

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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THE MAN-SAVIOR'S
REAL RELATIVES

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Living Stream Ministry

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In [Luke 7:36-50](#) we have an account of the Man-Savior forgiving sinners. Then in [8:1-21](#) three matters are covered: the Man-Savior being ministered to by women ([vv. 1-3](#)), the Man-Savior teaching with parables ([vv. 4-18](#)), and the Man-Savior identifying His real relatives ([vv. 19-21](#)). If we consider [7:36—8:21](#) as a unit, we shall see that as those who have had their sins forgiven, we should follow the Lord, minister to Him, grow in life, and shine as lamps. Eventually, as such ones, we become the genuine relatives of the Man-Savior. In this booklet we shall consider [8:1-21](#).

MINISTERED TO BY WOMEN

[Luke 8:1](#) says, “And it came about soon afterwards that He journeyed from city to city and village to village, proclaiming and bringing good news of the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with Him.” The Greek word translated “proclaiming” means proclaiming as a herald. The

Greek word rendered “bringing good news” is *euaggelizo*, which means evangelize, to announce good news, to declare glad tidings, to preach the gospel. Therefore, to bring good news of the kingdom of God is to preach the kingdom of God as the good news, as the gospel.

In [verses 2 and 3](#) Luke goes on to say, “And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, who were ministering to them out of their possessions.” In [8:1-3](#) we see that the twelve called ones were following the Savior and that the healed women were ministering to the Savior and His followers out of their own possessions. What a beautiful picture!

The women named in [8:2 and 3](#) ministered to the Lord and to the twelve out of their possessions. It may have been that, under the Lord’s sovereignty, the husbands of these women were wealthy. We may say that this wealth was the result of the Lord’s exercise of His divine attributes. Then the women exercised their human virtues to use their possessions to minister to the Lord and His disciples.

According to [8:1-3](#), there were two groups of people around the Lord Jesus. The first group was composed of His followers; the second was composed of the women. The disciples simply followed the Lord without doing anything. The women, however, ministered both to the Lord and to the disciples in a practical way. In the church life sometimes the sisters are more practical than the brothers are. Whereas the brothers may find it easy to speak, the sisters will often serve, minister, in a practical way.

It is significant that [8:1-3](#) follows immediately after [7:36-50](#). The sequence indicates that after we have experienced the forgiveness of sins and have begun to love the Lord and live in peace, we should follow the Lord and minister to Him.

TEACHING WITH PARABLES

In [8:4-18](#) we have the Man-Savior's teaching with parables. Here the Lord gives two parables, the first in [verses 4 through 15](#) on the growth in life and the second in [verses 16 through 18](#) on the shining of the lamp. In brief, these two parables are concerned with the sower and the lamp.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

The record of the parable of the sower in

8:4-15 is somewhat different from the record in [Matthew 13](#). Matthew's purpose in recording this parable is to point out how it reveals the kingdom life. However, Luke's purpose is to show us that as those who are living in peace, following the Lord, and ministering to Him, we should grow in life.

In [Luke 8:5-8](#) the Lord Jesus tells the parable of the sower; in [verses 9 through 15](#) He explains this parable to His disciples. [Verse 8:5a](#) says, "The sower went out to sow his seed." The sower is the Lord Himself, and the seed is the word with the Lord in it as life. In [verses 5 through 8](#) four kinds of soil are mentioned. As we shall see, these kinds of soil signify four conditions of the human heart.

When the disciples questioned the Lord concerning this parable ([v. 9](#)), He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables, in order that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand" ([v. 10](#)). This verse indicates that God's economy concerning His kingdom was a hidden mystery, a mystery which has been unveiled to the Man-Savior's disciples. Because the nature and character of the kingdom of God are wholly divine and because the elements through

which it is brought forth are the divine life and divine light, the kingdom of God, especially in its reality as the genuine church in this age ([Rom. 14:17](#)), is still all a mystery to the natural man.

