Open Bible Stories

The Story of the Farmer

## 0 Introduction

### 0.1 Key Idea

The story of the farmer teaches us that real faith receives God’s word and produces fruit in one’s life as evidence of genuine faith.

### 0.2 Creedal Verse

“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” John 15:8

### 0.3 Metanarrative Summary

The eternal God created all things in six days. He made a good and perfect world. He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation. But humans rebelled against God and ruined God’s creation. God set to restore his world through his promise. God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all nations through Abraham. God kept his promises across the generations. God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac. God gave Isaac a wife and she bore twins, Jacob and Esau. God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation. God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob’s sons, and used him to rescue his family. God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves. But, God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from their slavery. God judged the Egyptians with harsh plagues; in the final judgment, he passed over his people who covered their doorposts with the blood of a sacrificed lamb. Then, God delivered the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea on dry land. God made a covenant with the Israelites and made them his people. God tested Israel in a series of wilderness wanderings and eventually brought his people into the promised land of Canaan. God raised up deliverers to lead Israel and rescue them from their enemies. God formed Israel into a kingdom. He made a covenant with King David and promised to send a king that would rule his people forever. Many of Israel’s kings were evil and the kingdom of Israel divided into two kingdoms. God sent prophets to warn his people of God’s judgment and call them to repent. When Israel did not repent, God sent his people into exile. After many years, he brought them back to the land. Throughout the Old Testament, God promised to send his Messiah to deliver his people form their sin. After many years, the prophet John was born. He would prepare people for the coming Messiah. At the perfect time, God sent his Son, Jesus, to be born of a virgin Mary. When John and Jesus grew up, John baptized Jesus as a sign that Jesus was God’s beloved Son. Jesus endured all manner of temptation without ever sinning. When he was thirty years old, he launched a public ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing. He taught his disciples about the life of compassion, sacrifice, and forgiveness. He performed many miracles: he fed a crowd of five thousand, he walked on water, he healed the sick, and he cast out demons. He proclaimed to people the nature of real faith

## 1 Biblical Interpretation: Observing the Details of the Story

After reading the crafted biblical story, answer the following questions to familiarize yourself with the details of the story.

### 1.1 Observation Questions

#### 33-01

At the beginning of this story, what was Jesus doing near the shore of the lake?

How many people gathered to listen to Jesus?

What did Jesus do because of the size of the crowd?

#### 33-02

What did Jesus tell the people?

Where was the first place Jesus said some the seed fall?

What happened to the seed that fell on the path?

#### 33-03

Where was the second place Jesus said some other seed fall?

What happened to the seed that fell on the rocky ground?

Why did the seed that grew on the rocky soil sprout quickly and then wither?

#### 33-04

Where was the third place Jesus said some other seed fall?

What happened to the seed that fell among thorn bushes?

Did the plants that grew on the thorny ground produce any grain?

#### 33-05

Where was the fourth place Jesus said some other seed fall?

What happened to the seed that fell on the good soil?

What did Jesus say to people who wanted to follow God?

#### 33-06

Did the disciples understand the meaning of the story?

What does the seed represent in the story?

What does the path represent?

#### 33-07

What does the rocky ground represent?

Why does this person fall away?

#### 33-08

What does the thorny ground represent?

What happens to this kind of person?

What is this person like?

#### 33-09

What does the seed in the good soil represent?

### 1.2 Translation Questions

Use the following translation questions to understand specific details of the passage. Discuss how you might translate these specific elements of the story.

#### 33-01

**One day** The events of this story happened in the past, but we are not told the specific time. How would you express **One day** to mean the events of this story actually took place in the past even though we are not told the specific day or time when they occurred?

  

**that Jesus did not have enough room to speak to them all** The crowd that gathered to hear Jesus was very large. The result of such a large crowd caused it to be hard for Jesus to speak to them all. How would you express **that Jesus did not have enough room to speak to them all** to mean the result of such a large crowd gathering to listen to Jesus was he did not have enough space to speak to them all?

