

Introduction

In [Luke 6:46-49](#), Jesus gives an illustration of those who hear but do not obey His word versus those who hear and obey Him (the wise man and the foolish man). This suggests that there are two important components of the gospel. First, people must hear the gospel ([Rom 10:13-17](#)). Second, people must obey the gospel.

[Luke 8:1-21](#) focuses on these two components: the proclamation of the gospel and response to the gospel. Not everyone who hears the gospel **listens** to the gospel. Not every profession of faith is a **genuine** profession of faith.

Jesus's preaching

[Luke 8:1-3](#) “1 Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.”

What did Jesus do in the cities and villages he visited? [Luke 8:1](#) ... proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God ...” Jesus set the pattern for missionary work. The church is commissioned to go throughout towns and villages proclaiming the gospel. The gospel (good news) is that the kingdom of God had come. Jesus said in [Luke 4:43](#) “... I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” **The church must do more than come together; we must go.**

Jesus traveled with the Twelve (the apostles), some women, and many others. *What did the three women who have in common?* [Luke 8:2](#) “... some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities...”

- Mary Magdalene previously had seven demons. Magdala was a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee [Michelle Morris]. She stayed by the cross when Jesus was crucified and came to the tomb the day He was resurrected. Pope Gregory (A.D. 591) suggested that she was the sinful woman who wiped Jesus's feet in [Luke 7](#). This idea is not impossible, but there is no evidence in Scripture to support this theory. There are a couple of gnostic gospels that include myths about Mary. *The Gospel of Mary* and *The Gospel of Philip* (which are not Scripture) describe Jesus's love for Mary, and suggest an intimate relationship, which has led some people to conclude that Mary was His wife. However, nothing in Scripture substantiates this view.
- Joanna's husband Chuza was Herod's household manager. Nothing is known of Susanna beyond this verse. It is possible that these women were still alive and somewhat

known. Luke stated in the opening of this Gospel that he was relying on eyewitnesses and was writing to give assurance of the gospel message.

Parable of the soils

[Luke 8:4-8](#) “4 And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, 5 “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. 6 And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. 8 And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.” As he said these things, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.””

There are four types of soil in this parable. The seed that fell on the path was trampled, then devoured by birds. The seed that fell on rocks withered. The seed that fell among thorns was choked. The seed that fell on good soil produced one hundred fold.

Jesus closed this parable, saying “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” ([Luke 8:8](#)). As verse 10 suggests, not everyone who hears the parable will understand the parable. The phrase “Let him hear” means, “Let him listen (or respond).”

[Luke 8:9-10](#) “9 And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, 10 he said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’”

What had been given to the disciples? [Luke 8:10](#) “... To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God ...” They did not **discover** the secrets of the kingdom of God; they were **given** the secrets of God’s kingdom. Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom throughout towns and cities; however, many people did not understand His teaching about the kingdom. Frequently, Scripture indicates that people do not understand the gospel through **wisdom or intellect**. We understand the gospel by the power of the Holy **Spirit** ([John 16:8-13](#); [1 Cor 2:10-16](#); [1 Cor 12:3](#)).

Why did Jesus speak in parables? [Luke 8:10](#) “... so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’” This is a quote from [Isaiah 6:9-10](#) “9 And he said, “Go, and say to this people: “ ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’ 10 Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.””

Jesus’s parables were not **illustrations** meant to help people understand. Jesus’s parables were intended to distinguish between those who have faith and those who do not. To those who had genuine faith, God **gave** them understanding. To those who lacked faith, the parables were intended to **keep them from understanding**.

[Luke 8:11–15](#) “11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. 14 And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. 15 As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.”

What is the seed in the parable? [Luke 8:11](#) “... The seed is the word of God.” Although the “sower” is not identified, this likely refers to Jesus. In [Luke 5:1](#), the crowd came to Jesus to hear the word of God. In [Luke 8:21](#), Jesus discusses those who hear the word of God and do it. This is likely a reference to [Luke 6:46–49](#), where Jesus contrasts those who hear His word and do it with those who hear His word and do not do it. So, this parable is primarily about Jesus’s preaching. However, Jesus’s preaching is a model for us proclaiming the gospel. So, the parable applies to us as well.

What does the seed on the path that is taken by birds illustrate? [Luke 8:12](#) “12 The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, **so that** they may not believe and be saved.” These are those who **hear** but **do not believe**.

What does the seed on the rocks illustrate? [Luke 8:13](#) “13 And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away.” Notice that these received the word with **joy** and **believed** for a while. This group professed faith in the gospel. However, they **fell away** after a time of **testing**. Some would argue that this refers to losing your salvation because these are people who received and believed the word.

First, faith is more than belief. [John 2:23–25](#) “23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many **believed** in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. 24 But Jesus on his part **did not entrust himself to them**, because he knew all people 25 and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.” [James 2:19](#) “19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!” Faith is more than intellectual belief.

