**I Love to Tell the Story**

Explore every story of Jesus in this year-long devotional guide. Go at your own pace using the online archive.

**Day 86: The Parable of the Sower**

**Read: Matt 13: 1-9; Mark 4: 1-9; Luke 8:4-8**

Guided reflection:

We now begin the section of the gospels that focuses on the parables of Jesus… the every day things that Jesus uses to explain a spiritual concept. In this parable, Jesus tells a story from a boat to the people who had gathered around him. It must have been planting season. Can you make a list of the kinds of soil the sower broadcast his seeds? Keep a space between each type of soil for day 89! We will hear his interpretation on Day 89. He just ends with “Let the one who has ears, hear!” What do you think Jesus meant?

Guided Prayer:

*“Loving God, as I look at these parables told by Jesus, help me to have ears to hear. Open my eyes and my heart to know how to apply Jesus’ teachings in my time in history. Amen”*

**Day 87: Why Parables, Jesus?**

**Read: Matt 13:10-15; Mark 4: 10-12; Luke 8: 9-10**

Guided reflection:

At Vacation Bible School one summer, someone brought one of those pictures of what looks like TV static… yet if you get your eyes fixed just right, you could see Einstein doing an experiment in his lab coat! But to the normal eye, you just saw squiggles… until you looked deeper. Or what about one of those photos that had things hidden in them and you were to look closely to see the old lady, or the bunny, or the hat, etc. Jesus said that parables are just nice little stories to pass the day to those who did not have discerning ears… but to those who wanted to know and to see, they had deep meanings. Do you have eyes to see and ears to hear?

Guided prayer:

*“Open my eyes that I might see glimpses of truth you have for me. Place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free. Silently now, I wait for you. Ready, my God, your will to see. Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine. Amen”* ( From hymnal, “Open my eyes, page 454)

**Day 88: The special gift for the disciples**

**Read: Matt 13: 16-17; Luke 10:23-24**

Guided reflection:

Yes, those lucky disciples. It is true that those twelve had the chance to walk with Jesus, to hear his words and to understand their meaning – Jesus was right there and they were open. We have the perspective from the other side of the cross… and the written word. We do not hear the emphasis Jesus placed on certain words; nor do we know the tone Jesus used. BUT, we do have the spirit of the living God within us to open our spiritual eyes to the truth. These three verses show us a special bonding with His disciples.

Guided Prayer:

*“Oh, to have Jesus say to me “Dear one, you are blessed because you see and you hear and you get it!” Sometimes I am slow to even WANT to see and hear. Open my ears, that I may hear voices of truth you send that are clear; and while the wave notes fall on my ear, let everything else disappear! Open my ears and illumine me, Spirit Divine! Amen”* ( From hymnal, “Open my eyes, page 454)

**Day 89 The meaning of the parable of the sower**

**Read: Matt 13:18-23; Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:11-15**

Guided reflection:

On Day 86 we read the parable of the sower. Now Jesus explains the meaning. Go back to day 86 and look over the list of soils you discovered… and then read today’s words. Write what each soil represents:

1) The path – someone hears but does not understands so just lets it wither and die;

2) The rocky place – receives the word of God with joy, but has no roots, so dies;

3) Thorns – grow up with the new plant, but the thorns end up choking out the life of the little

 plant, so it dies;

 4) Good soil is rich and filled with what is needed for a plant to take root and flourish.

The point, the seed will do its thing IF the soil is ready to create the environment for it to flourish. Now, Jesus wants us to get the point that WE are the soil… it is up to us to allow the seeds of truth to grow in our lives. So, where are the rocks and thorns in your spiritual life? What do you need to remove or cultivate so you can be open to what the Word of God wants to say to you today?

Guided prayer:

*“Open my mouth and let me bear gladly the warm truth everywhere. Open my heart and let me prepare love for your children thus to share. Silently now, I wait for you, ready, my God, your will to see. Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit Divine. Amen”* ( From hymnal, “Open my eyes, page 454)

**Day 90: The purpose of the parables**

**Read: Matt 13:12; Mark 4: 21-25; Luke 8: 16-18**

Guided reflection:

I suggest you read the Mark text today… the point of the parables is to “get” an insight and then let it bear fruit because that begins the cycle of abundance. If you are open to some truth, even more will come. If you give some away, more will come to you. The spiritual cycle of abundance will have begun in you!

Guided Prayer:

*“Dear God, do not allow me to be stingy with your truth. Help me be open to the cycle of abundance of truth: the more I give, the more I will receive. Lord, where am I hindering my own understanding? I want all that you have for me! Amen”*