

1 *The Parable of the Sower*

What The Parable of the Sower Confirms About Faith

Introduction

The Parable of the Sower is one of two passages in the Synoptics that talks about faith and salvation. (The other is Luke 7:47.)¹ The Parable discusses *faith* in a *negative manner*. The Parable of the Sower teaches that the failure to continue in *faith* or *trust* leads to becoming lost. It never says faith that later fails saves. In fact, the only person saved among the seeds is the one who *produces fruit to completion*. Thus, in this parable Jesus addresses faith and works in a way totally at odds with the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace. Now please note this is not a parable proponents of cheap grace can avoid by claiming its meaning remains a mystery. Jesus explained its symbolic meaning in *excruciating detail*.

Let's analyze with care the Parable of the Sower.

Analysis of the Parable of The Sower

The first seed never believes because Satan snatches the word from his heart before he can believe “and be saved.” (Luke 8:12.) Unlike the first seed, the second seed (*i.e.*, the seed on rocky soil) (Luke 8:6) “sprouted.” Jesus explains this means the second seed “received the word with joy” and “*believes for a while*.” (Luke 8:13.)

1. For a discussion of Luke 7:47, *see*, Douglas Del Tondo, *Jesus' Words Only* (2007) at 157-60.

In Luke 8:13, the Greek tense for “believes” is the present indicative active of *pisteuo*. This means Jesus is saying the seed on rocky ground “*keeps* on believing.” Jesus then adds an adverb meaning “for a while.” In this context, the present indicative is indistinguishable from the present participle active of *pisteuo* which is used uniformly in John’s Gospel.²

Logically, if the first seed would have been “saved” had Satan not prevented faith from forming, this second seed must be “saved.” Thus, Jesus is saying the second seed is “saved” (at least) for a while because it believed for a while yet the first seed is never saved because it never believed.

Jesus goes on to say the second seed then “withered away” (*i.e.*, shriveled up). (Luke 8:6). Jesus explains this means it fell into “temptation” (sinned) and “fell away.” (Luke 8:13, *aphistami*.) Why did it fall away? It shriveled up “because it lacked moisture.” (Luke 8:6.) The Greek of this verb was present active as well, meaning “it did not continue to have moisture.” Jesus explains again why, saying the seed

2. The Greek word for *believes* in Luke 8:13 is *pisteuosin*. This is one form of the present participle active when a masculine dative is involved. *Pisteuosin* is also a present indicative active if the subject is a third person plural. (Walcott-Hort online at *Perseus.com*.) The subject pronoun in 8:13 is *hoi*, a masculine plural noun. Thus, *believes* in Luke 8:13 is the present indicative active. By comparison, *believe* in John 3:16 is *pisteuon*, which is the present participle active because the subject is a masculine nominative. This difference in *believes* between Luke 8:13 and John 3:16 is not substantive. Both correspond to a continuous tense. See Appendix A: *Greek Issues*.

“did not have root.” (Luke 8:13.) The verb, however, is again present active in Greek (*ecousin*) and means “it **did not keep holding** on to the Root.”

TABLE 1. Parable of the Sower: Second Seed

Second Seed Metaphor	Jesus' Explanation
sprouted	received the word with joy continued to believe for a while
did not continue to have moisture withered away (shriveled up)	did not keep holding to the root tempted, fell away

Thus, Jesus is saying that someone who received the word with Joy, “continued to **believe** for a while,” and thus “sprouted,” then fell into temptation. This person ends up withered away (dead). Dead means no life. No life means no eternal life. The reason is they “did not keep holding to the Root” and so they “fell away.” This was a lesson about faith lacking endurance and being destroyed by sin (temptation). Thus, it is a negative message about faith. ***It is not an example of faith saving, but how faith can be brought to naught by sin.***

As one of the greatest preachers in Christian history, John Donne (1572-1631),³ said in 1626 that parable contains a great warning since the second seed represents *believers*:

[Y]et **we may relapse into former sins**, or fall into new, and come to savour only of the earth...[W]e may have *received the good seed*,