  

**So he got into a boat in the water** Jesus could not speak to the crowd because of how many people gathered near the shore of the lake. The result of this was for Jesus to get into a boat and teach the people from the water. How would you express **So he got into a boat in the water** to mean the result of Jesus not able to teach the large crowd on the shore was for Jesus to get into a boat and teach the people from the water?

  

#### 33-02

**this story** The story is in the form of a parable. A parable is a short story that teaches something(s) that is true, and delivers the lesson in a way that is easy to understand and hard to forget. Though the events in a parable could happen, they did not actually happen. They are told only to teach the lesson(s) that the listener is meant to learn. How would you express **this story** to mean a short story that teaches something that is true?

  

**spreading the seed by hand** The farmer was covering all of his crop soil with seed. This is the way that farmers in the ancient Middle East typically planted grain-bearing crops. How would you express **spreading the seed by hand** to mean throwing/dispersing the seed on the soil to plant crops?

  

**some of the seed happened to fall on the path** Some of the seed landed on a path where people typically walk. The farmer did not intentionally throw seed on the path. He spread/dispersed the seed out widely on the soil and some of it fell on the path. How would you express **some of the seed happened to fall on the path** to mean some of the seed which the farmer spread widely on these soil ended up falling on the path where people walk?

  

#### 33-03

**the rocky ground** Some of the seed fell on soil that was full of rocks. How would you express **the rocky ground** to mean ground that was full of rocks?

  

**sprouted quickly** It did not take long for the seed to start to grow. The seek sprang up from the grow as a small plant really fast. How would you express **sprouted quickly** to mean the seed grew into a small seedling after a short period of time?

  

**but its roots were not able to go deep into the soil** The seed grew up into a seedling fast. In contrast with this, the roots did not go deep into the soil because the ground was full of rocks. How would you express **but its roots were not able to go deep into the soil** to mean the roots not going deep into the soil of the rocky ground is the different/opposite from how fast the seed sprouted from the ground?

  

**When the sun came up and it got hot** The sun came up and it became hot. At this time, the plants withered and died. How would you express **When the sun came up and it got hot** to mean the plants withered and died at the time the sun came up and made it hot?

  

#### 33-04

**Still** Something different happened to the seed that fell on the thorny ground that happened to the seed that fell on the rocky ground. How would you express **Still** to emphasize a contrast (something different) between what happened to the seed that fell on the thorny ground and the rocky ground?

  

**choked it out** The thorns surrounded the plant that grew among the thorn bushes and made it hard for the plant to grow. How would you express **choked it out** to mean the thorns overshadowed or crowded out the plant that grew among the thorn bushes?

  

**the thorny ground** Thorn bushes grew on this part of the ground. How would you express **the thorny ground** to mean the ground that was covered with thorny bushes?

  

#### 33-05

**good soil** Some seed fell on soil that was good for crops. How would you express **good soil** to mean fertile soil or soil that was good for growing plants?

  

**let him pay attention to what I am saying** Jesus used this story to teach his disciples about what it really means to follow God. Jesus explained that people who wanted to follow God needed to listen to what Jesus was teaching and How would you express **let him pay attention to what I am saying** to mean concentrate/focus on what Jesus was saying and consider closely what it taught them about their own lives?

  

#### 33-06

**This story confused the disciples.** At this time, Jesus’ teaching did not make sense to the disciples. How would you express This story confused the disciples to mean the disciples did not understand this story?

  

**The seed is the word of God** In this story, Jesus compared God’s word to seed. The word represents God’s message. Sowing the message represents teaching it. How would you express **The seed is the word of God** to mean the sowing of the seed is teaching people God’s message?

  

**The path is a person who hears God’s word, but does not understand** it In this story, Jesus compared a person who hears God’s word to a path. The path represents a kind of person who hears God’s word and does not understand what it means. How would you express **The path is a person who hears God’s word, but does not understand** it to mean the path is like the person who hears God’s word taught but does not understand what it means?

  

**takes the word away from him** Jesus explains that the devil takes God’s word away from some people, causing them to forget it. This is like the birds in the story that eat up the seed on that fell on the path. How would you express **takes the word away from him** to mean steals the word from his heart so he won’t believe it and be saved just as birds eat up the seed that falls on a path?

