

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
November 4, 2016

1 Kings 5:1–6:38. The blessings of God are gifts from God, not human achievements.

Mark 4:1–24. The parable of the Sower and soils.

Proverbs 1:20–27. Wisdom’s invitation.

COMMENTS.

1 Kings 5:1–6:38. In **5:1-18** we see the preparation for the Temple. Like his father, Solomon seemed concerned for the reputation of the Lord. He allied himself with Hiram, king of Tyre in Phoenicia, and acquired from him building materials for the temple. When Hiram witnessed Solomon’s wisdom, he praised the God of Israel (**5:1–12**). Solomon’s laborers were drafted from among the Israelites (**5:13–18**). Samuel had warned Israel of such conscription under a king (**1 Sam 8:11–12, 16**). In **6:1-38** there is the construction of the Temple. The importance of this event in the life of Israel is indicated by the careful dating of the event and the elaborate description of the temple’s architectural plan. The date is the fourth year of Solomon’s reign (966 B.C.). The Phoenician craftsmen, who were specialists, were employed for the temple. Between the description of the temple’s external features (**1 Kgs 6:2–10**) and its luxuriant furnishings (**6:14–36**) the author emphasized the Lord’s promise to bless Solomon (**6:11–13**). The construction required seven and a half years (**6:37–38**).

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. In **5:1-7** we see the basis for God’s blessing on Solomon (despite the conscription of workers, which God warned would happen if Israel sought a human king rather than God): His covenant with David. These blessings, like Solomon’s wisdom, were not gained by any human merit in Solomon or anyone else. We must remember that everything is a gift from God. While believers can reject God’s grace, they can never earn it. The same is true of the spiritual life. All of the power and blessedness that one enjoys in the spiritual life are gifts from God, never from human achievement. It is God who loved us first. We are able to love by God *by knowledge and by love only* because He first offers Himself to us in grace: 1 John 4:19, *We love Him because He first loved us.*

Mark 4:1–24. For the first time in Mark’s Gospel we are able to listen to Jesus teaching. He sits in a boat, so that the crowd doesn’t overwhelm him, and teaches the people along the shore. He describes a farmer scattering seed. The seed lands in various places—on a path, on rock, among thorns and on good soil. The birds snatch it from the path, the sun scorches it on the rock and the thorns choke it! But the good soil produces a wonderful harvest. Jesus teaches in the form of this parable and leaves it to his hearers to make the connection between his everyday images and the kingdom of God. Later, the Twelve ask Jesus what these parables mean. He explains that the good news of the kingdom is like a secret being shared. Some people are spiritually blind and can’t see it. Some are spiritually deaf and can’t hear it. Some refuse to believe in God and block it out. He reminds them that the prophet Isaiah had to live with this frustration. Isaiah also delivered God’s message to people who couldn’t or wouldn’t receive it (Isaiah 6:9–10). Now Jesus is doing the same. This parable helped the disciples understand why Jesus was not impressed by the large crowds that followed Him. He knew that most of them would never produce fruit from changed lives, because the Word He was teaching them was like seed falling into poor soil. The human heart is like soil: it must be prepared to receive the seed before that seed can take root and produce a harvest. Like seed, the Word is alive and able to produce spiritual fruit, but the seed must be planted and cultivated before that harvest will come.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. As in that day, so today, there are four kinds of hearts and they respond to God’s message in four different ways. **The hard heart** resists the Word of God and makes it easy for Satan (the birds) to snatch it away. Soil becomes hard when too many feet tread on it. Those who recklessly “open their hearts” to all kinds of people and influences are in danger of developing hard hearts. Hard hearts must be “plowed up” before they can receive the seed, and this can be a painful experience. **The shallow heart (5–6, 16–17).** This heart is like thin soil on a rock, very typical to Palestine. Since there is no depth, whatever is planted cannot last because it has no roots. There may be great enthusiasm for several days or weeks; but when persecution and difficulties begin, the enthusiasm wanes and the joy disappears. It is easy to have “spiritual feelings” and gain a false sense of truth and confidence. **The crowded heart (7, 18–19).** This heart pictures the person who receives the Word but does remove the “weeds” out of his heart. This hearer has too many different kinds of “seeds” growing in the soil—worldly cares, a desire for riches, a lust for things—and the good seed of the Word has no room in which to grow. **The fruitful heart (8, 20).** This heart pictures a changed life through its fruit. Not all true believers are equally as productive. Each of the three fruitless hearts is influenced by a different enemy: the hard heart—the devil himself snatches the seed; the shallow heart—the flesh counterfeits religious feelings; the crowded heart—the things of the world smother the growth and prevent a harvest. These are the three great enemies of the Christian: the world, the flesh, and the devil. Only the believer who responds to God’s offer *of life in Him by proper knowledge and proper love* will avoid the curses of a heart that is hard, shallow, or too distracted with loving Mammon (Matt. 6:19-24).

Proverbs 1:20–27. In this section Wisdom calls to those who will listen. Personified as a woman, wisdom appeals in all the public places of the city for self-centered, irresponsible people to begin fearing God and thus be enlightened and blessed by wisdom. She has stretched out her hands to a wayward people (cf. Isa. 65:2; Rom. 10:21), while warning them that if they spurn her she will repudiate them when they come whining to her in trouble. Even divine mercy needs human acceptance if it is to be truly redemptive, and while those who yield to wisdom's entreaties will live, the simpletons who reject her will bring about their own destruction

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Notice in verse 23 how Wisdom issues an invitation to receive her gifts. She promises to change hearts and teach the wisdom of God from the Word of God. It is unfortunate that so many laugh at her warnings; one day when the crisis comes she will, in effect, laugh at those who reject her (26). We see, once again, that success in the spiritual life is a gift from God and not an achievement, all we can do is accept the invitation. It is also true that we never accept that which we do not see as a good. Hence, the only ones who accept God invitation of His wisdom are those who seek God and His wisdom *by proper knowledge and by love.*

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love.

Pastor Don