3. In 1610, Donne publicly renounced Roman Catholicism, and wrote anti-Catholic pamphlets. He was an attorney who was drafted by King James, as it were, into being an Anglican minister in 1615. Donne thereafter became renown as “one of the greatest preachers of the era.” See his biography at <http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/donne/donnebio.htm> (accessed 5/6/2007). Donne’s *Meditation 17* contains the immortal lines: “No man is an island” and “never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.”

and endured for a while, as St. Matthew expresses Christ's words; *Received it and **believed it for a while***, as St. Luke expresses them, and then ***depart from the goodness*** which God's grace had formerly wrought in us, and ***from the grace of God itself***.⁴

Donne is saying the Parable of the Sower teaches a Christian who "departs from the goodness" wrought in him or her by God after *faith* then has likewise departed "from the grace of God itself."

Thus, what was the response Jesus wanted to His warning to a believer who endured in belief for a while but fell into temptation? Jesus said keep holding on to the Root. Jesus is the Root. Hold to Jesus' words and you will not fall into temptation (sin). Let go and you are opposite of the saints who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Rev. 14:12.) By falling into temptation you fail to "keep...the commandments...and faith of Jesus" and become lost.

There is no missing this point if you see the precise parallel to Revelation 2:4-5.

There Jesus tells the Ephesians they have "left your first love," and "art fallen," so "repent" and do your "first works."

Compare this then to the second seed in the Parable of the Sower. The second seed had "joy" in the word at first, like the Ephesians had "love at first." The second seed "sprouted" and thus had "first works," just like the Ephesians. The second seed then sinned and "fell away," just as the Ephesians "art fallen." The solution, as always, is "repent," as Jesus told the Ephesians in Revelation 2:4-5 and do your "first works."

4. [Sermon on 'Easter' 1626], *The Works of John Donne, D.D.* (Henry Alford, ed.)(London: John Parker, 1839) Vol. 1 at 378, available in full scanned text online at <http://books.google.com> (accessed 5/6/2007).

Now who is the only saved person in the Parable of the Sower? It is the fourth seed, which is the only one who brings forth *fruit* or...dare I use the synonym...works.

The fourth seed is the good and noble heart that hears the word. To understand the fourth seed, we must see the contrast to the third seed. The KJV says the third seed “brings no fruit to perfection.” (Luke 8:14, KJV.) However, the translation is lacking. The third seed is choked by thorns (*i.e.*, the worries of this world) and so does not *telesphorousin*. This Greek word combines *teleos*, which means *end*, with *phore*, which means *to produce, bring forth*. Together, the two words literally mean “to complete” or “bring to a finish.” *Telesphore* is often used with regard to fruit, pregnant women or animals. (*Robertson’s Word Pictures*.) *Telesphorousin* is the present active form in Greek. So it means “did not keep on producing to the end” or “did not continue to the finish.” Completion, not perfection, is in view. They did not *telephorousin*, *i.e.*, they did not keep on producing to completion. They were choked off. This is reminiscent of the Sardisians whom Jesus tells in Revelation 3:3 that their works are “not fulfilled,” *i.e.*, incomplete. (*Cfr*: KJV “works not perfect”). Failure to complete your works leads to a loss of salvation.

Knowing the flaws of the third seed opens our understanding of the fourth seed’s reason for being saved. The fourth seed, by contrast, “fell into good ground, and grew, and brought forth fruit a hundredfold.” (Luke 8:8.) Listen to Jesus’ explanation of why this person alone among the four is ultimately saved:

And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and **bring forth fruit with patience**. (Luke 8:15 ASV).

The Greek verb for “hold it fast” is in the Greek present active again. It means “keep on holding down.” It is not hold “fast,” but hold “down.” (*Robertson’s Word Pictures*.) This is a significant point. As Jesus tells the parable,

the devil swooped down and stole the word from the first sown seed, depriving it of salvation. By continuing to **hold down the word**, the fourth seed is **guarding itself**. It is doing everything possible to keep Satan from snatching the word away. It is the same meaning behind John 8:51. He who has “kept guard” (*tereo*) over Jesus’ word “should never [ever] taste death.” (John 8:51, ASV.) It is the same meaning behind 1 John 5:18 which says he that is “born of God guards (*tereo*) himself (*auto*), and the Evil One cannot touch him.”⁵

Finally, what does it mean that the only saved person in this parable “brings forth fruit with patience.” (Luke 8:15, ASV)? Salvation depends on completing works to the end.

