

## **Home Church Study Guide—March 7, 2010**

### **Parables for Life (Luke 8)**

As chapter eight begins, we once again see the focused purpose of the ministry of Jesus. He proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God wherever He went. It was the wonderful news that one could enter into life as God intended. The kingdom of God is that place where God's will is done, where life is lived to its fullest.

The parable of the sower is important at this point of Luke's gospel. Theophilus has to be questioning how anyone could refuse to acknowledge Jesus as God's Messiah. After the amazing miracles He has performed, and the wonderful teaching He has freely given—it is abundantly clear that Jesus is God's special messenger to His people. But some refuse to acknowledge Him. Jesus explains in the text of a simple story that all could understand. A sower holds powerful seed in His hand. He indiscriminately sows the seed, not concerned about where it lands. He knows the seed is powerful. While some soil will not receive it, other accepts it and produces an incredible yield. The normal excellence seed yields seven to tenfold. This extraordinary seed yields a remarkable hundred fold. The point of this parable is that the yield of the seed is not dependent on the seed, but on the soil that receives it. Clearly, the power of the kingdom cannot be denied, but the seed can be refused.

Jesus follows his explanation of the parable of the sower with a brief analogy explaining God's desire to make His word known. The mysterious parables are not meant to hide the true nature of the kingdom. God's will is that all His mysteries be made known. How will this happen? Through the lives of those who understand the truth of God's revelation in Christ. Our responsibility is indeed great. We must continually grow in our understanding of God's purposes for our lives so that we can be beacons of God's light to a dark and a misguided world!

The calming of the storm is often dismissed as irrelevant to our daily lives (vs. 22-25). While it is acknowledged as one of the most amazing miracles of Jesus, what can it mean to those of us who've never experienced a storm at sea? Clearly, the heart of the story is the question we must all answer, "Where is your faith?" Especially in the troubling times in which we live, this story is not only relevant, but central to our understanding of life.

#### **"So What" for Home Church discussion:**

1. How would you characterize your heart "soil" according to the parable at the opening of Luke 8? How can we help each other develop hearts that allow God's word to produce kingdom fruit?
  
2. In practical terms, are we visible lights "on a stand" for the kingdom of God? What can we do specifically this week that will allow the light of God to shine from our lives?
  
3. How real is the power of Jesus to us? In the storms of life, where is our faith? If Jesus can calm storms, defeat legions of demons, heal the hurting, and raise the dead— what can He do for us?