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Luke 8:1-15

Welcome to Cornerstone: Mature Jesus Followers

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Introduction:

1. What would happen if you never grew up?
2. I assume most of you know the story of Peter Pan, the boy who refused to get older?
3. At an early age he ran away to live on a magical island with other “lost boys” where nobody grows up.
4. He decides to kidnap a young girl named Wendy and her two brothers (missing person/kidnapping)
5. At Never Land they get abducted by Indians, tormented by mermaids, and hunted by Captain Hook.
6. The Lost Boys decide they want to go home but Peter Pan won’t let them, which leads to their capture.
7. Peter Pan then humiliates an adult, Captain Hook, and chases him away with a crocodile.
8. Peter and the Lost Boys end up staying in Never Land but Wendy and her brothers go home.
9. They realize they have to grow up, but Peter doesn’t, and returns to the land of magic and make believe.
10. Peter Pan is the story of how not growing up can lead to harming ourselves and others.
11. I want us to think how we as a church can help Peter Pans grow up in Christ.
12. In the gospel of Luke, Jesus teaches how to grow up healthy and find true joy.

(Have you ever noticed how kids love stories?)

(In the gospel of Luke, Jesus tells stories to help people mature, but they weren’t easy stories.)

I. Parables confuse those who don’t care and teach those who do (**Luke 8:4-10**)

A. Jesus taught in parables or proverbs to confuse some and teach others.

1. Parables are short, vivid, fictional stories that use figurative images to teach spiritual lessons.
2. Some of his other parables are the good samaritan, the prodigal son, and the unjust steward.
3. Jesus’ parables confused those who came to him for the wrong reasons (power, entertainment).
4. Not only does Jesus know everyone won’t get it, he doesn’t want some to get it.
5. In v. 10 Jesus quotes Isaiah who God commissioned to harden the heart of Israel (turn & heal).
6. In Isaiah 5, God planted Israel in “a vineyard on a fertile hillside” but it “yielded only bad fruit.”
7. He gave Israel a land, his presence in the temple, and they rejected him.
8. Jesus is perfectly just in saying, “Some won’t understand me because they rejected my Father.”

(Jesus shows compassion to his disciples who do want to understand.)

(Parables confuse those who don’t care and teach those who do.)

C. I took multiple years of Spanish through elementary school, high school, and college.

1. The extent of my Spanish is about, “Hola! ¿Cómo estás? ¿Como se llama? Me llamo gato.”
2. I just said, “Hi! How are you? What’s your name? My name is cat.”
3. I spent all those years taking Spanish but didn’t learn much because I didn’t want to grow.
4. How many of us come to church and go through the motions because we don’t want to learn?

(Do you want to understand this parable?)

II. This parable teaches us what type of people grow up in God (**Luke 8:11-15**)

(“Sowing” was when farmers scattered wheat and barley seeds by hand in a field.)

(In v. 11, the sower is Jesus and he explains “The seed is the word of God.”)
(Each terrain represents a different type of person: path, rock, thorn, and soil.)

A. Path people don't let Jesus change their hearts (v.12)

1. These seeds are scattered on a path and trampled by birds and consumed (v.5).
2. V.12 tells us the devil “takes away the word from” path people's hearts.
3. These people hear the message, call themselves Christians, but don't really believe.
4. The “heart” stands for the whole of a person—these are people who aren't “all in.”
5. The devil steals their “belief” so they were never really “saved” in the first place.
6. If you know Christ, you're not a “path person” but you might act like one sometimes.
7. Path people don't let Jesus change their hearts—how are we not letting Jesus change our hearts?
8. Is God convicting you about something, or calling you to something, but you're ignoring him?
9. How are we reaching out to people that don't want Jesus to touch their hearts?
10. Our POM says, “We value authentic worship that draws people into God's presence...” (hands)

(Path people don't let Jesus change their hearts.)