Luke 8:15 really means: “who keep carrying on producing fruit with endurance.” The Greek verb this time is *karpos* (carrying) combined with *phore* (produce, bear) in the Greek present indicative. So it has a continuous meaning. This is followed by *hupomeno* in Greek. In most translations of this verse, *hupomeno* is rendered as *patience*. However,

5. The *auto* here is crucial to the meaning, and reveals the parallel to the Parable of the Sower. The KJV and ASV translates this correctly as “guards *himself*.” The NLT has a radically different and incorrect translation. It says “for **God’s son holds them securely**, and the evil one cannot touch them.” Why so different a translation? It is not because of any literal words. Rather, the NLT is reading “one born of God guards himself” so that “one born of God” means Jesus (*i.e.*, God’s son). Then the NLT ignores the reflexive *himself*. It instead reads the reflexive to mean *him*. Then the NLT collapses “one born of God” into “God’s son.” By these numerous subtle changes, the NLT has robbed the text of its true meaning that a Christian is only safe while he “guards himself,” like the fourth seed was doing in the Parable of the Sower. What justifies the NLT forcing a contrary meaning upon the verse? Why would it want us to think we can rely entirely on Jesus to guard the word in us, and we have no duty of vigilance of our own? The only defense for the NLT’s translation is that it props up the false Gospel of Cheap Grace. However, the NLT is giving us a false assurance that we are safe without any personal vigilance. It causes us to lose the parallel between John’s lesson and the Parable of the Sower. However, no matter how the NLT may seek to obscure the principle, the principle of the Parable of the Sower is also stated by James when he says: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7.)

almost everywhere else *hupomeno* appears in the NT it is translated as *endurance*, which is the more likely intended meaning of Jesus. The combination of *karpos* and *phore* implies fruit-bearing by definition. This parallels Luke 8:8 which mentions “fruit a hundredfold.” Thus, literally, Jesus is saying the saved seed “keeps carrying on producing fruit with endurance.” This is in sharp contrast with the third seed which was lost because it did not “continue to the finish” or “produce to completion.” (Luke 8:14.)

So let’s build a diagram of the saved person in the Parable of the Sower.

TABLE 2. Parable of the Sower: Fourth Seed

Fourth Seed (The Saved)	Jesus’ Explanation
good ground	noble and good heart
seed sown	heard the word
grew	kept holding the word down (protecting it)
keeps on producing fruit a hundredfold	keeps on carrying on producing fruit with endurance. <i>Cfr.</i> third seed fails to produce to the finish

Here is Jesus’ salvation formula in a nutshell. Producing fruit is never optional. Fruitlessness and being choked are pictures of the lost, even including those who “kept on believing for a while” and who “received” the word with joy at first. In fact, Jesus’ point is even more adamant than just that: Jesus is saying partial fruitfulness is not enough. Jesus portends gloom for the one who has growth and then is choked off by thorns. Your initial good works are forgotten if you do not finish and complete well. Instead, you must endure to the end to be saved. This is an echo of Matthew 10:22 once more. It is reminiscent of Ezekiel 33:12. Salvation by faith alone is clearly refuted. Salvation by works alone is not approved either. However, salvation by endurance in good works to the end is crucial besides faith. So says the Lord Jesus Christ.

To hold onto the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace, one has to do many twists and turns with this parable. Jesus explained it, so you cannot say it is a parable *hard to understand*. Jesus already explained it!

Luther Could Not Come Up With A Gloss To Solve the Parable of the Sower

No one has ever properly explained how Jesus' Parable of the Sower can even remotely line up consistent with the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace. Luther's effort is so untenable that it proves how absolutely impossible it is to reconcile the two. Luther must have realized Jesus contradicts the Modern Gospel. Thus, he injects the Modern Gospel's doctrine of faith, not works, into what saves the second seed. Luther then ignores how this mismatches the rest of what the parable means.

