

The Parables of Jesus

The Parable the Sower and the Seed

Pastor/Teacher Ken L. Birks

I. Introductory Remarks.

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

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!"¹*

This speaks to us the importance of hearing what this parable has to say to us.

Matthew 13:10-11 *And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" ¹¹ He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.*

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.

Ephesians 1:17-18 *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*

Matthew 13:16 *"But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;*

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

¹ All Scripture references are from the "New King James" Bible unless otherwise noted.

Matthew 13:17 *for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.*

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

Hebrews 2:1 *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*

Mark 4:13 *And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"*

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.

II. 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 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."*

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 *"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.*

3. What is the Ground?

Jesus made reference 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 is that the seed is the same regardless of where it falls. It is the round that makes the difference.**

III. 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.

- Careless 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 he or she hears, and also 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 *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we 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?

Noted author, Phillip Keller says, "It is possible to become conditioned by the culture and mood of our society. If the trail that has been trodden across your spirit and soul is solidified by the world's ideologies and thoughts it will produce a hardening in your heart towards God's Word."²

2. The Seed Sown on the Rocky Soil.

Matthew 13:20-21 *But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.*

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 his or her life 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 the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."*

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 *Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.⁴ Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,*

² Quote from Phillip Keller

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 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

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 Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

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 takes up the most space in my life?
 2. What occupies most of my time and attention?
 3. What has gained prime place in my priorities?
 4. What has become the chief outgrowth and production in the overall performance of my life?
 5. What is the net result of my living – worthless weeds or fine fruit of eternal value?³

³ From Phillip Keller

- **Biblical exhortations regarding worldliness’.**

1 John 2:15-17 *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.*

2 Corinthians 6:17 *Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."*

Psalms 62:10 *Do not trust in oppression, Nor vainly hope in robbery; If riches increase, Do not set your heart on them.*

1 Timothy 6:9 *But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

4. The Seed Sown Into Good Ground.

Matthew 13:23 *But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*

The good ground is that soil that is very fertile, because it has been well cultivated. They are free from the entanglements of the world and sin.

Isaiah 51:7 *"Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, You people in whose heart is My law: Do not fear the reproach of men, Nor be afraid of their insults.*

Isaiah 66:2 *For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the Lord. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.*

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.

Phillip Keller mentions that there are three definite, deliberate steps involved in responding to God’s Word in order 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.