

The Parables of Jesus

The Parable the Sower and the Seed

The Parable of the Sower and the Seed. Matthew 13:10-14

Jesus used the Sower, the seed and the soil to teach about mankind's reception of God's Word.

- There are many who hear God's Word, but very few live it.
- Some accept it for a short time, only to allow sin and self to choke out *the Word*.

In this parable Jesus makes some important points before He really begins to impart, *into the understanding of His disciples, the meaning and the significance of this parable.*

Matthew 13:9 - He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

- **If you have ears, pay attention!**
- This tells us the importance of hearing what this parable has to say to us.

Human ears hear many sounds, but there is a deeper kind of listening that results in spiritual understanding.

Matthew 13:10-11 - 10 The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" 11 He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.

- **When speaking in parables, Jesus was not hiding the truth from *sincere seekers*, because those who were open to spiritual truth understood the illustrations.**
- **To others** they were merely stories with perhaps good moral messages but no transformative meaning.

Vs 11 Ref. – Matthew 11:25 - The Father Revealed in the Son - 25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because **you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.**

Jesus mentioned two kinds of people in his prayer.

- “The wise and learned” – arrogant in their own knowledge. And -
- “The little children” – humbly open to receive the truth of God’s Word.

This shows us that **it is God’s desire** to reveal His wisdom and revelation unto those of us who really desire to know it.

Paul prayed for the believers to know God better.

Ephesians 1:17-18 - 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

- You get to know someone by spending time with them. (No Shortcuts)
- The same holds true with God!
- Do you really know God, or do you just know about him???

Vs 18 – Paul wants the hearts of all believers to be enlightened.

- The hope we have in Christ means more than a vague assurance that the future will be good...
- It means being certain that God will do as He has promised.

Matthew 13:16 - But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.

Jesus really wants us to know and understand what a blessed privilege it is to know and understand His Word and revelation.

Matthew 13:17 - For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

He doesn’t want us to ever take for granted what we have in Christ.

Hebrews 2:1 - Warning to Pay Attention - We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.

These early believers were in danger of falling away from following Jesus.

- They had **heard the gospel**, but *it had not sunk in*.
- **Listening to God means not just hearing his words**, but also finding ways to put them into practice.
- **Be ready to follow his instructions**.

Mark 4:13 - Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?”

This is an important parable, because ***it teaches us how to receive God’s Word*** and ***how to keep His Word alive in our hearts***.

This parable also explains to us what it takes for God’s seed to be truly planted in our hearts so that we can be ***truly converted and begin to bring forth fruit*** in good fertile ground.

- ***Some people do not understand God’s truth because they are not ready for it***.
- ***God reveals truth to people who will act on it and make it visible in their lives***.

Defining The Terminology Used in The Parable

Before we can really understand the full significance of this parable it will be important to ***define the terminology that Jesus used in this parable***.

1. Who is the Sower?

It is my conviction that the Sower is the Holy Spirit, because it is ***the Holy Spirit who worked in the life of Jesus*** and ***works in the lives of believers*** to give them the ability to sow seed.

- **The Testimony of Jesus.**

Luke 4:18-19 *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."*

Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1-2

- Jesus was proclaiming himself as the Messiah, the one who would bring the Good News to pass.
- People were unable to grasp – Like when we are converted.
- His neighbors could hardly believe such a remarkable claim.

2. What is the Seed?

The seed is the Word of God. *This is made very clear as Jesus Himself interprets the seed as God's Word.*

Luke 8:11 - "This is the meaning of the parable: **The seed is the word of God.**

3. What is the Ground?

Jesus referred to the devil coming and taking the word out of their hearts.

Luke 8:12 - Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

If the seed is the Word of God then by forgone conclusion the ground that Jesus is talking about is the heart of man.

The thing to keep in mind in this parable - The seed is the same regardless of where it falls. It is the ground that makes the difference.

The Four Types of Soil

1. The Seed Sown by the Wayside

Matthew 13:19 - When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by **the wayside**.

The seed sown along the wayside is that land along the paths that has been beaten hard by the passing feet of those who have crisscrossed it in their travels.

This ground has **not been properly cultivated to receive the seed**. In other words, **this person's heart has not been prepared to receive the Word of God**.

