

Make Room for God

Luke 8:4-15

Week of July 21, 2024

BELONG

Ask this Ice Breaker Question: Share a quirky habit or interesting routine that you do on a regular basis.

BELIEVE

Have someone in your group read aloud: Luke 8:4-15

Leader Context (not to be read aloud):

Jesus had a ministry akin to the activity of a sower going out to sow seed. The seed naturally would fall in many different types of locations; Jesus mentions four that were typical. It should be noted that the variety in results in this context was connected with the manner of first century agriculture. At the time, farmers spread the seed on the ground before they plowed the soil. As a result, it was inevitable that the sowing process produced widely different results with different seeds.

Ask these questions to prompt group discussion:

1. What do the seed, sower and the wayside soil represent? How do we see this play out in real life?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

The seed itself is the word of God. The sower, therefore, must be (at the moment) Jesus Himself, and (afterward) those He would commission to sow the word. Jesus identifies the first soil, that by the wayside, as people who hear the message (at least the words are in their consciousness), but do not respond in faith. Before they can do so, the effect of the word is intercepted by the supernatural work of the devil (the "birds of the air" in the parable), who removes the message before they can believe, and as a result, be saved. This verse suggests what the rest of the parable makes clear: that the word produces life in the last three soils, but not in the first, the only one where it is not believed.

2. What does the rocky soil represent and what problems arise with it?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

The second soil, the ones on the rock, believe (and, by implication from the previous verse, are saved). However, the word is designed to do more than just protect its hearers from eternal condemnation. Implicit in it is the power to produce fruit. In this respect, the rocky soil fails to be an adequate medium for its work. Many people are rocky in their response to the truth. They hear it accurately, believe it sincerely, yet, because their spiritual depth is minimal (they have no root), in



time they fall away. This expression is a common one in Scripture for people who cease to practice the distinctive lifestyle of the fruitful believer. The statement describes human behavior, but says nothing about God's attitude toward that behavior. The message of the kingdom is designed not simply to bring people into it, but to make them useful and fruitful citizens of it.

3. What does the thorny soil represent and what problems arise with it?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

The thorny soil represents people who go a little further than those of the rocky soil. They hear the word and begin to produce fruit, but never bring it to maturity. Their spiritual lives have some depth, but they are distracted by the cares, riches, and pleasures of life, which entangle the growth produced by the word and choke it out. Examples of such behavior are easy to find in the Scriptures and in contemporary life.

4. What does the good soil represent and why is it successful?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

Only in the fourth soil, the good ground, does the word of God find the place where it can produce the mature fruit that is its goal. Those who hear with a noble and good heart keep it (that is, they make its precepts the rule by which they live) and they bear fruit. Not only that, they bear fruit with patience. The last expression could be translated "in a persevering fashion." It is not a commentary on the state of a person's emotions, but on the consistency of his fruit-bearing.

BECOME:

Ask this question:

- 5. Read Luke 5:16, 6:12-13, and Mark 1:35. Being like Jesus is our ultimate goal as Christians, but it doesn't just happen -- it takes intentionality and dedication. What is one step you can take this week to grow in your spiritual disciplines with God?**

Bonus: Is there someone you can think of that might be willing to cheer you on as you go deeper?

Remember it's about relationship not ritual.

Close by praying together.