sow the Word... not good deeds, or ideas, or plans
- Jesus (referred by John as the Word) and the gospel (the seed) do not change...
- sometimes the Word is received in different ways...
- the heart receives truth in different ways
- Our job is to join God in His work... spread the message everywhere, and trust Him no matter what
- our job is to faithfully plant...no crop if no seed planted
- plant the church, the gospel, in North Florida and beyond.... and trust Him for growth
- not done until all the seed has been scattered... using every method available!
- All out... no holding back....

12 The seeds that fell on the footpath represent those who hear the message, only to have the devil come and take it away from their hearts and prevent them from believing and being saved.

- Satan steals seed... active spiritual warfare
- Satan is only mentioned in one... interesting

13 The seeds on the rocky soil represent those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they believe for a while, then they fall away when they face temptation.

- going gets tough... fall away

14 The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity.

- Thorns rob nutrition, water, light, and space from young seedlings
- thorns... choked out... distractions...false security of money... American dream?
- this story should keep us awake at night...
- just because my soil might be good now...does not mean the thorns will crop up next year...

15 And the seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, good-hearted people who hear God's word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest.

- we need to pray that God keeps our hearts "good soil"... open, receptive to the Gospel, the WORD, Jesus!!
- believer needs to do things to help the ground not turn hard
- plan as a people to follow Jesus and keep ground of our hearts soft
- worship God together – read Bible, pray, give money, obey--- own responsibility to grow in worship
- connect in life together – who knows & is praying for me? Who am I connecting & praying for?
- serve on mission together – serve Jesus in church and out... what is my gift? How am living to make an eternal difference in the world?
- these are requirements and agreement of membership... be offering that this spring
- growth is a continual, gradual process
- ends in harvest, spiritual maturity

- hear, cling, and patiently... produce a crop
 - what are we producing?
 - Wheat produces more wheat...can't help it!
 - Inside every christian is a church plant
 - we, the church, followers of Jesus... are the plan of God... Great Commission...
 - don't really “get it” until we “share it”
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- some people say... “I can't remember the day or moment I accepted Jesus...am I saved?”
 - Salvation is a state of on-going belief in Jesus death for my sin and being raised to life to set us free, growing in knowledge, following Him in obedience as our Lord....
 - today, am I believing and following Him?

Transition to communion....

Luke 22:15 – 20

15 Jesus said, “I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins.
16 For I tell you now that I won't eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.”

17 Then he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then he said, “Take this and share it among yourselves. 18 For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come.”

19 He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.”

20 After supper he took another cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.