

Does the Parable of Soils Support Arminianism?

Luke 8:14 - 15

Nutshell: In the Parable of the Soils, people are the soils. We respond to the Word in four basic ways. Only one way leads to salvation. The ones who are lost let the Word of God go missing.

I. Context: The Parable of the Soils.

II. Text

Luke 8:14 Now the *seed* having fallen into the thorns: these are the *ones* having heard, and going forth under *the* preoccupations and plenty and pleasures of life- they are thoroughly choked; and they do not carry *on to* completion.

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

A. An outline of Luke to this point

I. About this Letter: So you'll know about this Jesus, 1:1-4

II. Rejoice! The Messiah is born! A boyhood turning point, 1:5 – 2:52

III. John proclaims repentance for Christ's coming, 3:1 – 20

IV. Messiah's Entry Credentials: Baptism and Genealogy, 3:21–38

V. His Initiation: Fasting and Temptation, 4:1 - 13

VI. His Self-Introduction and Hometown Rejection, 4:14 - 30

VII. Jesus: the FIRST MAN with absolute authority **in** Scriptures, and **over** angels/demons, sickness, and nature, 4:31 - 5:11

VIII. Turning-Point Healings, 5:12 – 32

A. Repatriating a leper, 5:12 – 16, touching the unclean outcast to preview His taking of our exile into Himself

B. Forgiving sin, 5:17 – 26, thus declaring His Deity

C. Healing/ renewal of a man's (Matthew's) soul, 5:27 – 32

IX. New and Old Covenants:

A. NC = OC *replacement*, ~~patch-up~~, 5:33–39. NC: Law in ♥.

B. 6:1-11, OC Sabbath *strict*, but intended as a *help*.

X. Picking the 12, 6:12-16.; teaching / etc., incl. Tyrites, 6:17-19

XI. Jesus' teaching manifesto: the **SERMON ON THE PLAIN**

- A. The Sermon on the Plain gives the *earthy* evidence of the *spiritual* traits in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt 5-7. Here, the poor are literal and the rich are their haters. Christ's disciples are to love their haters.
 - B. Christ's disciples are to give generously, living by pity
 - C. Only right teaching can produce right living, always convicting *self* first. Only building squarely, exclusively on Christ will survive the floodplains life is lived in.
- XII. Messiah & His Mission Portrayed in His Interactions**
- A. Forecast: A **Gentile** seeks Jesus for a healing, Lk 7:1-10
 - B. Forecast: Hope still held out to **Israel**: Nain widow, 11-17
 - C. Recheck: But is this ↑ the Messiah? Just a healer? 18-23
 - 1. John expected Christ to judge the world, per prophecy
 - 2. Luke uses John to explicitly introduce the Interim in Christ's work, between a 1st and a 2nd coming
 - 3. Jesus' healings forecast an era of extended mercy, especially to the Gentiles- the era we're in now, 24-30
 - D. The Jews rejected John and Jesus on opposite counts, but Wisdom claimed both John and Jesus as her own, 31-35
 - E. Love for Jesus is tied to forgiveness. The sinful woman had both; Simon the Pharisee lacked both, 36-50.
 - F. Many women followed and helped Jesus' ministry, 8:1-3
 - G. Jesus now begins His formal Parable teaching, 8:4

Kid-speak: What do we call the kind of lessons where Jesus said, "God's Kingdom is like _"?

- 1. Parable #1: The Planter and the Soils, 8:4-8
- 2. The Explanation's preview: 8:9-10
 - a. Parables put God's kingdom right before men
 - b. But unless God opens our eyes, we won't see it
- 3. Parable key for this parable: seed = Word.
- 4. Soil #1: Compacted. Word taken by Satan before penetration.
- 5. Soil #2: Rock layer just beneath.
 - a. Joyful reception!
 - b. But a trying time proves its lack of root.
- 6. Soil #3: Alongside thorns: Preoccupations; Plenty; Pleasures of life-
 - a. *Whatever* eclipses God as supreme
 - b. As evidenced by whatever chokes out the Word

7. Remember, we must assess ourselves: What sort of soil/ receptivity to the Word am I?

Outline:

- I. The Word Can Be “Thoroughly Suffocated”
 - A. Meaning choked to death: the life in the Word didn’t mirror life in the soul
 - B. Entangled with *bad* elements
 1. Preoccupations: worries, engulfing fears

Kid-speak: What is worry? It’s when you’re afraid bad things will happen to you, and God can’t stop it. Is it easy to worry? Yes.

