



Good Shepherd
Sermon-Based Study Guide
Luke 8:4-15 | June 7, 2026

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I. Introduction to this Study

This summer we are listening to the parables of Jesus. Parables are not simply “earthly stories with heavenly meanings.” They are stories that invite us in, lower our defenses, and then often turn the light back on us.

In *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart suggest several important practices for reading parables well: listen to them again and again, understand their points of reference, and pay attention to the original audience. They compare parables to jokes—not because they are always funny, but because they often depend on surprise, reversal, and subverted expectations. If we do not understand the world of the story, we may miss the force of the punchline.

The Parable of the Sower is one of the best parables to begin with because Jesus gives an explanation. A sower scatters seed, and the seed falls on four kinds of soil: the path, rocky ground, thorny soil, and good soil. The seed is good. The issue is not the quality of the seed, but the condition of the soil.

Jesus’ parable asks a searching question: What kind of hearer am I becoming?

II. Connecting with One Another

Think of a time when you heard good advice, a wise warning, or an important truth but did not really receive it at first. What made it hard to listen?

III. Study the Text

Read Luke 8:4–8

- What details stand out to you as Jesus tells this parable?
- What happens to the seed in each place? (Along the path, on the rock, among thorns, in good soil)
- What surprises you about the way the sower scatters the seed?
- Why do you think Jesus ends the parable by saying, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear”?
- At first hearing, what do you think the crowd might have assumed this story was about?



Read *Luke 8:9–10*

- What do the disciples ask Jesus?
- What does Jesus say has been “given” to the disciples?
- Jesus says that some people see but do not see, and hear but do not understand. What is the difference between hearing words and truly receiving them?
- Why might a parable both reveal and expose at the same time?
- The disciples do not understand the parable at first, but they come to Jesus and ask. What does that teach us about faithful hearing?

Read *Luke 8:11–15*

- What happens to the word in the first soil, the path? What does this kind of hearing look like today?
- What happens to the word in the rocky soil? Why is an immediate joyful response not always the same as deep faith?
- What does Jesus say chokes the word in the thorny soil?
- Luke names three things: cares, riches, and pleasures of life. Which of these is most likely to crowd out God’s word in your life right now?
- Luke says the good soil represents those who hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience. Why is patience necessary for spiritual growth?
- What does this parable teach us about why people can hear the same word and respond in very different ways?

IV. Digging Deeper

Read one or more of the following passages this week:

- **Isaiah 6:8–13** — The background to Jesus’ words about seeing and hearing
- **Jeremiah 4:3–4** — “Break up your fallow ground”
- **Ezekiel 36:24–28** — God gives his people a new heart
- **Luke 6:46–49** — Hearing Jesus’ words and doing them
- **Luke 10:38–42** — Martha, Mary, and the danger of distraction
- **Luke 11:27–28** — Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it
- **James 1:19–25** — Hearing the word and doing it

V. Prayer

Spend time in prayer together:

- Thank God for generously scattering His word and inviting us to hear Him.
- Confess the ways our hearts become hard, shallow, distracted, or crowded.
- Ask God to reveal the cares, riches, and pleasures that may be choking His word in us.
- Pray for honest and good hearts that receive God’s word and hold it fast.