Luther begins his commentary properly. The first type who has their seed snatched are those who "hear the word" but do not understand it. (*Sermons of Martin Luther*, Vol. II, at 114.)⁶ These "never believe" and never become saved. (*Id.*, at 115.)

Luther then says the second seed knows the correct doctrine of salvation, *i.e.*, "they know the real truth" that they are saved by "faith without works" (the Modern Gospel). However, "they do not persevere." He adds: "when it comes to the test that they must suffer harm, disgrace and loss of life or property, then they fall and deny it....in times of persecution they deny or keep silence about the Word."

6. Martin Luther, "The Parable of the Sower," *The Precious and Sacred Writings of Martin Luther* (Minneapolis, MN: Lutherans in All Lands, 1906) Vol. 11 reprinted as *The Sermons of Martin Luther* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House) (1983) Vol. II at 113 *et seq.*

Luther in essence is saying that they lose their salvation because under pressure they deny this truth that salvation is by faith alone. This is a bizarre self-contradiction. If you can lose your salvation by losing faith in the principle of faith alone, then faith alone does not save you. You must *endure* or *persevere* in the doctrine of faith alone or be lost. This is a self-contradiction, because then faith alone did not save you. Faith and ***perseverance in faith alone*** saves you. These two ideas are self-contradictory: if you must persist in faith to be saved, then *persistence*, not the faith alone, is necessary for salvation. Hence, Luther's solution is nonsensical. (Anyone who has read eternal security arguments know that they reject Luther's argument precisely because salvation then depends on more than a one-time faith. Luther is actually contradicting the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace to save it from the Parable of the Sower.)

Luther's comments on the third group are enlightening as well. This group of seeds "always possess the absolutely pure Word...." (*Id.*, at 116.) Their fault is "they do not ***earnestly*** give themselves to the Word, but become ***indifferent*** and sink in the cares, riches and pleasures of this life...." (*Id.*, at 117.) They are thus apparently initially saved. Luther says "these have all in the Word that is needed for their salvation, but they do not make any use of it, and they rot in this life in carnal pleasures." Luther seems to understand Jesus is saying their problem is sin, not lack of proper faith. Luther says that despite the proper knowledge of the Gospel, "they do not bring under subjection their flesh." (*Id.*)

This leads Luther to the correct conclusion why the fourth seed is saved. Luther says they "bring forth fruit with patience, those who hear the Word and *steadfastly retain it*, meditate upon it and *act in harmony with it*." This leads to as true a statement as you will ever hear by Luther:

Here we see why it is no wonder there are so few true Christians, for all the seed does not fall into good ground, but only the fourth and small part; and that they are ***not to be trusted***

who boast they are Christians and praise the teaching of the Gospel. *Id.* at 118.

Luther realizes that salvation depends in the Parable, as Jesus depicts it, on *YOU!* It depends on the earnestness of *your response and productivity!*

This is the end of Luther's substantive commentary. What did he do? He explained Jesus' parable correctly. Yet, he pretended it was consistent with the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace by injecting it into what saved the second and third seeds initially. Luther did so without acknowledging it was self-contradictory nonsense. How can a seed that is saved by faith alone have to persevere and not succumb to sin? How can it lose salvation by being overcome by the thorns (pleasures) of this life? Nor did Luther try to ever explain away why the saved fourth seed alone had completed works.

Luther's response is a perfect example of how people retain the Modern Gospel even when it contradicts Jesus. Luther is conceding certain unavoidable aspects of this parable are at direct odds with cheap grace. Yet by injecting the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace in the middle of the discussion, Luther makes it appear that Jesus' words are compatible with the Modern Gospel. In this manner, Luther has somehow rationalized away that a conflict exists.

It is as Isaiah prophesied: "the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." (Isaiah 29:14.)

