

Open Bible Stories — The Story of the Farmer

Introduction

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.

Core Belief Verse

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

God's Big Story

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 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 was 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 from 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.

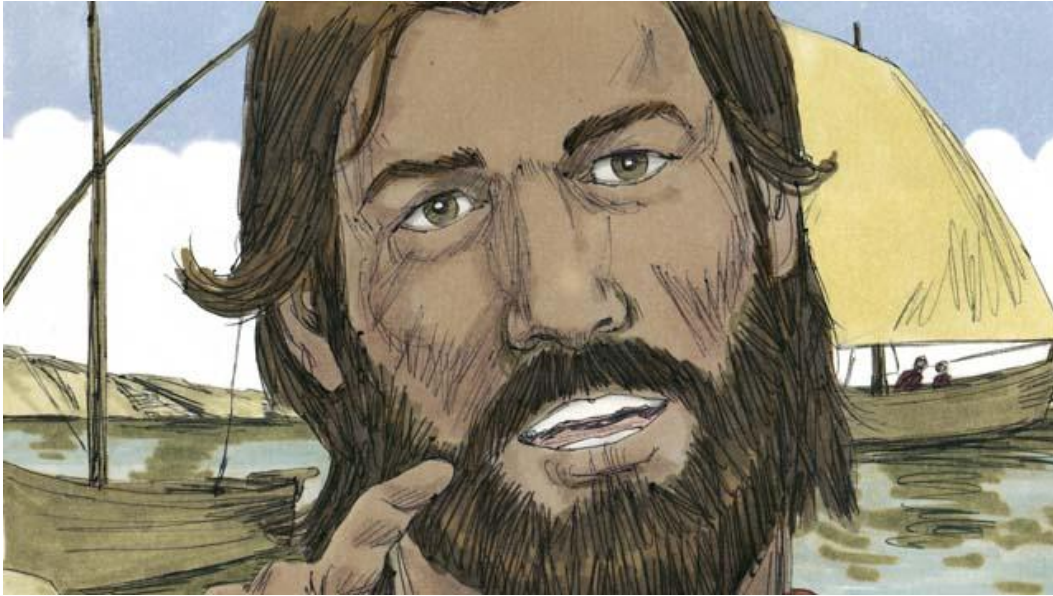
He taught his disciples about the life of compassion, sacrifice, and forgiveness.

Jesus 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

The Story: The Story of the Farmer

33-01



One day, Jesus was near the shore of the lake. He was teaching a very large crowd of people. So many people came to hear him that Jesus did not have enough room to speak to them all. So he got into a boat in the water. There he sat and taught the people.

33-02



Jesus told this story. "A farmer went out to plant some seed. As he was spreading the seed by hand, some of the seed happened to fall on the path. But birds came and ate all of that seed."

33-03



"Other seed fell on rocky ground, where there was very little soil. The seed in the rocky ground sprouted quickly, but its roots were not able to go deep into the soil. When the sun came up and it got hot, the plants withered and died."

33-04



"Still other seed fell among thorn bushes. This seed began to grow, but the thorns choked it out. So the plants that grew from the seed in the thorny ground did not produce any grain."

33-05



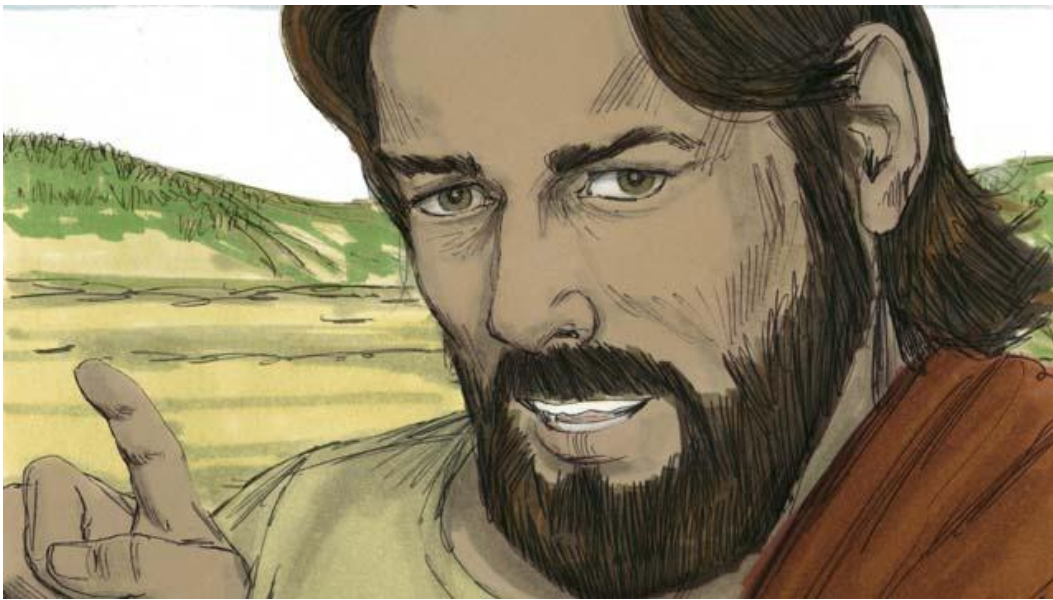
"Other seed fell into good soil. This seed grew up and produced 30, 60, or even 100 times as much grain as the seed that had been planted. Whoever wants to follow God, let him pay attention to what I am saying!"