First John is written to a church who had recently lost members to instruct them of the difference between genuine faith and false professions. There are three categories listed as evidence of genuine faith: belief in Jesus, love for God and others, and devotion to God (e.g., obedience and repentance).

- Faith is belief that leads to love and devotion. [1 John 5:1–3](#) “1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever

has been born of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.”

- Belief - [1 John 2:18-24](#); [4:1-6](#); [5:5-13](#)
- Love - [1 John 2:7-11](#); [2:15-17](#); [3:11-18](#); [3:23](#); [4:7-21](#)
- Devotion - [1 John 1:5-10](#); [2:3-6](#); [3:4-10](#); [3:24](#)

Faith is belief that leads to love and devotion. The first group lacked belief. This second group lacked devotion.

Second, the trials caused them to fall away, which is not the same as losing salvation. When trials cause someone to fall away, this indicates that they never had faith. [1 Peter 1:6-7](#) “6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the **tested genuineness of your faith**—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

What does the seed among the thorns illustrate? [Luke 8:14](#) “14 And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.” Genuine faith is evidenced by **love** for God, but you cannot love God and the world. [1 John 2:15](#) “15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” [James 4:4](#) “4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” This third group lacked **love** for God. **Faith is belief that leads to love and devotion.**

What does the seed in good soil represent? [Luke 8:15](#) “15 As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.” There are two distinguishing characteristics of the good soil. First, they have an **honest and good heart**. This implies that the other groups did not respond with the right heart. Second, **they “hold fast”** the word and “bear fruit with **patience**” (better translated endurance or perseverance). They endure in their faith. Two of the groups responded with a profession of faith, but they did not endure. Genuine faith will be enduring faith.

A hidden lamp

[Luke 8:16-17](#) “16 “No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. 17 For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.”

Why do people put a lamp on a stand? [Luke 8:16](#) “... so that those who enter may see the light.”
What will become of hidden things? [Luke 8:17](#) “... nothing is hidden that will not be made

manifest ...” *What will become of secret things?* [Luke 8:17](#) “... nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.”

All three of these statements describe the same thing. Although some things may be in the dark (hidden, secret), they will eventually be brought to light (made known). Consider this is in light of [Luke 8:10](#) “...To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’” The masses remained in misunderstanding, but God **gave** the disciples understanding of the secrets of the gospel.

[Luke 8:18](#) “18 Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”

It is important to read this verse in light of (1) [Luke 8:8](#) “... He who has ears to hear, let him hear,” (2) [Luke 8:10](#) “... so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand,’” and (3) the parable of the soils.

There are some who hear, but do not listen or understand. From them, what they think they have will be taken away. In light of Jesus’s parables, I take this to mean that they **think** they are part of God’s kingdom, but it has been taken from them. There are others who hear and listen. God **gives** them understanding. They will be given more. So, the warning is “take care then how you hear (or listen).”

Jesus’s mother and brothers

[Luke 8:19-21](#) “19 Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. 20 And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.” 21 But he answered them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

Who came to see Jesus? [Luke 8:19](#) “19 Then his mother and his brothers came to him ...” *Why could they not meet with Him?* [Luke 8:19](#) “... they could not reach him because of the crowd.” Joseph is not mentioned after [Luke 2](#), when Jesus was twelve years old ([Luke 2:41-52](#)). It is possible that he is no longer alive.

The Catholic church teaches that Mary was perpetual virgin. However, that doctrine is difficult to reconcile with passages like this that speak of Jesus’s brothers. [Matthew 13:55](#) ([Mark 6:3](#)) lists His brothers by name.

Who did Jesus say were His mother and brothers? [Luke 8:21](#) “... My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.” This last statement ties [Luke 8:1-21](#) into one unit. Jesus’s family are those who are in God’s kingdom. **God’s kingdom is made of those who hear Christ and obey with faith.** It is worth noting that Jesus’s brothers did not yet have faith in Him ([John 7:5](#)).

Conclusion

Consider this passage together. Some people hear the word of the gospel, but do not have faith. Some people **profess** faith, but their lack of love or devotion to Christ proves the lack of faith; they fall away from that profession. Those who lack faith will hear, but will not understand or be forgiven.

Other people will hear the word of the gospel and respond with faith. They hear **and** obey Christ. God **gives** them understanding and their faith is proven by their endurance. These who have faith are in God's kingdom and Jesus calls them brothers.

There are many implied applications of this passage. **First**, if you lack belief in Christ, love for Christ, **or** devotion to Christ, then you do not have faith. **Second**, like Jesus, you should be proclaiming the word of God, the gospel. Jesus knew what was in the heart of men, including the crowds; nonetheless, He proclaimed the gospel to those whom He **knew** would not respond in faith. The gospel is a message of **promise** and a message of **condemnation**. Do not discriminate to whom you proclaim the gospel. **Third**, in light of Jesus's teaching that God **gives** understanding, an important aspect of proclaiming the gospel to people is praying for God to give them understanding. Understanding does not come from my brilliant explanation; it comes from the conviction of the Holy Spirit.