2. Plenty: greed
 3. Pleasures: wrongful desires
 - C. Or *entangled* in otherwise OK activities (the entanglement being the trap)
 1. Preoccupations: life’s busyness
 2. Plenty: the hunt for my daily security
 3. Pleasures: God-given earthly enjoyments eclipsing Christ and heaven
 - D. Are OK activities really easier to repent of than bad ones?
 - II. The Word Can Be Dropped Well ‘Short of Its Objective’
 - A. Lk 13:23-24, even for those who concentrated on its attainment
 - B. Three main detours:
 1. Burnout: the *flesh* could not follow the Spirit
 - a. FADING out: “Well, I still believe, but...”
 - b. FLAMING out: “Christ’s claims are not real.”
 - i. The Apostles aren’t real
 - ii. The Bible isn’t real
 2. APPLYING the energy to a *counterfeit*
 - C. But, again, all 3 return to *no new birth*
 1. No love of Christ to the despising of flesh (human strength and/or wisdom)
 2. No love of Christ’s righteousness
 - a. Assuming that my righteousness attains the goal
 - b. No real poverty of spirit. The goal becomes amendment.

III. The Main Difference of the Good Soil is God's Working

- A. A virtuous and sound heart can only come from God, Ezek 36:26
- B. The soil = the person. With God's DNA inside, the Word will prosper, 1 Jn 3:9.

H. Luke 8:14, Last time, I translated *hupo* "because of"; this time I translated it "under," with virtually the same meaning, but it fits more naturally in the sentence

- I. After the 3 kinds of thorns are described, they all have the same result: those who "hear and go forth under" their influence "are thoroughly choked"
 - 1. In the plant world, this means death
 - 2. But as with the rocky soil, there is an initial positive reception

Kid-speak: When you get older and you have a job or are taking care of babies, will that be enough to keep you from following God? Yes! You have to make up your mind that you will follow God *no matter what*.

- J. Do the Rocky and Thorny soils, with their initial positive reception, portray saved then unsaved?
 - 1. With only this parable to judge, it would be inconclusive
 - a. On the one hand, we have life, then death. That seems like saved, then unsaved.
 - b. On the other hand, the only kind of soil that bears fruit is the last one. That seems like the only saved one.
 - 2. How, then, would we explain the temporary signs of life?
 - a. Same as Heb 4:4-6
 - b. Human being were designed to relate to God
 - c. If the Devil isn't able to remove the Word immediately, men will likely see what they were missing: Augustine's 'God-shaped hole in our heart.'
 - d. Even without the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, then, we can respond positively, allowing the Word initial penetration, affecting our thoughts and actions
 - e. But **regeneration** is the key. Man can respond positively to the Word, but short of regeneration, the Word cannot do its full work. It cannot actually transform the soul.
 - i. In effect, man ends up trying to plug the Word into his

- life his own way. The Word = self-improvement.
 - ii. Eventually, when challenged where the Word didn't reach, man will revert to his old, real nature
 - iii. He only submitted to the Word provisionally
- 3. The answer, then, is No. The *temporary* signs of life are not proof of being "born again." Note that only one kind of soil bears fruit, Lk 6:43-45. That's our key to its being the only one matching the description of "saved."

Kid-speak: If God gives you a new heart to love and trust Jesus, we call that being "saved." Can someone get "unsaved" after being saved? No, not if God really gave them a new heart.

K. "Thoroughly choked"

- 1. The person is choked in relation to the Word. It's real influence is blocked.
- 2. The person bows to life's preoccupations and/or plenty and/or pleasures, as we considered last time (I'm thinking; I'm acquiring; I'm enjoying).

L. YET they may become 'zombies'!

- 1. Meaning this: it doesn't say that they *disavow* the Word, only that the Word's real fruit is not borne in them
- 2. They can therefore become 'Christians' by some definition other than Scripture's (cultural Christian, cult, theological liberal, Catholic (or spinoff), etc.

- 3. It is therefore critical to define a Christian Scripturally
 - a. The fact that it is a *complex* question (not *complicated*, but multi-layered) is seen in 1 John, the Bible book given TO test regeneration
 - b. 1 John has a repeated cycle of 3 tests
 - i. Keep God's commands
 - ii. Love the brethren (how do you know who they are until you define what a Christian is?)
 - iii. Have the right Christology (in Galatians, it's the right soteriology- doctrine of salvation)

Kid-speak: Do some people think God gave them a new heart, but He really *didn't*? Yup. We need to *make sure* we have a new heart.

