

YOU

Bible Study

Sermon Series: How to Share Christ
To be used with: Trust God to Work
Sermon Title Possibilities: Represent Christ By Continuing
Scripture: Matthew 13:18-23

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study "How to Share Christ," this sermon tells the teacher, the preacher, the witness to continue to share the message of Christ and not to be discouraged. As the late Dr. B. Gray Allison said, "We only fail if we do not witness." Our job is not to fertilize the soil. Our job is to continue planting the seed of God's Word and not become frustrated when people do not respond the way we desire.

Introduction: Farm life is very challenging. The farmer does not control how often the sun will shine or how much rain the soil will get. Yet, in faith, the farmer plants their seeds in the ground, trusting that God will provide. Using this picture of the farmer, Jesus tells a parable to explain the different responses to God's Word and encourage every saint to continue giving the Word even though the responses may not be to our liking. Plant and leave the results up to God.

1. Continue when people Miss It (vs. 18-19)

Jesus presented the first type of hearer. This listener hears the Word about God's kingdom and does not understand it. He or she misses the point. The Evil One comes and snatches away the message from their heart. This type of hearer could be a fool. The Bible declares that fools despise wisdom and discipline" (Pro 1:7). A fool despises God's wisdom because he wants to show off his opinions (Prov 18:2). This lack of understanding may be because this listener is an inexperienced one, a mocker, or one who loves being ignorant. The Scriptures admonishes, "How long will you mockers enjoy mocking and you fools hate knowledge?" (Prov 1:22).

You may be teaching the Word of God, but some are not listening because they are looking for an opportunity to express their ideas. Your message may be missed, but don't stop telling it. Let God handle it.

2. Continue when people Misread It (v. 20-21)

Jesus taught that there is another type of hearer. This listener is one who misreads the message. As the teacher teaches, the pastor preaches, or the saints share the Scriptures, this individual hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy. They hear about having a new name, a new family, a new home, a new walk, and a new talk, and become excited that everything is made

new by the gospel. Yet, because the Word does not take a deep root but is only skin deep, the rays of hardship and persecution destroy the Word.

Some people misread the intent of the message. God never promised that our lives would be without heartache and pain. He promised that He would be with us until the end of the age. Warn the hearers to be careful how they hear (Mark 4:24). So, when the tribulation of life come and test them, they will not pass away.

3. Continue when people Misinterpret It (v. 22)

Jesus described another hearer. This person misinterprets the message. You teach or plant the Word, but it is sown in a crowded heart. First, this heart is full of the worries or cares of this age. He or she is concerned with getting and maintaining the essential elements of existence: food, clothing, and shelter. This pursuit becomes a significant concern. Christ's command to not to worry about the cares of life, because life is more than food and clothing (Matt 6:25) is disregarded. Rather than seek Christ, cash is the pursuit.

The next item that crowds this listener's heart is the pursuit of riches. They seek security through money rather than the Master. Ezekiel described people like this in his day. He said that the people hear God's Word, but they don't obey because their "hearts pursue dishonest profit" (Eze 33:31). Paul lamented that Demas forsook him because he loved this present world (2 Timothy 4:10). Jesus warned His followers to watch out against greed because their life and ours is not measured in the abundance of one's possessions (Lu 12:15). Worries and the deceitfulness of wealth become more important than the Word. Rather than respond to the truth of the Word, the individual is tossed by the causing the Word of God to be unfruitful.

4. Continue when people Make sense of It (v. 23)

The last type of hearer that Jesus informed His witnesses about is the person who hears, and the teaching make sense. They understand it. These people listen closely to the message and mixed it with faith. As the Bible teaches faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom 10:17). The message was heard, believed, and it produces fruit in this type of hearer's life.

In contrast, the hardened heart has no crop; the stony heart has a weak harvest; the crowded heart has an overtaken crop, and the good heart has a plenteous yield. It is not hard to tell who has good ground. Look for the fruit!

The message you gave last week or the one you will give today, will produce and yield a hundred, sixty, or thirty times more in their lives. Rejoice and continue to share the Word.

Conclusion: Do not stop, continue sharing, keep on representing Christ by not being weary in sharing. We do not know what type of soil we are engaging. Yet, we must continue to do what is right. God will cause you to reap, if you do not give up!

Author Bio: Brian M. Carmichael Sr. is married to Stacey of twenty-seven years. They have four grown children (three boys and one girl) and two grandchildren. He is the pastor of Holy Temple Baptist in Memphis, TN. He is an adjunct professor at Baptist Health and Sciences University, Union University (Jackson, TN), and Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. He received his BSOL from Union University (Jackson, TN) and his MDIV and Ph.D. from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.