How Presuppositional Logic Blinded Luther

A worthwhile side-note is to point out that Luther's presupposition which imposed *sola fide* on the Parable of the Sower is not a unique contamination of thinking. It is a presupposition Luther allowed to permeate all his interpretations of the parables. Warren Kissinger noted this defect in his *The*

Parables of Jesus: A History of Interpretation and Bibliography (Metuchen, N.J.: American Theological Library Association, 1979) at 47:

The central category of his [Luther's] hermeneutic is... *sola fide*, and this is reflected in his interpretation of the parables. It often appears ***strained*** and as ***a presupposition superimposed upon a given parable***. Here perhaps Luther does some "spiritual juggery" of his own, and reflects... a methodology which he found so distasteful in the allegorizers [of parables].

Thus, Luther had a penchant of twisting Jesus' parables so that they fit the presupposition of faith alone. The parable texts did not support the conclusion, but the opposite: each parable proves that more than faith is required for salvation. However, to prevent the casual Sunday Christian from learning the parables were all at odds with *sola fide*, Luther incessantly injected *faith alone* into each parable. He read each one to conform to his presupposition that *sola fide* as a principle was true.

We will see this again, for example, when Luther discusses the Parable of the Ten Virgins.

Luther's decision to do this has had major repercussions on Christian history.

If Luther had not distorted the parables' meanings, then Jesus' parables would have refuted faith alone doctrine long ago in everyone's analysis. Rather than accept Jesus' correction, Luther was constantly redacting Jesus' Gospel to fit Luther's youthful endorsement of the Fable of Cheap Grace.

Thankfully Luther gave up this fable when he was more mature. (As an older man, Luther endorsed the costly grace gospel as what Jesus truly taught. See the *Shorter Catechism* and *Longer Catechism* of 1531 and the *Antinomian Theses*.)⁷

The Parallel to the Unprofitable Servant

In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus says the seed in good ground sometimes produces different yields. Jesus says “others fell upon the good ground, and were giving fruit, some indeed a **hundredfold**, and some **sixty**, and some **thirty**.” (Mat 13:8, ASV.)

This precisely parallels Jesus’ Parable of the Unprofitable Servant. (Matt. 25:14-30.) In that parable, one servant is unprofitable, and produces nothing. Jesus says this one must be thrown outside where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. The two servants with five and ten talents produced respectively are, by contrast, welcomed in the kingdom.

There are two striking parallels. The unprofitable servant is similar to the second seed in the Sower Parable who “believes for a while” (Luke 8:13) but sins and hence withers (dies) (Luke 8:6), never bearing any fruit. Likewise, the profitable servants produce varying multiples of talents, which clearly parallels the fourth seed in the good ground that produces varying amounts of return.

This tells us Jesus is underscoring a distinction on who is saved and unsaved in the Parable of the Sower, just as Jesus clearly did in the Parable of the Unprofitable Servant. For in the latter, the servant of His Lord who takes the treasure given him but who produces nothing is then sent to a place “outside” of weeping and gnashing. Jesus elsewhere says this place is the “fiery furnace” where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt. 13:42.) Of course, there is no weeping in heaven (Isaiah 25:8; Rev. 7:17, 21:4), and thus we know Jesus’ imagery is meant to signify damnation for the servant of His who is unprofitable

This means in the parallel Parable of the Sower that the seed who sprouts initially but produces no fruit or is choked off and produces nothing is meant to symbolize the same thing as the unprofitable servant. Therefore, we know

7. See Douglas Del Tondo, *Jesus’ Words Only* (2007) at 106.

that Jesus intends us to view the seed that produces no fruit and withers (dies) to be spiritually dead even though at first “he believes for a while.” (Luke 8: 13).

Hence, Jesus teaches a one-time believer who sins and produce no fruit, and consequently withers and dies (Luke 8:6, 13) goes to the place “outside” where there is “weeping and gnashing” for the unprofitable servant. Jesus specifically says this place is the “fiery furnace.” (Matt. 13:42)

*Commentaries on the Parable of the Sower
Without Presuppositions*

In *Counting the Cost*, subtitled *The Cost of Bearing Fruit With Perseverance*, Mark Dunagan, of Beaverton Church of Christ, explains the Parable of the Sower in Luke 8:11-15. He says:

Being a faithful Christian is not an easy or effortless task for anyone, including the “good” heart. This person has to **hold on to the gospel**, and **bear fruit with “perseverance.”** It is going to take work and effort to live the Christian life.⁸

Amen!