- M. So Jesus' first parable is a fountainhead. It gets down to the most critical question: Who's been made right with God?
1. Jesus obviously intends this issue to be on the table. It's no secret matter just between you and God.
 2. We must test ourselves *and* one another, then joyfully embrace God's children
 3. Will we make mistakes about who's 'in'? Heartbreakingly, yes. But we can't therefore dodge the duty.
 4. Moving us to the second description of the Thorny ground's insufficiency:
- N. "They do not carry *on to* completion"
1. A little more literally, this would be, "They do not goal-carry." It's a compound word. They don't "end-carry" or "completion-carry."
 2. This especially contrasts them to the fruit-bearing soil, which *does* bear to a bountiful end
 3. Again, stopping short doesn't mean they throw their Bibles down. They may just begin reading it differently, 2 Pet 3:16, using some variety of *human* sense (which can make them passionate and popular) rather than *Gospel* sense.
 - a. Man's self-righteous nature produces full-blown defenses of all variety of counterfeits
 - b. This includes deeply somber counterfeits, wild-eyed ones, and everything in between
 - c. (Though *real* Christian worship styles may differ greatly)
 4. Those who only *start* well can greatly perplex those who continue
 - a. It can become a significant stumbling block: "I just *knew* he was a Christian!"
 - ★ b. Many, then, are choked out simply by refusal to categorize counterfeits (groups or individuals)
 - i. The good they do in Christ's name confuses us; *or* their great doctrinal understanding
 - ii. That's why there are 3 *interlocking* tests in 1 Jn.
 - c. If naming chokers is wrong, John himself was wrong, 1 Jn 2:19

Kid-speak: How many tests does the book of 1 John give for whether or not we are real Christians? 3.

- i. No, the only way to define the "in" group IS to define

- the “out” group, however dear some of them may be
- ii. Naming them puts them in our evangelistic sights
5. Those who choke on sidetracked professors may actually fit the rocky soil description better
 - a. They’re able to stay *focused*, but their souls have insufficient moisture of grace
 - b. Their human sensibilities don’t carry them far enough. The offense of total depravity, hell, election- the offense of the Gospel itself, becomes enough to block them off.
 - O. The Bible promises that whom the Spirit baptizes into Christ, 1 Cor 12:13, He will keep to the end, Eph 1:13
 1. No one will snatch them out of Jesus’ hand, Jn 10:28
 2. None will snatch them from the Father’s hand, Jn 10:29

Kid-speak: Who is it that saves us? The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Will They lose someone if They decide to save them? No.

3. But true regeneration makes these people very concerned to *keep themselves* in God’s hands, 1 Jn 5:21; Jude 1:21
4. The seed of God in us is self-proving, 1 Jn 3:9-10. It produces no presumption.
5. The “perseverance of the saints” (the “P” in “TULIP”) teaches that those whom the Spirit brings to Christ will persevere (endure) to the end, 1 Pet 1:5; 1 Cor 9:27

Luke 8:15 And the *one* in the good ground, these are *the ones* who, with a virtuous and sound heart, hearing the Word, they hold *it* fast and bear fruit with endurance.

- P. Obvious first question: where does a virtuous and sound heart come from?
 1. One elegantly embedded factor in the parable is that *the soil = the heart/ the person!* (The pronouns told us this too.)
 2. The only heart that houses the Word is a God-transformed one.
 3. And guess how He transforms it: Jms 1:18.
 4. Do these folks tangle with thorns and go through dry spells? Yes. But the Word **impels** the newborn man.
- Q. The issue of temporary ‘life’ raises the comparison between Arminianism and Calvinism (see other sheet)

1. Each view is self-consistent
2. But for me, only Calvinism is also consistent with Scripture

IV. How does this Teaching fit into the story of the Bible?

- A. Creation: God made man knowing that He would be saving a people.
- B. Fall: Man became a rejector of God's words.
- C. Redemption: God sends His Spirit and Word to call His people back.
- D. Judgment: Those who reject the Word will be rejected.
- E. Consummation: The Word preserves God's people to the end.

V. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, "Uphold the strengthless")
Until your heart is mended, don't let thorns blockade the Word.

VI. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): *What have I done wrong?
How have I lost righteousness?*

Does my love of the Word reflect its agency in my new birth?

VII. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):
How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?

I will use thorns and dry spells to catapult my love of the Word,
Jms 1:2.

VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: *How do I put this on the road?*
Walking with God means abiding in the Word, Jn 8:31.

Wrap-up: Arminianism teaches that you can lose your salvation. They are right that not everyone who has faith in Christ ends up in Heaven, Jn 12:42. But that's because of temporary faith, not a temporary new birth.

Their gravest mistake is seeing some spark in man by which he can reconnect himself to God. In effect, they give man a "virtuous and sound heart" *with* which man may *request* a "virtuous and sound heart." In this, the Parable of the Soils exposes the deep flaw in Arminianism.