



Parable of the Sower/Preparation

13th Confirmation Class Lesson

Supplies Needed: Journals; Handout; 1 small slip of paper per student; a hat or bowl to put the slips of paper into and be able to pull out; a couch that holds four people or 4 chairs as part of the seating circle; teams for opening activity is by default boys vs girls, however, if you have a large imbalance in male/female student ratio, then you'll need another way to divide the class and will also need some sort of way to visually highlight one team (example: take bandanas and tie them around the wrists of half of the class); TV/DVD; Nooma video: Breathe by Rob Bell;

Opening Activity 4 on the couch

- First, let's get everyone sitting in a circle.
- Part of the circle must contain a couch that can hold 4 people (we can put some seats on the side of the couch if the couch doesn't seat 4 people). From now on, when we say "the couch" we mean the couch with the two chairs next to it.
- There should also be one and only one empty chair in the circle.
- The "couch" must have 2 girls and 2 boys seated on it in the beginning.
- The point of this activity is for the boys to get 4 boys to be sitting on the couch while the girls are trying to get four girls to sit on the couch.
- This is how you'll try to do that:
- Everyone write your name on a piece of paper and fold it up.
- Put all the pieces of paper in this hat (or bowl).
- Now as I come around again, take a new paper out of the hat.
- The name that you draw is your new name.
- Don't tell or show anyone your new name.
- To start the activity, the person to the right of the empty chair is trying to move off a boy or a girl depending on what team they are on (for example: a boy will want to move a girl off the couch so a boy could then sit in that spot later).
- So this person calls a name of someone in the group except for the name he has in his hand (remember, at this point, no one knows anyone's name yet).
- Whoever has that name on their piece of paper then goes and sits in the empty chair **AND then exchanges names with the one who called them.**
- Now the person to the right of the new empty chair calls someone.
- Play continues this way until we have either all girls or all boys on the couch.
- No one should be giving clues to the person whose turn it is.

DO Opening Activity

OPENING PRAYER

CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK REVIEW

Our challenge from last class: Sit down by yourself with a pen(cil) and paper. Either write down the words or say out loud a request to God to help you name and identify ways that you may be living without God and how that might hurt you and/or others. Give yourself and God 10 minutes after you ask. Write down whatever comes to mind. If what you see is something you want to let go of – then admit what you’ve done and ask God for forgiveness. God will forgive you. Try this at least twice during our break.

--How’d it go?

REVIEW

- Concepts we’ve talked about recently in class:
 - The word “devil” parallels the Greek word diabolis, which means “divider.” It is often used in scripture interchangeably with “Satan.” Satan means “adversary.”
 - The word “temptation” is interchangeable in scripture with the word “test.” A helpful way to think of temptation is to think of it as motivation(s) that makes the choice to not choose God seem attractive.
 - Transfiguration – when we follow Jesus, we see the divide removed between the “every day” and the divine. All heaven breaks loose.
 - Christ means “anointed.” It’s a symbol of protecting the ears from death.
 - Jesus is anointed, on his feet, most likely by a prostitute.
 - Asking for and then receiving forgiveness offers us the opportunity to live freely, unencumbered by the burdens of guilt and shame we used to feel, just like the woman lived freely who then anointed Jesus' feet.

TELL

- Today, we’re going to focus on preparation and its role in our paying attention to God.
- In our last class, the Bible story we talked about had a parable in it.
- A parable is a short story that helps illustrate a point.
- Jesus used parables (stories) to help people think about and visualize ways of what living inside or living outside the kingdom of God looks like.
- The parable that we’ll read today illustrates what both these ways of living would look like.
- This parable is often referred to as the parable of the Sower.

READ Matthew 13:1-9

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. 6 So, when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 Let anyone with ears listen!"