8. http://www.ch-of-christ.beaverton.or.us/Counting_the_Cost.htm (last accessed 7/16/06).

*Clarke's Surprisingly Frank Commentary
On The Parable of the Sower*

Adam Clarke, the famous commentator, typically does everything he can to twist passages to suit cheap grace. However, in reading the Parable of the Sower, he brings no presuppositions.

Clarke correctly sees the target of this parable is the audience if on a personal level they fail to bring forth fruit:

Under the parable of the sower, our Lord intimates, That of all the multitudes then attending his ministry, few would bring **forth fruit to perfection**. (Comm, Matt. 13:3.)

Clarke also correctly understands the problem with the first two seeds is the **deficiency of soil** when one hears Jesus' Gospel. There is the impervious ground "by the way side." There is no soil for the seed to enter. Then there is the stony ground, which only has a thin surface of the earth to grow in. (Comm., Matt. 13:4-6.)

Then Clarke says the difficulty with the third seed is different. It is not the soil *itself*. Rather, it is the surroundings in which the seed is sown. This earth has been "ploughed up," and thus was fertile and accessible for growth. However, this seed was sown where there were already "brambles and weeds" which unfortunately "had not been cleared away." (Comm., Matt. 13:7.)

Then Clarke correctly sees the difference for the fourth seed. It is prepared to hear the gospel:

Good ground - Where the earth was deep, the field well ploughed, and **the brambles and weeds all removed**. (Comm., Matt. 13:8.)

Let's stop there. The Modern Gospel teaches it makes no difference how you prepare the soil of your heart **prior** to hearing the gospel. Nor is it supposedly important after you hear the gospel to clear away the cares and worries of this

world as a *precondition* to not later being choked off, and hence bearing no fruit. According to the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace, your saved-relationship can never turn on either preparing your heart to listen nor improving your chance of being fruitful once you are saved. Thus, notice how Clarke is forced to admit Jesus teaches contrary to the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace by the force of Jesus' words.

Is there any examples in the New Testament that illustrate what Jesus teaches? Yes. The life of Cornelius in Acts chapter ten proves it is foolish to believe that pursuing God earnestly does not matter to prepare yourself to find the true Gospel. In Cornelius' case, God sent a message to an *unsaved* man that his acts of generosity to the poor had been a fragrant odor to the Lord. God now wanted him to hear the gospel from Peter. Cornelius was the good soil. Yet, Cornelius was still *unsaved*. (Acts 10:1 *ff.*)

Now let's pick up again with Clarke's commentary. Clarke then explicates what it means that "others fell upon the good ground, and were giving fruit, some indeed a hundredfold, and some sixty, and some thirty." (Mat 13:8, ASV.) In agriculture, Clarke says in his own experience, if you weigh the seed versus what seed it produces, the harvested seed from the seed planted is sometimes 700 times heavier than the original seed.

The power of grain to multiply itself, even in the same year, is a subject as much of curiosity and astonishment as of importance and general utility.

So Jesus is referring to something people in an agricultural world would immediately appreciate. If you sow seed, it can produce hundreds of times its own weight in new seed. Clarke goes on to tell of an example where a single ear of corn produced 21,209 new corn plants. He then comments:

Who can help admiring the wisdom and providence of God in this single grain of corn! He

has, in some sort, impressed on it an idea of his own infinity; and an idea which, like the subject to which it refers, confounds our imagination and reason.

Here Clarke ends his substantive commentary. He has given Jesus' true gospel. Salvation depends on being fruitful to the end. Clarke normally tries to spin things to fit the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace. Here he relents. Clarke lets Jesus speak about productivity. Clarke simply digresses into amazement at the multiplication principle rather than observe the most amazing fact of all: Jesus refutes the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace in clear terms.

What we can take from Clarke is that even if just one of us recaptures the true gospel of Jesus Christ, and we plant it in good soil, Jesus' message has such power that it can ignite the world and create thousands of believers on the right Way from a single stalk.

