



## **Sunday of the 7th Ecumenical Council**

The parable of the sower answers a critical question for many Christians: why have so many people rejected the gospel? As we find out, the sower represents Christ, or anyone who is teaching the gospel. The seed, of course, is the content of the gospel. Jesus explains that the “slander” seizes the Word away from some people. Others have no “roots” and easily fall away. And, still others are more concerned about the wealth of this world. But, despite these setbacks, there is “good soil.” To the shock of the listeners, however, it’s the outsiders who are bearing the fruit of the seeds: the Gentile centurion, the shady tax-collector, and the sinful woman.

**Scripture:** Luke 8:5-15

**Bottom Line:** We are all called to bear the fruit of the seed and do so with patience.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. At the end of today’s reading, those who bear fruit are those who hold fast to the word and bear fruit “with patience.” What does this mean? For you, what makes patience so hard? How can you learn to be more patient with others, even when they annoy you?
2. David Bentley Hart, in his New Testament, translates “patience” differently. He uses the word “constancy.” How does this change your understanding? What does it mean to have “constancy” in trusting the gospel and bearing fruit? What makes this easier or harder than being “patient”? How might “patience” and “constancy” both be a part of your Christians walk?
3. In this parable, Jesus explains the strange way the Kingdom was arriving—through outsiders instead of insiders. How might this upset people? How might this shine a new light on God’s priorities and the goals of the Kingdom? Who are the outsiders in your world? How might they actually be demonstrating the Kingdom?

## **Moving Forward**

What made the outsiders different was their trust in the gospel. They began to bear fruit by putting their lives, reputations, and property at the disposal of this coming Kingdom. The insiders—the folks who “went to church”—were too shocked by the gospel and wanted to distance themselves. Or, they were too attached to their worldly positions, power, or things to bear fruit. The question for us today is: how much “mature growth,” how much fruit, is the Word is producing in our lives?

## **Changing Your Mind**

“And [those seeds] in the good soil, these are those who, hearing with a fine and good heart, hold fast to the word, and by their constancy bear fruit.” (Luke 8:15)