

## The Parable of the Sower

---

Matt. 13:3-8; 18-23

In Matthew 13 Jesus gives seven parables dealing with the mysteries of the Kingdom (vs. 11, 19, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47)

1. The Sower (vs. 3-9, 18-23; also found in Mark and Luke).
2. The Tares (vs. 24-30, 36-43)
3. The Mustard Seed (vs. 31-32)
4. The Leaven (vs. 33-35)
5. The Hidden treasure (v. 44)
6. The Pearl of great price (vs. 45-46)
7. The Dragnet (vs. 47-50).



Every passage of Scripture has a **three-fold application**:

1. Historical (it is an actual event in history).
2. Doctrinal / dispensational / prophetic (It teaches a specific truth for a particular time to a particular people).
3. Devotion / spiritual (it gives practical instruction in righteousness).

**The Interpretation** of the parable:

1. The Sower— Someone who proclaims the Word such as a preacher, missionary, Sunday School teacher, or soul winner.
2. The Seed— The word of the Kingdom (v. 19).
3. The Soil— The heart of the hearer (v. 19).

**DOCTRINAL application** (context vs. 10-11, 18-23). Up to this point in Christ's ministry, the kingdom has been offered to Israel. The parable represents four presentations of the Gospel of the Kingdom:

1. **WAYSIDE** (v. 19)—The sowing of John the Baptist (Mt. 3:1-2). Because the majority of Jews did not understand or believe John's message, it was snatched from their heart.
2. **STONY** (vs. 20-21)—The sowing of Jesus . John was the forerunner, but was rejected. Jesus came after John preaching the same message (Mt. 4:15-17). While some immediately jumped on Jesus' bandwagon, they didn't last and soon bailed out because they had no root (John 6:66).

3. THORNS (v. 22). After Jesus came the Twelve sowing the message of the Kingdom to Israel (cf. Mt. 10:5-7 John 20:21 cf. Mt. 15:24; Acts 11:19). But the Jews rejected their preaching also (Acts 13:46).
4. GOOD GROUND (v. 23)—The sowing of the 144,000 (Rev. 7:3-4, 9, 13-14).

**SPIRITUAL application:** Illustrates four types of hearers of God's Word.

- Nothing wrong with the sower. He is doing his job.
- Nothing wrong with the seed. God's Word is perfect.
- The problem is in the soil (the heart of the hearer).

**I. The seed on the SURFACE** (vs. 4, 19).

- Wayside is a downtrodden pathway in a field where the sower walks as he scatters the seed. The ground is hard and compacted. Seed that lands on this pathway cannot penetrate the soil and remains on the surface. Therefore, the seed was "*trodden down*" (Luke 8:5).
- When people trample underfoot the seed (God's Word) they show disrespect for God's Word. This would include skeptics and scorers. They see little or no value in the seed of the Word.

A. The DESCRIPTION of the soil. Three kinds of hearts.

1. The **unreasonable** heart— Cannot be reasoned with. Heart is hard and mind is closed. You can quote Scripture to them by the hour and it only runs off like water off a duck's back.
2. The **undiscerning** heart (Mt. 13:19). The Word does not make sense to them (1 Cor. 2:14). This is where the world is. They do not comprehend God's Word. So they turn it aside.
3. The **uninterested** heart—No interest in the Word of God. They are interested in politics, sports, business, and other worldly

1. The **stealer** of the seed — Satan (v. 19 cf. Mk 4:15; Luke 8:12). Satan's program is to take the Word of God away from people. Satan's "birds" do his dirty work.
    - a) Things to disengage a person's mind from the message they heard from God's Word. This would include things like radio, TV, and sporting events like Sunday afternoon football, when people get home from church they lose the impact of the sermon they have heard. Hence, they lose the lessons, the impressions, and the import of the Word.
    - b) Ungodly school teachers to destroy and take away the faith in the Word of God of the students in class.
    - c) Works through our courts and legislatures which have taken the Word of God out of our schools and government.
  2. The **swiftness** of the devourer (Mk. 4:15—"*...when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts*").
    - Satan knows the power of God's Word. He knows well what damage the Word will do to his interests. Sadly, Satan knows the value of the Word better than most church members do. Would that church members knew how powerful God's Word is.
- C. The DESIGN of the devouring. The stealing of God's Word from people's hearts keeps them from being saved—"*The devil... taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved*" (Luke 8:12).