B. Rock people have shallow belief and wimpy faith (v.13)

1. These seeds are scattered on rocky ground and wither because there's no water (v.6).
2. Luke says these people receive God's word with excitement but after a while fade away.
3. They have no “root”, no understanding of what they believe or why they believe it (mind/will).
4. So when Satan puts them through a trial, testing, or hardship, they don't know why to stay.
5. What are we doing as a church to turn “rock people” into good soil?
6. **Small groups** are our primary place to build community and grow disciples.
7. We'll dive deeper into each week's text, and help each other weather the storms of life.

(We act like path people when disengage our hearts and rock people when we disengage our minds.)

C. Thorn people care more for power, profit, and pleasure than God (v.14)

1. These seeds are scattered among thorns and “choke” or “drown.” (v.7)
2. V.14 lists three ways these seeds suffocate—from worry, riches, and pleasure.
3. I am most worried and anxious when I'm most trying to control life (power struggle).
4. “Riches” are those who are so wrapped up in their careers and profit they can't focus on God.
5. My dad once said he learned to trust God the most when he had the least amount of money.
6. We as a church are learning to trust God financially as we navigate startup costs.
7. We're a new church, and I'll be honest, we need your financial support (see bulletin back).
8. Part of growing in Christ, is giving to God what we hold dear, including our finances.
9. The Greek word for “pleasure” is where we get the modern english word “hedonism.”
10. Hedonism is “the pursuit of pleasure or sensual self-indulgence.”(Google)

(We act like *path people* when we don't love God with our hearts, like *rock people* when we don't love God with our minds, and *thorn people* when we love ourselves more than Jesus.)

D. Soil people believe from the heart, persevere when its hard, and look to Jesus for happiness. (v.15)

1. Those who have a “noble and good heart” believe from the heart (all in).
2. Those who hear God's word, retain it, and persevere engage their minds and wills in truth.

3. And when you put v. 14-15 together, it's implied that this soil also finds its joy in Christ.

Christian Hedonism... God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him. -John Piper

(If you believe in Jesus, you are good soil, but you still need cultivation.)
(Farmers scattered the seed and then plowed the land to protect the seeds.)

- E. How are you tilling the soil God has given you?
1. An easy step is beginning to pray for those around you (ask God for opportunity).
 2. This Saturday we're working the soil in Westford at the Trunk or Treat.
 3. We're working the ground and building relationships.
 4. We're not at the harvest yet, but we are planting seeds.
 - 5. Soil people help other people grow.**

(Notice Jesus had to reveal the meaning of this parable to his disciples for them to understand...)
(This tells us it's a miracle anyone is good soil—God has to open their hearts.)
(Are you writing people off because you don't think they are good soil?)
(It's not our job to figure out who is good soil—it's our job to scatter the seed.)

III. The most unexpected people grow the best fruit (**Luke 8:1-3**)

- A. God surprises us with the type of people he thinks make good disciples.
1. See the types of people following Jesus (he doesn't stop them).
 2. Mary Magdalene had seven demons till Jesus cast them out (Mark 16:9)
 3. Instead of beauty, she probably had mental or physical illness, or told fortunes (Acts 16:16).
 4. Joanna's husband managed Herod's house as a steward (Jews disliked oppressive Romans).
 5. Herod married his brother's wife and beheaded John, Jesus' cousin. (Luke 3:19, 9:9)

(The most unexpected people grow the best fruit.)
(Soil people help other people grow.)

Conclusion:

1. The other gospel accounts say good soil produces crops 100, 60, and 30 fold (Mk 4:8, Mt 13:23).
2. I think Luke only mentions a crop a hundred fold because he wants believers to dream big (Lk 8:8).
3. As a church plant, we need to dig our roots deep into Westford and spread our seeds all over town.
4. We want to be like a vine or weeds that grows all over this garden.
5. Did you know some of the most beautiful flowers are weeds?
6. Clovers, dandelions, daisies, the sumac tree with its crimson red seeds, and goldenrods are all weeds.
7. The lupin flower is not native to New Zealand, but it's taking over and it's beautiful ([see photo](#)).
8. As followers of Jesus, we are aliens to this world, but God has called us to cultivate the land.
9. Soil people believe from the heart, persevere when it's hard, and look to Jesus for happiness.
10. Soil people help other people grow.

Benediction: *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* (2 Corinthians 13:14 NIV)