FOUR KINDS OF HEARTS

In [Luke 8:11-15](#) we see four kinds of hearts into which the seed is sown. The first kind of heart is likened to the soil “beside the road” ([v. 5](#)). Concerning this, the Lord says in [verse 12](#), “Those beside the road are those who heard; then the Devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved.” The earth beside the road is the earth on the wayside. This earth has been hardened by a great deal of traffic. As a result, wheat cannot grow in that kind of soil.

A heart that is like the wayside, like the soil beside the road, is a heart in which there is too much traffic of worldly business. If our heart is occupied with making a living, there will be too much traffic in our heart. The result will be that our heart will not be the proper soil for the growing of Christ, for it will be a heart hardened by worldly traffic.

A second kind of heart is likened to rocky ground ([8:6, 13](#)). This kind of ground has soil

on the surface, but underneath it is full of rocks. It is not possible for Christ to grow in this kind of heart. A person with such a heart may receive Christ and be saved; however, it will be difficult for him to grow in life. Because of the rocks, it is difficult for Christ to grow in the heart signified by the rocky ground. [Matthew 13:5](#) describes this kind of heart as rocky places, which do not have much earth. This signifies the heart that is shallow in receiving the Lord's word. Such a heart is shallow because deep within are "rocks"—hidden sins, personal desires, self-seeking, and self-pity—which frustrate the seed from gaining root in the depths of the heart.

[Luke 8:7](#) says, "And other seed fell in the midst of the thorns, and the thorns sprouted up with it and choked it." Concerning this, [verse 14](#) explains, "And that which fell into the thorns, these are those who heard, and they are choked by the ongoing anxieties and riches and pleasures of life, and do not bring any fruit to maturity." Here we see clearly that the "thorns" signify anxieties, riches (in particular, the deceitfulness of riches—[Matt. 13:22](#)), and the pleasures of life. These things choke the word and prevent it from growing in the heart and becoming fruitful.

The fourth kind of heart is that signified by

the good earth. “And other seed fell into the good earth, and having sprouted up, it produced fruit a hundredfold” ([Luke 8:8](#)). In [verse 15](#) the Lord explains, “But that in the good earth, these are those who in a noble and good heart hear the word, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with endurance.” This good earth signifies the good heart, a heart that is not hardened by worldly traffic, that does not have hidden sins, and that is without the anxiety of the age, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of life. Such a heart gives all the ground to receiving the word so that the word may grow, bear fruit, and produce even a hundredfold.

A heart without worldly traffic, rocks, and thorns is a purified heart. This kind of heart is good for growing Christ.

After we have been forgiven and have begun to live a life in peace, we should follow the Lord and minister to Him. Then according to [8:4-15](#), we need to deal with our hearts.

In dealing with our hearts, we should keep our hearts away from worldly traffic. This means that our hearts should not be occupied with the business of making a living. Instead, we should live a simple life. However, many are slaves to earning a living. The more they increase their

living expenses, the more they need to labor. The more they uplift their standard of living, the more they need to work. Some even work two jobs in order to maintain a high standard of living. We, on the contrary, should simplify our living. If we simplify our life, our hearts will be kept away from worldly traffic.

We also need to deal with all the rocks, the obstacles hidden within us. These hidden things may include hidden sins or hidden desires. As an example of a hidden desire, we may mention the desire common among young people to have a good car. The desire for a certain kind of new car may become a “rock” in our hearts—a rock that makes it difficult for Christ to grow within us.

In addition to dealing with worldly traffic and the hidden rocks, we also need to deal with the “thorns” of anxieties, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of life. Some, after graduating from college, worry about getting married or about taking care of their children. These anxieties are related to the cares of this life. If our hearts are filled with anxieties, how can Christ grow in us? In order for Him to grow within us, our hearts need to be free from anxiety, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of life.

DELIVERED FROM THE TREND OF THIS AGE

In today's world we face many perils—perils of immorality, perils of anxiety, and perils of pleasure. The more you desire to have pleasure, the more anxiety you will have, and the more you will suffer. But if you are willing to have a simple life, you will not have as many pleasures nor as many anxieties.

