

LESSON PLAN

THE SOWER AND HIS SEED

Matthew 13:1-52; Mark 4:1-29

Lesson Memory Verse: John 5:24 - "Truly, truly, I say to you, **He that hears My Word, and believes on Him that sent Me, has everlasting life**, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death to life." (Grades 1 & 2 memorize the portion in **bold**.)

Lesson Aim: Know what the Bible says about salvation, trust it and do what it says to be saved.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Have you ever planted a seed and watched it grow? Maybe you helped your mother or father plant a garden. Can anyone tell me what kind of seeds you have planted? (Let children share their experiences.) We need to plant seeds in order to have food to eat. What kind of food did you eat this morning that came from plants? (This may be too hard for younger children to answer, so be sure to think it through ahead of time and ask them if they had waffles or pancakes, hot or cold cereal, grape juice or orange juice, rolls or toast, etc., and then tell them from what kind of plants each of these foods came. Also remind them that someone had to plant the seeds that later produced these foods.)

HE (for Authority): God's Word is a seed (1 Pet 1:23), which can grow in our hearts and give us eternal life when we trust it and do what it says. We must hear God's Word and believe what He has done for us; this will plant it in our hearts. Let's plant the words in our hearts that Jesus said in our memory verse.

Hear" what Jesus said so that you understand it.

"Believe on Him that sent Me," that is, believe on God the Father who sent His Son to earth.

"Has everlasting life"; if you believe God's Word, you will live forever.

"Shall not come into condemnation," that is, you will never be condemned and sent to hell.

"Passed from death to life"; you will never die (be separated from God), but will live with Him forever.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. Our lesson today is from a story that Jesus told His followers. This story will help us to understand how the Word of God needs to grow in our hearts so that we can be born again and live a life that pleases Him. (Since many elementary children have trouble understanding figures of speech, parables can be a problem for them. Be careful to help them clearly grasp what each part of the story represents. Go slowly and do not give your students more than they can handle.)

I. The Sower - Mark 4:3

The sower is a farmer who plants seeds in his fields. (Be sure the children do not confuse this person with one who sews clothes.) In Jesus' day the farmer carried the seeds in a bag by his side and as he walked up and down his field, he took seeds in his hand and scattered them all over his land. He did this until he planted (sowed) his whole field with seeds. Everyone in Jesus' day had seen a sower (a farmer) do this kind of work in the fields.

Just like a farmer planted seeds in his fields, so Jesus planted seeds in people's hearts, which we will explain in just a minute. Jesus wanted His disciples to plant the same seeds that He was planting.

WE: We need these seeds planted in our hearts. Listen carefully and I will tell what these seeds are.

II. The Seed - Mark 4:3, 14

The farmer planted (sowed) seeds that would grow into plants that would give food so he and his family could live. Jesus and His followers planted Gospel seeds in people's hearts so they could live forever. His seed was the Word of God. The Word of God is the most powerful seed ever known. It is about Jesus Christ, how He died on the cross to pay for our sins and rose again to give us eternal life.

WE: We need this seed in our hearts so we can be saved and live forever.

III. The Soils - Mark 4:4-8, 15-20

The farmer scatters his seeds over four kinds of soil which represent the four kinds of hearts people have.

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A. Hard Ground – Hard Heart - 4:4, 15

Some of the seeds fell on the hard pathway where it could not grow; the birds ate those seeds. This represents the person who has a hard heart and will not listen to God's Word. What happens to the Word? Satan is like a bird that takes away the seed of God's Word so the person cannot be saved.

WE: We do not want a hard heart that does not listen to God's Word. Do not let Satan take it away.

B. Stony Ground – Hurt Heart - 4:5-6, 16-17

Some seeds fell on stony ground. This happened when there was a thin layer of soil over a big rock that was buried in the ground. When these seeds landed in this kind of soil, they soon began to grow, but were unable to develop roots to get water to the plants because of the big rock under them. When the hot sun came up, the plants were hurt so badly that they died. Some people's hearts are like this kind of soil. They love the story of salvation, but their sins still lie buried in their hearts and they will not let the seeds of God's Word get roots down deep into their lives. They want to be saved from Hell, but they do not want their lives changed. Jesus saves people from their sins; He wants to take the sin out of their lives. If they keep their sins, they were never saved. The proof, whether or not a person is saved, can be known when he/she has to suffer for being a Christian. Suffering is like the hot sun on the plant. If a person has true faith in Jesus, he let Jesus remove his sins so he could grow good roots in his love for Him. He will not get hurt when he suffers as a Christian; he will still love Jesus. However, if a person is hurt when he suffers as a Christian so that he leaves Jesus to return to his sinful life, he never was saved; he never let Jesus take the sins out of his life.

WE: Are we willing to suffer for Jesus? Or, are we offended when we suffer for Jesus and return to the way we used to live? If we never let Jesus take the sins out of our life and make us into a new person, we have never been saved from our sins. Do think that you are saved simply because you prayed to be saved from going to Hell. You are saved when you want Jesus to take all your sins and make you into a new person (2 Cor 5:17). Have you asked Jesus to do that for you?

C. Thorny Ground – Hampered Heart - 4:7, 18-19

Other seeds fell on ground that was full of thorns. These plants began to grow, but the thorns grew faster and hampered their growth so that they could not produce fruit. These plants were worthless. The thorns are like troubles that hamper the desires of a person to be like Jesus. Or, thorns can be like a desire to be rich to buy the things of this world and enjoy the fun times in the world. This also will hamper the seed of God's Word so it cannot save a person. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him (cf. Mt 6:24; I Jn 2:15-17). This person is hampered by the world; he is unchanged, unfruitful and unsaved.

WE: We must not let the world control us or love the things of the world. We must let Jesus Christ control us and love the things He loves. We must take up our cross to follow Him (Mt 16:24). We must not be a friend of the world or we are the enemy of God (Jam 4:4). We are a friend of the world, if we would rather skip church and go to the park for a ball game. We are a friend of the world, if we would rather buy some chocolates or soda drinks with our offering money than give it to Jesus Christ. If you are a friend of the world, even though you prayed to be saved, you still need to be saved from your sins.

D. Good Ground – Honest Heart - 4:8, 20

Not all of the good seeds fell into bad soil. Some seeds fell into good soil and became plants that grew strong and healthy and produced food. Some soil was better than other soil so that the best soil produced the most food of all. The good ground is like honest people whose hearts receive God's Word and accept Jesus as their Savior. All of these people are fruitful to God because they are saved, but some are more fruitful than others because some do more to obey the Word of God (Jn 15:1-5).

WE: We have an honest heart and are saved, if we love Jesus Christ and want to be like Him. We have an honest heart, if we want to obey the Word of God. Do you have an honest heart?

BE (for Action): What are the four kinds of hearts that are given the Word of God? (The hard heart, hurt heart, hampered heart and honest heart) What proves that we have an honest heart? (We ask Jesus to remove all our sins and love Him so much that we want to be like Him.) Ask the children if they have an honest heart. If so, do any of them need to ask Jesus to save them from their sins so they can begin to be like Him? If any raise their hands, dismiss the class and help those children receive Jesus as Savior.