33-06



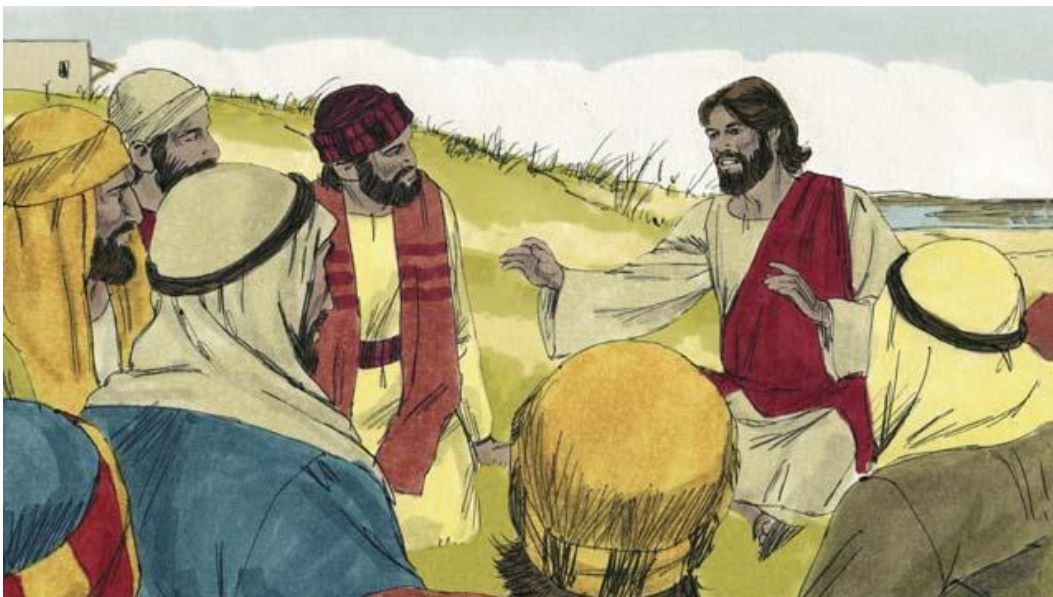
This story confused the disciples. So Jesus explained, "The seed is the word of God. The path is a person who hears God's word but does not understand it. Then the devil takes the word away from him. That is, the devil keeps him from understanding it."

33-07

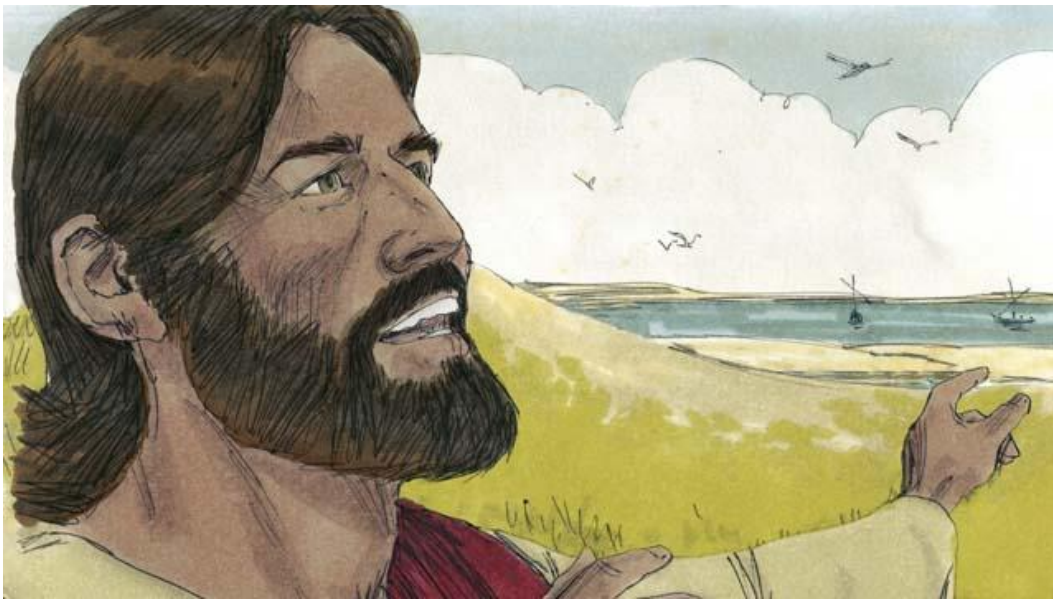


"The rocky ground is a person who hears God's word and accepts it with joy. But when he suffers hardships, or when other people make him suffer, he falls away from God. That is, he stops trusting in God."

33-08



"The thorny ground is a person who hears God's word. But he begins to worry about many things, and he tries to make a lot of money, and he tries to get many things. After some time, he is not able to love God any longer. So what he learned from God's word does not make him able to please God. He is like wheat stalks that do not produce any grain."



