

## THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

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Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

1. This is the first of several kingdom parables we are going to focus on over the next several weeks.

NOTE: Large crowds were now following Jesus, and He resorted to parables as a way of differentiating between genuine seekers and superficial followers.

2. When questioned by His disciples about these parables Jesus responded, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it has not been granted.” Matthew 13:11

NOTE: When I write about Heaven or the Kingdom of Heaven I always try to remember to capitalize those terms because they are real entities and not just concepts.

- a. These parables reveal various aspects of the Kingdom of Heaven not previously made clear in the Scriptures.
  - b. The truth contained in these parables was meant for those who could and would receive it.
  - c. Studying and understanding these parables will help us to see how the Kingdom of Heaven will manifest itself on the earth during the Church Age.
3. There are three principle elements to the parable: the Sower, the Seed, and the Soils.
4. We also encounter three enemies of the gospel and our souls: The Devil, The World, and the Flesh.
5. We will examine this parable by looking at the three principle elements.

### I. The Seed.

- A. Jesus referred to the seed as, “The word (message) of (relating to) the kingdom.” 19
- B. In Luke 8:11 Jesus is quoted as saying, “Now the parable is this; the seed is the Word of God.”
- C. It is clear in Scripture that the Word of God applied to the mind and heart by the Holy Spirit leads to salvation.
  1. Paul declared, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Romans 1:16
  2. He also stated, “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” 1 Corinthians 1:21

### II. The Sower.

- A. The sower refers to those who sow (spread abroad, broadcast) the Word of God.
- B. The sower in this parable was unusual in that he did not worry about where the seed ended up.
- C. A farmer does not normally waste his seed; rather he sows it in ground he has prepared for planting.
- D. The sower of the Word of God cannot always discern what sort of soil he is dealing with because it is God who enlightens men’s minds and prepares them to receive the Word.

- E. Note God's promise to faithful, caring sowers. Psalm 126:5-6  
Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. 6 He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

### III. The Soils.

- A. We are first introduced to the road or path denoting people with closed minds and hearts.
1. Fields in Jesus' day were often bordered by pathways.
    - a. Even a careful farmer, sowing the borders of his field, would inadvertently throw some seed on the pathway.
    - b. The seed could not penetrate the hard soil so it became food for the birds.
  2. There are those we refer to as hardened sinners with hard, callused hearts.
    - a. The hearts of many have been hardened by ongoing sin and rebellion.
    - b. Some hearts have been hardened by religion and self-righteousness.
    - c. Other hearts have been hardened by exposure to people who refer to themselves as Christians, but, who do not live a Christ-centered life.
  3. The Word is heard but not understood.
    - a. "The evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart." 19
    - b. "These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them." Mark 4:15
    - c. "Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved." Luke 8:12  
NOTE: The Enemy of men's souls does not give up easily.
- B. Secondly we encounter the rocky soil which denotes people with shallow minds and hearts.
1. Because there is no depth of soil the seed germinates quickly, produces foliage, but withers because there is no supporting root structure, nutrients, and moisture.
  2. Here we have people with shallow hearts who are subject to outside influences, enthusiastic, changeable, and impressionable.
  3. They hear the Word and initially receive it with joy.
  4. Their joy is only temporary, and they soon fall away when confronted with the realities of the Christian life. 21  
NOTE: Galatians 5:16-17 speaks of how the flesh competes with the Spirit.  
But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 **For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.**
- C. The third example Jesus used denoted those with divided hearts.
1. Here we have soil that is capable of receiving the seed, but it is soil that is intertwined with fibrous root structures that produce competing growth that chokes out the impact of God's Word.
  2. There are many who have cluttered, preoccupied minds and hearts.
  3. The impact of God's Word is overcome by the worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things. Mark 4:19  
NOTE: This world is a powerful deterrent to spiritual growth and perseverance.
- D. The good soil denotes the prepared, receptive mind and heart.
1. The Word is heard.
  2. The Word is understood.
  3. The Word is responded to.
  4. The Word brings forth fruit in varying degrees.

## **APPLICATION**

1. The question might be asked, “Is there no hope for those who appear to be hardened, shallow, and preoccupied people?”
2. The answer is yes because the same Holy Spirit that prepared the good soil can accomplish His work in the lives of those who appear to represent the first three types of soils.
3. The Holy Spirit has a three bladed plow that convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. John 16:8
4. Our responsibility as sowers is to pray for the harvest, sow the seed, and tend to the crop the best we can.
5. At some point, the genuineness of all those who profess to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ will be revealed.