*The Salvation Message of Revelation Is
Straight From the Parable of the Sower*

We can confirm our interpretation of the Parable of the Sower from Jesus' words in Revelation. There Jesus once more states His core salvation theology. Jesus does this by reproving or commending each church by the criteria that Jesus used in the Parable of the Sower. This is done ever so subtly. Thus, many commentators miss this.

There are some who left their first love. (Rev. 2:4). They correspond to the second seed that starts with joy. This seed “believes for a while” but in time of temptation falls away. (Luke 8:13.) In Revelation, these do not “produce to completion” because of incomplete works. (Rev. 3:2.)

Then there are believers at another church who are neither hot nor cold but lukewarm. Jesus explains why: “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing.” (Rev. 3:17.) These correspond to the third seed which was choked not only by the cares of this world, but also by “riches and pleasures” of this life. Thus, they did not produce to the end. (Luke 8:14.)

Yet, there is one church and one seed that is viewed as on the right path. This is the church of Philadelphia which compares to the fourth seed in the Parable of the Sower. The church at Philadelphia is told “I know thy *works*,” and as a result a door is in front of them that no one can shut. (Rev. 3:8.) This church has very little “power” left, but “***did keep my word***, and did not deny my name.” (Rev. 3:8.) This corresponds to the fourth seed which “in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, ***hold it fast***, and ***bring forth fruit*** with patience.” (Luke 8:15.) There is an unmistakable parallelism between “keep my word” (Rev. 3:8) and “hold it fast” (Luke 8:15) as well as “thy works” (Rev. 3:8) and “bring forth fruit...” (Luke 8:15).

Thus, Jesus has made re-appear in the Book of Revelation all the criteria for assessing the saved seed versus these lost seeds from his Parable of the Sower. Why?

Precisely because there is no more difficult passage for a proponent of the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace to explain in the Synoptic Gospels on salvation than the Parable of the Sower. Jesus in the Book of Revelation invokes the Sower Parable obviously to rebuff the message Jesus heard that faith alone saves, and works matter not at all. In the Sower Parable, those whose faith died, who fell in times of

“So because
thou art
lukewarm,
I will spew
thee out of
my mouth.”
Rev. 3:16

temptation, or whose works were incomplete were lost. Only the one who produces fruit to the end with endurance was saved in the Parable of the Sower.

Conclusion

The Parable of the Sower is an amazing nugget of Jesus' doctrine. For here is the whole *true* gospel of salvation from Jesus' lips. It is all contained in a very unassuming Parable of the Sower. Jesus tells you how to be saved and what is necessary to complete your salvation. Jesus tells you also how to be lost even after you have faith and accepted His word with joy and experience initial growth ("sprouted").

Accordingly, the Parable of the Sower puts an end to the salvation by a one-time faith alone idea. It puts an end to the idea that producing fruit is not essential. It shows the folly of thinking you can get to heaven having believed and withered, or having grown significantly and then having been choked, never bringing your works to completion.

Thus Jesus in this parable shows the error of the Modern Gospel's starkly different doctrine. If you read what is claimed by the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace adherents, *it is all over once the seed is successfully sown*, no matter what happens next.⁹

The Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace has a *different voice* than our Lord Jesus. Its themes are *alien* to Jesus's message of salvation. They undercut, if not destroy, the message of Jesus. The true sheep of Jesus *recognize* His voice, and will not follow another. (John 10:27-29.) Who are you following?

9. For more discussion on the fable of cheap grace, see the chapter entitled "The Fable of Cheap Grace" on page 1.

Conclusion

Thus, how many times must Jesus make the same points about repentance from sin and productivity at odds with the Cheap Grace Gospel's *different message* before we will listen? If we think the Parable of the Sower is some distorted addition to Scripture, then think again. It appears in all three Synoptic gospels. (Matt. 13:3 *et seq*; Luke 8:5 *et seq*; Mark 4:3 *et seq*.) There is no lineage of any early manuscript that ever omitted it. You have to deal with Jesus' Words alone versus the Cheap Grace Gospel's *different message*.

The Parable of the Sower