ASK

- What causes a seed to not grow well? (Thorns, not enough good soil, birds, not enough water, too much water, not enough sun, too much sun).
- So what *does* cause a seed to grow well? (Lots of good soil, the right amount of sunlight and water and not too many predators to eat it).
- What makes good soil good? (nutrients, texture of the soil particles which is soft enough to allow air and water to get into it, but solid enough that it can support the roots and hold moisture)
- Let's pretend for the moment that the seeds represent the Word of God, and the soil represents our hearts and minds, then what might the thorns and birds represent? (the voice of the devil/temptation)
- If we continue to pretend that the seeds represent the word of God, then who do you think the sower represents? (Anyone who shares/spreads the Word of God – Jesus, mentors, teachers, me, you)
- Finally, still pretending that the seeds represent the Word of God, and the soil represents our hearts and minds, what might, do you think, prepare our hearts so that they are like good soil?

TELL

- Another perspective of this story is to think of ourselves as the sower and think of the world/others as the soil
 - The term that's used for the way that farmers used to sow seed in the 1st century is called "Broadcasting." Meaning, when you throw the seed out, it is "cast" in a "broad" way.
 - We now use that word for what? (wireless, tv and radio signals – because the signals go everywhere!)
 - So where the seeds would land was anyone's guess. This is similar to our opening activity, where when we were picking names, the names landed randomly. And then trying to put people in the "right" places was near impossible.
 - So if we think of ourselves as the sowers, then the story is telling us that we are to keep broadcasting Word of God/the Good News, but that we are not to worry about where the Good News lands.
- Another perspective of the story is to think, "Ok, what soil am I?" And then we try to figure it out. But that *could* be a depressing or discouraging answer.
- A perspective that we would like to share with you today is that *all* those types of soils are in you, everyday. Depending on what you're paying attention to will determine in that moment what kind of soil you are. We'll talk more about this after...

SNACK

TELL

- We're going to watch a Rob Bell Nooma video called "Breathe."
- As you watch it, it may not immediately connect for you with what we've been talking about.
- But that's why we talk afterwards.

WATCH Breathe video

Important Quotes from Video (for instructors to note):

- All ground is holy ground
 - Moses becomes aware of it
 - Moving too fast to be aware of all the burning bushes
 - God has breathed into us, making us divine dirt clods
 - crowned us with glory and honor. dwells in us.

ASK/TELL

- Rob Bell, referring to the Moses story, says that all ground is holy, only Moses just didn't notice it before.
- But once Moses did notice, then the ground was holy.
- Then later on Rob Bell calls us divine dirt clods, right? Dirt clods that came from the ground. Ground that was holy.
- Rob Bell is reminding us that we are holy ground. We are holy soil.
- So then, if we think of ourselves as soil, and we think about God's word as seed, then a question we might want to ask ourselves is, "How can I be the good soil that produces a hundred-fold?"
- Well, we can prepare the soil, right?
- One way that we can prepare the soil is that
 - We breathe. We slow down. We pay attention to God's word.
 - We breathe. We slow down. Then we pay attention to God's word.
 - We breathe. We slow down. Then we pay attention to God's word.

THE GOOD NEWS

- There are surprises that happen in life.
- Things can get messy and go not as we expect them to go.
- These surprises could make us angry or upset or worried and while doing that, they can also divide our attention so that we're no longer paying attention to God.
- But one way we can "prepare our soil" is to pay attention to our breathing.
- To sit or stand still and focus on our breathing.
- To hear God's name in our breathing.
- This is one way in which we can prepare ourselves to better receive what God is offering us.

CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK

- Find a time where you are by yourself.
- Notice how you are feeling: Tired? Worried? Relaxed? Distracted?
- Set a timer for at least 7 minutes.
- Then listen to your breathing.
- Maybe even form the sounds of Yah-hey and Va-hey as you breathe in and out.
- After your timer goes off, notice how you are feeling.
- Do you feel any different? How?

CLOSING PRAYER – ask for prayer requests and give time during prayer for students to pray.