"But the seed in the good soil is a person who hears the word of God, believes it, and produces fruit."

A Bible story from: Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15

Community Study: Good and Faithful Servants— Bearing Fruit as

God's Stewards

Recite the Creedal Verse (3-5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage. Read the verse out loud as a community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who remains in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing. John 15:5

OR

10 We have been praying that you will walk worthily of the Lord in pleasing ways. We have been praying that you will bear fruit in every good deed and that you will grow in the knowledge of God.

Colossians 1:10

Discuss Together (5-10 minutes)

God wants his people to live fruitful and productive lives. Discuss together what characteristics describe

a fruitful life and a fruitful community.

Some of the characteristics of a fruitful life and a fruitful community are...

Read the Passage (3-5 minutes)

Only God can cause a life and a community to be fruitful.

Nevertheless, Christians are responsible for

being faithful with what God has entrusted to them. As a community, read the following Bible passage

together to understand what it means to be faithful stewards in God's service.

14 For it is like when a man was about to go into another country.

He called his own servants and

gave over to them his wealth. 15 To one of them he gave five talents, to another he gave two, and to

yet another he gave one talent. Each one received an amount according to his own ability, and that

man went on his journey. 16 The one who received the five talents went at once and invested them

and made another five talents. 17 Likewise the one who had received two talents made another two.

18 But the servant who had received one talent went away, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his

master's money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came back and settled

accounts with them. 20 The servant who had received the five talents came and brought another five

talents. He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five talents more.' 21 His

master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things. I will put you in charge over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.' 22 The servant who had received two talents came and said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more talents.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things. I will put you in charge over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.' 24 Then the

Key Idea: approaching God's work as God's servants

Key Passage: Matthew 25:14-30

Main Session: OBS 33 (The Story of the Farmer)

Movement 1: Understand the Story

Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.

Observation Questions

33-01

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

Jesus was teaching a very large crowd of people.

How many people gathered to listen to Jesus?

So many people came to hear him that Jesus did not have enough room to speak to them all.

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

Because of the size of the crowd, Jesus sat in a boat in the water and taught people from the boat.

33-02

What did Jesus tell the people?

Jesus told the people a story about a farmer who planted seed by spreading them on the ground by hand.

Where was the first place Jesus said some of the seed fell?

Some seed fell on the path.

What happened to the seed that fell on the path?

The birds came and ate all of it.

33-03

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

Some seed fell on rocky soil.

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

It sprouted quickly but then withered and died when it got hot.

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

The seed that grew on the rocky soil withered because its roots were not able to go deep into the soil.

33-04

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

Some of the seed fell among the bushes.

What happened to the seed that fell among thorn bushes?

It began to grow, but the thorns choked it out.

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

No. The plants that grew from the seed in the thorny ground did not produce any grain.

33-05

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

Some of the seed fell on good soil.

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

It grew up and produced 30, 60, or 100 times as much grain as the seed that had been planted.

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

Jesus said that whoever wants to follow God must pay attention to what he was.

33-06

Did the disciples understand the meaning of the story?

No, they were confused.

What does the seed represent in the story?

The seed is the word of God.

What does the path represent?

The path is the person who hears the word but does not understand it, and the devil takes it away from him.

33-07

What does the rocky ground represent?

The rocky ground is the person who hears the word and accepts it with joy but falls away.

Why does this person fall away?

This kind of person falls away when hardship and persecution come, and this kind of person stops trusting in God.

33-08

What does the thorny ground represent?

The thorny ground is the person who hears the word, but as time passes, he begins to worry about many things, and he tries to make a lot of money, and he tries to get many things so that he is not able to please God any longer.

What happens to this kind of person?

This kind of person is not able to love and please God.

What is this person like?

This person is like wheat stalks that do not produce any grain.

33-09

What does the seed in the good soil represent?

The seed in the good soil is the person who hears the word, believes it and produces fruit.

Movement 2: Theological Questions

What Does This Story Teach Us?

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 teach God's word? How does this story explain what it is like to minister to others by teaching God's word/truth?

Movement 3: Live It Out

Personal Implications & Applications From The Story

Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.

1. Think about this week. Where does "The Story of the Farmer" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
2. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: 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.

Movement 4: Retell the Story

Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.

1. Can someone retell "The Story of the Farmer" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.
3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

Church Ministry

Ministry Preparation: Take time to consider how you could minister this story to others. Record some ministry ideas below.

Ministry Implementation: Minister this story to a group of believers as you had planned. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching/lesson or lead a discussion of this story with other believers. Record your ministry plan below.

Ministry Reflection: Think about what you learned from ministering this story to other believers. Reflect on your experience below.

Movement 5: Share It

Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.

1. Who is one specific person you will share "The Story of the Farmer" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?
3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

Report-back next meeting: Who did you share with, and what happened?

Mission Engagement

Witness Preparation: Take time to consider how you will witness this narrative to unbelievers. Record some ideas below.

Witness Implementation: Share this story with an unbeliever. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching/lesson or lead a discussion of this story with unbelievers. Record your witness plan below.

Witness Reflection: Think about what you learned from ministering this story to unbelievers. Reflect on your experience below.