We should not follow the trend of today's world. This trend includes worldly traffic, pleasure, and anxiety. Because of this trend, it is difficult for many to live a long life. As the result of following the trend of the world, many are exhausted. They are busy with the worldly traffic and with earning money to have more pleasures. The result is more anxiety, more disease, and more death. We Christians should be delivered from the trend of this age and take another way. If we do not take the way of the world with its traffic, pleasures, and anxiety, our hearts will be released and available for Christ. Then our hearts will be occupied by Christ.

As an elderly person, I can testify that the secret to good health is taking Christ as everything. Because I take Christ as my everything,

I am released from the trend of this world, and my heart is free for the Lord. This makes it possible for Christ to grow within me.

THE PARABLE OF THE LAMP

In [8:16](#) and [17](#) we have the parable of the lamp: “Now no one having lit a lamp covers it with a vessel or puts it underneath a couch; but he places it on a lampstand, in order that those who come in may see the light. For nothing is hidden that shall not become manifest, nor concealed that shall not by all means be known and become manifest.” According to the parable of the sower, we need to grow. According to the parable of the lamp, we need to shine. We should shine brightly as a lamp without any covering. We should be lamps in an open place shining so that others may be enlightened. Therefore, we need to grow, and we need to shine.

The lamp which shines light indicates that the Man-Savior’s ministry not only sows life into His people, but also brings light to them. Hence, such a divine ministry issues in the believers as luminaries ([Phil. 2:15](#)) and the churches as lampstands ([Rev. 1:20](#)), shining in this dark age as His testimony, and consummating in the New

Jerusalem with the outstanding characteristics of life and light ([Rev. 22:2; 21:11, 23-24](#)).

In [Luke 8:18](#) the Lord says, “Take heed therefore how you hear; for whoever has, it shall be given to him; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have shall be taken away from him.” This verse is concerned with how we hear the word of the Lord. [Luke 8:18](#) is similar to [Matthew 13:10-13](#) and [Mark 4:25](#).

IDENTIFYING HIS REAL RELATIVES

[Luke 8:19](#) says, “And His mother and His brothers came up to Him, and they were not able to get to Him because of the crowd.” When it was reported to the Lord Jesus that His mother and brothers were standing outside wanting to see Him, He answered, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it” ([vv. 20-21](#)). The Lord’s answer indicates that we can become the real relatives of the Man-Savior. We may become those who are truly related to Him. Through His ministry the Man-Savior was making the believing sinners His spiritual relatives who became His many brothers ([Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11](#)) in the house of God ([Heb. 3:5-6](#)) and His many members for the building

up of His mystical Body ([Eph. 5:30](#); [1 Cor. 12:12](#)) to do the will of God.

The most important matter in the parable of the sower is the word ([Luke 8:11](#)). We need to take care of the Lord's word in a proper way. If we care for the word, we shall become the real relatives of the Man-Savior, and He will recognize us as such. Because we correspond to His word and make ourselves one with Him, He will identify Himself with us. This is the reason He says in [8:21](#) that His relatives are those that hear the word of God and do it. The Lord lived a life according to the word of God, and now we also are living a life according to His word. Therefore, we and He correspond, and there is an identification between us.

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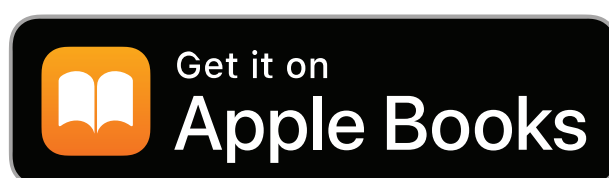
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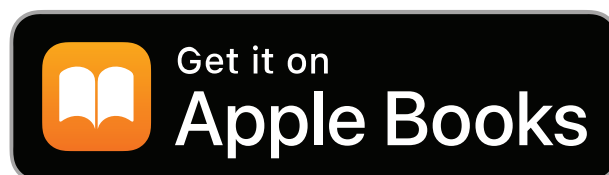
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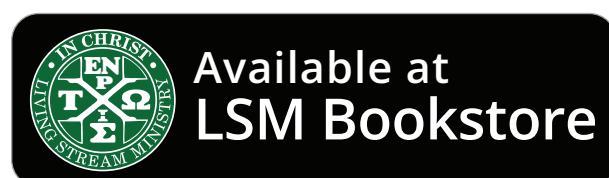
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