

Hope for the Hearing Impaired

Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 8:4-15



Big Idea

A bad soil can't make itself good. An incurable heart can't make itself well. A blind man can't make himself see. A deaf man can't make himself hear. God has to do that in an act of sovereign grace. And He's done it for all of us who are in Christ!

(1) The Purpose of Parables

A parable can be defined as: “a narrative or saying of varying length, designed to illustrate a truth especially through comparison or simile” (BDAG). It might help you to think of it this way: Parables are earthly windows into heavenly realities. With the story He sets the frame of the window. And then, with His help, we start to see the view through the window—the realities that lie beyond.

“Parables both reveal and conceal truth: they reveal it to the genuine seeker who will take the trouble to dig beneath the surface and discover the meaning, but they conceal it from him who is content simply to listen to the story. . . Parables are a mine of information to those who are in earnest, but they are a judgment on the casual and careless” (TNTC).

So, as Jesus looks out at these crowds following Him now, and as He scatters the seed of His word, He knows there's many soil types represented. He knows there's all sorts of reasons these people have for being here—some worldly and selfish, and some are genuinely starting to hear and trust Him. By speaking in parables Jesus is able to simultaneously weed out the former and minister to the latter. He is able to conceal truths from those who are merely pursuing Him for selfish gain, while at same time revealing truths to those who are truly wanting to follow Him. Jesus is not interested in gaining a following but in gaining followers.

(2) The Gift of Grace

The parables initiate the division between those who have ears to hear and those who don't, but they don't tell us how we get them in the first place. How do I become the good soil with the good heart who will hear the word, take it in deep, hold onto it, and bear fruit a hundredfold? How do I get ears to hear?! Because that's what everything turns on.

The answer comes to us in the beginning of v. 10 with that little phrase: “To you it has been given . . .” In other words: you and I, if we have ears to hear, we have been given them as an act of God's sovereign grace (cf. Matt 16:17; Luke 24:45–46; Acts 16:14b).

Reflection Questions



- Does it seem counterintuitive to you that fruitfulness begins not with activity but inactivity, not with doing but listening? How has first listening to the word of God made you more fruitful in the end? If hearing is so important, how can you take care how you hear (v. 18)?
- How do the parables simultaneously reveal and conceal? Can you think of examples in the Scriptures where this very thing happens as a result of Jesus' use of them? What precious truths about the kingdom of God have been revealed to you through the parables?
- Read again the three texts mentioned under point two above. How do you interpret them? Do you believe that God has done this for you? How do you know? What qualities should mark your life because of God's mercy shown to you in this way?