  

#### 33-07

**The rocky ground is a person who hears God’s word and accepts it with joy** In this story, Jesus compared a person who accepts God’s word with joy for a short time and then falls away with rocky ground. At first, this person joyfully believes God’s message and agrees that it is true, but then he stops following God. How would you express **The rocky ground is a person who hears God’s word and accepts it with joy** to mean the rocky ground is like the person who hears God’s message and joyfully believes it but then falls away?

  

**he suffers hardships, or when other people make him suffer** The kind of person that Jesus describes experiences difficulty life circumstances and is mistreated by others after coming to follow God. The hardship and suffering cause this person to stop following God. How would you express **he suffers hardships, or when other people make him suffer** to mean this person experiences painful misfortunes in life and is mistreated by others because he believes God’s message?

  

**falls away** The person that Jesus describes accepts God’s word with joy at first. Soon after this hardship and suffering cause this person to no longer follow or obey God. How would you express **falls away** to mean stops following or obeying God?

  

#### 33-08

**The thorny ground is a person who hears God’s word** In this story, Jesus compared a person who hears God’s word but then worries about money and possessions. His desire for the wrong things makes it hard for him to love and please God. How would you express **The thorny ground is a person who hears God’s word** to mean the thorny ground is like the person who hears God’s message but the focuses on other things more than God?

  

**He is like wheat stalks that do not produce any grain** Jesus compared the person who focuses on the desires of the world more than God to stalks of wheat which do not produce grain. This person does not produce spiritual fruit or do not behave in a way that shows God’s Spirit is working in him. Jesus speaks of a person’s good works as if they were grain. How would you express **He is like wheat stalks that do not produce any grain** to mean the person who gets concerned about the desires of the world more than God and does not show spiritual fruit (evidence of God’s spirit working in him) is compared to stalks of wheat that do not produce grain?

  

#### 33-09

**the seed in the good soil is a person who hears the word of God, believes it, and produces fruit** In this story, Jesus compared the person who truly believes God’s word and shows evidence of this genuine belief to seed that fell on good soil. The seed in the good soil represents the person who hears and believes God’s word, and produces fruit as a result. How would you express **the seed in the good soil is a person who hears the word of God, believes it, and produces fruit** to mean the seed that fell on the good soil is like the person who hears and understand God’s message, and then behaves in a way that shows God’s Spirit is working in him?

  

## 2 Theological Dialogue: Discussing the Meaning of the Story

Take time to explore the meaning of this story together as a community. Use the following discussions as a way to grasp what truth the story teaches.

### 2.1 Discourse Questions

##### How did Jesus use the story of the farmer to teach God’s word/truth? (33-01, 33-02, 33-05)

##### What does the seed which fell on the path teach us about how some people respond to God’s word? (33-02, 33-06)

##### What does the seed which fell on the rocky ground teach us about how some people respond to God’s word? (33-03, 33-07)

##### What does the seed which fell on the thorny ground teach us about how some people respond to God’s word? (33-04, 33-08)

##### What does the seed which fell on the good soil teach us about how some people respond to God’s word? (33-05, 33-09)

### 2.2 Theological Questions

Answer the following theology questions as a community. Discuss what truths this story teaches.

1. What does it mean to truly believe and follow Jesus? What does this story teach us about the nature of true faith?
2. What different obstacles do people face in coming to believe in Jesus? How are these obstacles represented and explained in Jesus’ story of the farmer?
3. How should believers go about teaching God’s word? How does this story explain what it is like to minister to others by teaching God’s word/truth?

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## 3 Personal Reflection: Following the Teaching of the Story

Take a moment to allow this story to evaluate your own life and to consider how God would have you respond. After this reflection, use the quality checking questions to check your translation draft among the translation team.

### 3.1 Journal Reflection

Prayerfully think about the following personal reflection questions. Write/Record your answers and/or discuss them as a group.

1. Which kind of soil represents the kind of person you are?
2. What obstacles in this story that keep people from fully following Jesus most challenge you?
3. What kind of fruit can you see in your own life that you have come to follow Jesus?
4. With whom might God want you to share the truth of his word? How does this story give you help to know how you can/should go about sharing the word to these people?

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