Carless hearing is the cause of this person not having their heart prepared to receive God's Word.

- This person is **not careful** as to what they hear,
- And **does not take God's Word seriously**.

Because of mankind's tragic error of **not taking heed to the Word that is sown**, **man opens himself up to Satan's devices**.

Satan does not want people getting saved or growing in the Word of God.

Hebrews 2:1 - **Warning to Pay Attention** – **We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.**

We must be careful as to what kinds of influences in our lives **cause our pathway to be trampled on and become hard soil.**

Do your friends and associations compact and compress your convictions against Christ and kingdom principles?

Are they slowly solidifying your sentiments **against the Spirit of God?**

2. The Seed Sown on the Rocky Soil

Matthew 13:20-21 - 20 The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

The rocky or stony ground is that soil which, even though cleared and cultivated at enormous cost and with infinite care, often produces only pathetic results.

This person is an emotional hearer, who went off on an emotional high and did not take the time to allow God's Word to take root.

- **This person is not building their lives upon the foundation of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.**
- **They are not digging the rocks out of the soil so that the roots of the seed can go deep.**
- In other words, **they are not really dealing with the sin in their lives.**

2 Timothy 2:19 - Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

There should continually be a desire for the milk of the word so that the seed can have an opportunity to grow.

1 Peter 2:1-4 - 2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. 2 Like newborn babies, **crave pure spiritual milk**, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The Living Stone and a Chosen People - 4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—

Because this person has **never taken the time to establish a solid foundation through repentance**, when temptation or persecution arise, they fall away.

3. The Seed Sown on Thorny Soil

Matthew 13:22 - The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Distractions and conflicts rob new believers of time to dive deeper into God's Word and grow from it.

The thorny ground is a ground that is infested with weeds and thistles that choke the plant as it starts to come up.

The Lord makes the point here that some of *our lives are so infested with noxious weeds* that **there can be no harvest.**

Luke's gospel gives us further description as to what the weeds and thistles were like.

Luke 8:14 - The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

- What we have here is **a total crop failure.**
- **The crop started to come up,** but it was **choked and never grew to maturity.**

There were *three types of weeds* mentioned.

1. The cares, anxieties, worries or interest of this world.
2. The deceitfulness of wealth; the attraction of affluence.
3. The covetousness for things; the magnetism of materialism.

Because of the intense competition from some of these influences, our lives end up in total crop failure as far as the Lord is concerned.

- **We should ask ourselves the following questions:**
 1. What occupies most of my time and attention?
 2. What has gained prime place in my priorities?
 3. *What is the result of my living – worthless weeds or fine fruit, eternal value?*

Biblical exhortation regarding worldliness - 1 John 2:15-17 - Do Not Love the World - 15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

4. The Seed Sown into Good Ground

Matthew 13:23 - But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

- Good ground is the **soil that is very fertile, *it has been well cultivated.***
- They are **free from the entanglements of the world and sin.**

Isaiah 51:7 - If you want to do right and obey my teaching with all your heart, then pay close attention. Don't be discouraged when others insult you and say hurtful things.

The person who receives the seed on the good ground is a person who has a real respect and love for God's Word and **as a result brings forth 30, 60, and even a 100-fold of the fruit.**

This is a person who hears and does all that the word implies. They receive it and accept it with joyfulness.

CLOSE: Christian Author Phillip Keller mentions that there are **three definite, deliberate steps involved in responding to God's Word for it **to become effective and fruitful.****

1. We must recognize that it is God who is speaking. ***His Word must be held in great respect as being of divine content.***
 2. We must respond to it in a positive way. ***We must alert ourselves to act upon it. This means we must set aside whatever else preoccupies our thoughts; and give our undivided attention to the Lord.***
 3. We must promptly and swiftly run to do what He requests. ***Our positive response results in immediate action.***
- ***This is Faith in action – the faith of obedience.***
This is to hear the Word and have it come alive and grow

The four types of soil represent different responses to God's message. People respond differently because they are in different states of readiness.

Some are hardened, others are shallow, others don't produce due to distracting worries, and some are receptive.

- How has God's Word taken root in your life?
- What kind of soil are you?