



Encountering the Word of God (Luke 8:1-15)

1. What has been your experience of reading the bible? Have you ever been amazed when reading it? Do you ever find it difficult to understand? How often do you read the bible? How and when you you read it?
2. A 'parable' is a short story that uses familiar imagery to reveal an unfamiliar insight, and tries to jolt its audience into seeing things in a new way. Jesus often used parables in his teaching. Parables usually make several 'points of comparison' with the wider world and issues a 'call to action' to follow. For example in our last encounter Jesus gave a mini parable about two debtors and a money lender (Luke 7:40-43). The debtor with the small debt compares to Simon the Pharisee, larger debtor to the sinful woman and the moneylender compares to God. The parable calls Simon to to change his attitude towards both God and the woman.

Read the parable of the sower (Luke 8:1-15). What are the points of comparison for the different elements of the parable?

<i>Story Element</i>	<i>Point of Comparison</i>
Farmer	
Seed (in general)	
Seed on the path	
Seed on rocky soil	
Seed within thorns	
Seed on good soil	

3. Who is the audience for this parable, and what action is the story calling them to do?

4. Re-read verses 4-5 and 11-12. In Jesus' assessment, what is the most dangerous thing the devil can do within the heart of a person? How should this impact our prayers for unbelievers?

What attitude should we have when we listen to God's Word?

5. Re-read verses 6 and 13. What kind of things might cause your response to Jesus to go through a 'time of testing'?

How might we 'water' the seed of God's Word planted in our hearts so that it might grow deep roots and not 'wither' during a time of testing?

6. Re-read verses 7 and 14. Jesus explains that 'life's worries, riches and pleasures' can choke your faith. Does this mean Christians will never worry, renounce all riches and never enjoy pleasure? Why / why not?

How can we ensure our faith is not choked?

7. Do you know somebody who's response to Jesus over the years has either 'withered' during a time of testing, or been 'choked' the things of this life? If you feel comfortable, pray for this person.

8. Re-read verses 8 and 15. Jesus wants those listening to him to respond by hearing, retaining and persevering in God's Word. On a practical level, how can you do this in your heart?

9. The goal of the farmer sowing his seed is to produce a fruitful crop. What do you think being 'fruitful' in the kingdom of God looks like in daily life?

According to the parable, what is Jesus responsible for, and what are you responsible for, in order to flourish in the kingdom of God?

How can you act to retain God's Word in your heart and and persist in following Jesus?

End the study by sharing what this encounter has taught you about who Jesus is, and about how you are to respond to him.