



## PREACHING AND WITNESS - LUKE 8:4-8, 11-15

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### 1. Witness: Both Identity and Action

- Being a witness is both a **noun and a verb**.
- As followers of Jesus, we **are witnesses** (identity) and we are called to **practice witnessing** (action).
- The series emphasizes that witnessing includes many practices: prayer, generosity, hospitality, holiness, and good deeds.
- However, verbal proclamation of the gospel remains essential.

### 2. The Central Role of Preaching

- Scripture consistently highlights proclaiming the message of Jesus.
- Jesus commissioned his followers to **tell people about him everywhere**.
- Jesus himself preached the good news of the Kingdom of God.
- Early believers boldly proclaimed the word of God.
- Preaching is not limited to pastors or Sunday services.
- All Christians are called to proclaim God's message.

### 3. Definition of Preaching

- Preaching is the public proclamation of God's message.
- It is:
  - **Public** – shared openly, even in everyday conversations.
  - **A proclamation** – spoken verbally rather than kept private.

- **God's message** – not our opinions, politics, or agendas.

### 4. The Parable of the Sower

- Jesus uses the parable to explain how people respond to God's word.
- The seed represents God's word.
- When believers share the gospel, they are **sowing seeds**.

### 5. Four Types of Hearts (Soils)

- Hard Hearts, Shallow Hearts, Divided Hearts, Soft Hearts

### 6. The Responsibility of the Sower

#### Sow in Faith

- Our job is to share the message faithfully, not control the results.
- The power of salvation is **in the gospel itself**, not the skill of the speaker.
- The Holy Spirit works through the message.

#### Sow Broadly

- We cannot always know the condition of someone's heart.
- Therefore, believers should **share the message widely**.
- Different people will respond differently, but some will receive it.

#### Sow the Seed You're Given

- The gospel should not be altered or diluted.
- Share the **pure message of Jesus** with gentleness and respect.
- Avoid letting secondary issues distract from the central message.

### 7. Conclusion

- God uses the **proclamation of the gospel** as the means through which people come to faith.
- Believers are called to scatter the seed of God's word faithfully.
- When the gospel takes root in a receptive heart, it produces a life that bears fruit and multiplies the message to others.

## Connect Group Discussion

### Warm up:

1. Do you enjoy gardening/farming or other agricultural work? Why or why not?
2. What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

### Study & Discussion:

1. In the parable of the sower, the same seed produces very different outcomes depending on the soil. What does this teach us about the relationship between **God's word, human responsibility, and spiritual openness**? How might this shape our expectations when we share our faith?
2. Jesus identifies spiritual opposition as a factor in hard hearts. In practical terms, what might it look like to respond to spiritual resistance with **prayer rather than frustration or argument** when someone rejects the message?
3. The "shallow soil" represents people who initially respond positively but fall away under pressure. What are some ways the church or small groups can move beyond celebrating someone's initial decision for faith and instead **help them develop deeper spiritual roots**?
4. The farmer scatters seed broadly without knowing the condition of the soil. What fears, assumptions, or social pressures tend to **prevent us from sharing our faith openly**, and how might trusting the power of the gospel change the way we approach those situations?

## Practice of the Week: Carry the Seed

### 1. Carry a Reminder

Take the packet of seeds (or any small object) and **keep it somewhere you'll see it during the week**—your desk, car, kitchen counter, or pocket.

- Let it remind you that **God's word is like a seed**.
- Every follower of Jesus is a **sower**.

### 2. Ask One Spiritual Question

Instead of starting by explaining your faith, try beginning with **curiosity**.

Ask one thoughtful question in conversation this week, such as:

- "Do you ever think about spiritual things?"
- "Did you grow up with any kind of faith background?"
- "Where do you usually turn when life gets difficult?"

Listening well is often the first step in meaningful witness.

### 3. Share a Small Piece of Your Story

If the conversation opens up, briefly share **one way Jesus has impacted your life**.

Keep it simple—no sermon required. Just something honest and personal.

### 4. Pray After the Conversation

Whether the response is positive, neutral, or awkward, take a moment later to **pray for that person**.

Ask God to continue working in their heart.

### Key reminder for the week:

Faithful witnesses don't control the harvest—they simply **carry the seed and scatter it where God leads**.

