

THE LORD'S HARVEST

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Lesson: Mark 4:2-20

“Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow” (Mark 4:3).

Now, the Lord is the Sower, and the Word is the seed that He sows. Our minds are the ground upon which the seed falls. It is the fruit of this harvest that we offer to the Lord. For more than anything else, the Lord wants us to become useful people—men and women who love His Word and want to do the Lord's will. But before we can do the Lord's will there are many things that we have to learn. That is why He has given us His Word. If we did not have the Word we would not know the Lord, we would not know about His kingdom in the heavens, and we would not know what it is that the Lord wants us to do. If we think about it in this way, we will realize that the Lord's Word is our most precious possession. It is by means of the Word that the Lord plants seeds of truth in our minds.

But seeds are tender things. Unless they are cared for they are soon scattered or wither away. This is the meaning of that part of the parable about the seeds that fell upon poor ground. So it is with the truths that we learn from the Lord's Word. Unless we love them, unless we care for them, unless we cherish them like tender plants in a garden, they cannot bear fruit for the Lord's harvest. Then we will have nothing that we can bring to the Lord, no offering that we can make to Him.

Sometimes we hear the Word read and do not pay attention; we think of things that we would like to do, and not of the things that the Lord wants us to do. It is not that we do not want to learn, but our minds are so busy with other thoughts that we do not make the effort to learn. This is what is meant by the seed that fell by the wayside. It falls by the wayside because we are not thinking about the Lord. Then birds of the air—that is, the other things which we are thinking about—take the truth away, and it is lost to us.

But, suppose we do pay attention, suppose we listen carefully to every word that is said. Useful as this may be, the things we have learned from the Word are still soon forgotten *unless* we love them. We do not forget what we love. You do not forget your parents or your friends. But the Lord is also our parent. He is our heavenly Father. And He has said that He is our friend, remember? “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (John 15:14).

Family Talk

The Lord's commandments are His teachings—the things that we learn from the Word. If we forget these things as soon as we have learned them because we do not really care about them, then the truths we learn from the Lord are like the seeds that fell on stony ground, where they did not have much earth. They spring up quickly, but because they have no roots in love to the Lord they soon wither away.

Now, what happens if we do come to love these stories from the Word, but then, after a while, we find that it is hard to do the things which the Lord wants us to do? It is not always easy to live as the Lord wants us to live, especially when selfish thoughts enter our minds. When this happens, we may neglect the beautiful garden which the Lord has given us. The selfish thoughts, which evil spirits sow in our minds, can take the place of the Lord's harvest. This is why we must tend the garden with great care. When evil thoughts enter our minds we must remove them. For if we do not, then, like the seeds that fell among thorns, the truths of the Word are choked by falsities and can yield no fruits.

But if we learn to love the Word and try each day to do the things which the Lord wants us to do, then He will give us the knowledge and the strength to care for this garden. In time it will become like the beautiful garden of Eden. And when we become angels in heaven, those truths which the Lord planted in our minds when we were children on earth will bring forth a great crop: "some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Then will we bring an offering of good things to the Lord—those things which He loves above all else. We know what those things are, for the Lord Himself told us about them in His Word. He told us what is good. As the prophet Micah said so many years ago, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). If we do these things, then we will have a rich harvest to return to the Lord.

Amen.