

Moving On Up!

Lesson for Sunday, February 1, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ This is the second lesson in our series on what it means to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Last week, we looked at the four calls that Jesus issued. Can you remember what they were? *Ask for their input - what was the call - what does it mean – etc. Use the board!*
 - **“Come and see”** – means to **just show up** and was issued to the **seeker**.
 - **“Follow Me”** – means to line up behind and to imitate – issued to those **young believers** who are ready to **commit** to walking in the steps of Jesus.
 - **“Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men”** – Jesus was inviting those men to become part of His **ministry** team and to become a **worker**.
 - **“Go and bear fruit”** – this is the call to be a spiritual **producer** – this is what it means to be a **disciple**.
- ⇒ You can look at those four calls on a continuum. We know that “come and see” is specifically for those who are lost, but the other three are places we can find ourselves as Christians at various times in our Christian life. Just because you might be producing spiritual fruit right now does not mean you will be doing so a year from now.
- ⇒ How do we move from “follow me” through the more advanced stages of our Christian growth? How do we avoid getting stuck in one area? Jesus gave us a familiar parable that describes the potential sticking points that keep us from moving on up in our spiritual growth. We find that parable in Mark 4.
- ⇒ At FBT we are quite familiar with the Parable of the Sower. Begin by reading Mark 4:3-8. Let’s look at this parable from the perspective of a farmer seeking to bring in a harvest.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. Seed Sown Along the **Wayside** (vs. 4)
 - a. Seed sown along a hardened rocky path has little hope of becoming fruitful.
 - i. The soil is hard, uncultivated, and not receptive to outside seed.
 - ii. The seed is exposed to the birds of the air who come along and steal the seed sitting on the top of the hard ground.
 - b. In Mark 4:15, we are told the condition of the person represented by this soil. The Devil comes and takes the seed away.
 - c. In this metaphor, the seed never has a chance to take root in a person’s life, and the person never comes to the truth. The sticking point that keeps people from answering the first call is that they have an **unreceptive** heart.
 - i. Discuss: Do you have someone in your life that you are concerned for their soul and yet they never seem interested? Do they seem like their heart is hardened toward spiritual things?
 - ii. Was there a time in your life when you were like this before you came to Christ?
 - d. The solution to this sticking point is to **cultivate** the hardened ground. For a farmer to have receptive soil, he must do the hard work of cultivating the soil.
 - i. Read Isaiah 28:23-24. Four times in verse 23 we are told to listen up!
 - ii. How do we cultivate the “soil” of our friends with hardened hearts?
 - e. When we are evangelizing, we must cultivate **relationships** with lost people. We see this example in the life of Christ.
 - i. We have to listen and help remove some of the “rocks” in the soil of their hearts so they will be receptive to Christ’s call.
 - ii. Discuss what this may involve for us as we invite people to come and see.
2. Seed Sown on **Stony** Ground (vs. 5-6)

- a. If you are a Christian, you have answered the first call of Jesus. You were exposed to the Gospel and decided to follow Jesus. This was most likely a wonderful time in your life.
 - b. But many Christians never answer Jesus's other calls. They get stuck as baby Christians who desperately needs to grow. What keeps people from moving on up in their walk with the Lord? Jesus begins to tell us in Mark 4:16-17.
 - c. People are eager to answer the call and come to Jesus (16)! But a decision to follow Christ is not the last step – it is the first step in a new way of life! Notice what Jesus says the new Christian must do and why they must do it (both seen in vs. 17).
 - i. The new Christian must be committed to be a **growing** Christian, developing spiritual roots in their life that will anchor them moving forward.
 - ii. Why? Because affliction and persecution will come! Difficult times will **derail** undeveloped Christians.
 - iii. How do we prepare ourselves for difficult times? Develop roots!
 - d. Discuss: How do we grow spiritual roots? What are the areas we need to know that will anchor us in the difficult days?
3. Seed Sown Among **Thorns** (vs. 7)
- a. When Jesus explains this seed in verses 18-19, He identifies three sticking points:
 - i. **Worries** – “cares of this world”
 - ii. **Wealth** – “the deceitfulness of riches”
 - iii. **Wants** – “the lusts of other things”
 - b. What keeps people from moving on up in their personal discipleship?
 - i. All of us have worries.
 - ii. All of us face the deceitfulness of riches.
 - iii. All of us face the wants (desires) of life.
 - c. How do we keep these things from choking out our spiritual growth? It takes humility that will look into one's life and answer some difficult questions. Consider:
 - i. We must be willing to discuss and discern how these areas impact our lives. What do we worry about? How are we influenced by the wealth and wants of the world?
 - ii. We must be willing to destroy the thorns in our lives that choke out our fruitfulness.
 - d. Interesting note #1: In many ways, these three sticking points can easily revolve around money. We just wrapped up stewardship month. Failure to tithe is usually a clear indicator that these issues have a root in a person's life.
 - e. Interesting note #2: If we take this parable at face value, it seems that 75% of the people who begin the walk with Christ never answer calls #3 & 4. Those who answer call #3 are the workers. Often, the three sticking points in this point are also what keep people from ever stepping into meaningful service within the local church.
4. Seed Sown on **Good** Soil (vs. 8)
- a. When...
 - i. We are saved (“come and see”)...
 - ii. And we are developing spiritual roots to help anchor our lives in Christ and His Word (“follow Me”)...
 - iii. We are prepared to serve the Lord Jesus in meaningful ways (“I will make you fishers of men”)...
 - iv. And will ultimately begin to see the Holy Spirit produce spiritual fruit (character, conduct, converts) in their lives (“bear fruit”).
 - b. Have you ever planted a garden? There is nothing like eating food that you worked to attain! When you have sacrificed, plowed the ground, planted the seed, watered, pulled weeds, etc. – nothing tastes like it!
 - c. The same is true spiritually. There is nothing like the fruit bearing Christian life! This is God's will and plan for your life! What is keeping you from it?

APPLICATION/DISCUSSION:

- ⇒ After two weeks, where would you put yourself on the spiritual continuum of discipleship?
- ⇒ After today's lesson, what would you identify is keeping you from being a fruit bearing Christian? What changes do you need to make?
- ⇒ Focusing on point 2 of the Bible study, discuss...
 - What are you doing (or what should we be doing) to develop deeper spiritual roots that will anchor our lives? Get specific!
- ⇒ Focusing on point 3 of the Bible study section, discuss...
 - What are things that people like us worry about? How do we overcome them?
 - How are we tempted to chase riches and feed our wants? Again, how do we overcome these challenges?
- ⇒ What would you say is the #1 obstacle that is keeping you from being a fruit bearing Christian? (We will answer this question next week!)