## II. **The seed on the SHALLOW ground** (vs. 5-6, 20-21).

➡ Two things about the shallow ground hearer.

- A. FAST in their response— "*anon*" means immediately (cf. Mk. 1:30).
  1. The stony ground received the seed "with joy." Pictures those who are moved easily by emotion and excitement.
  2. They are moved by circumstances, not principle. They sign up quickly and make pledges quickly but do not fulfill their

commitment. But we shall know them "by their fruits" not by their stems.

- B. FLEETING in their growth. The seeds would germinate quickly but the roots had no place to go. When the heat came, the plants wither because they had no root system. At the first sign of difficulty, the plants died.
1. The **reason** for it. "*No root*" (v. 21). They are all show, but no depth of commitment.
  2. The **retreat** in it. "*When tribulation or persecution ariseth for the word, by and by he is offended.*" Christianity is fine to them as long as everything is peaches and cream. But let it cause some persecution, then these "stony ground" hearts jump ship and retreat.
  3. The **ruin** from it (v. 6— "*scorched... withered*"). They "fall away." They seemed so promising, so earnest, so enthused. But it isn't long until they find some reason to back away.

### III. The seed that is **STRANGLED** (vs. 7, 22).

- A. The **PERVERSENESS** of the soil.
1. Thorny soil is sinful soil. Thorns were part of the curse that came upon the earth because of the sin of man (Gen. 3:18).
  2. These thorns where the seed are sown are already in the ground when the seed is sown. Thus it was sinful soil, for the thorns were not cleaned out of the soil.
- B. The **PERVASIVENESS** of the thorns.
1. Thorns choke the seed by being allowed to co-exist with the seed. Thorns talk co-existence but actually want to dominate.
  2. Thorns steal the nourishment from the ground which is needed by the seed. Thus the seed is starved, strangled, and bears no fruit.
  3. Sin will drain away our energy so we have none left for God. If we spend all our energy, emotion, time, and money on the thorny things, there will be little left for the seed. Many lives

are like that. What should be used for God is being used pursuing sinful pleasures.

- C. The PROCESS of the choking.
  - 1. Worry— *"the care of this world."*
  - 2. Wealth— Love of money/riches.

#### IV. The seed that is **SUCCESSFUL**. (vs. 8, 23).

- A. A PREPARED heart. Ground must be plowed... rocks and stones removed... and weeds taken out. We must prepare our hearts for the reception of God's Word before coming to Church or doing our personal devotions.
- B. A PERCEPTIVE heart (v. 23— *"...heareth the word, and understandeth it..."*). We need to pray that God will open our eyes to understand His Word. *"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law"* (Ps. 119:18). As Jesus walked with the two Emmaus disciples that first Easter Sunday, the Bible says, *"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures"* (Luke 24:45).
- C. A PRODUCTIVE heart (*"...beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold some sixty, some thirty."*). They are productive Christians. Get a church filled with this kind of soil, and the church will thrive. Our problem today, however, is that the church is filled with the other three kinds of soil and has very little good ground soil in its midst.

**SUMMATION:** Only one out of four soils brought forth fruit. Experience confirms this. Only about 25% of professing Christians are fruitful and spiritually productive. Most people do not receive the Word of God well.

➡ Anyone who sows the seed of God's Word can gain encouragement from this parable.

- 1. **It will keep from us discouragement.** God doesn't hold us responsible for the results of our sowing, but simply requires us to be faithful in getting the seed of His Word out.

2. **It will keep from us poor discernment.** It warns that time is needed to ascertain what sort of profession of faith has occurred, for some may be very enthusiastic for a while but still not be real.
3. **It will keep us from compromise.** When results are few, one may be tempted to change the seed. But remember that the soil must conform to the seed not vice versa.

➡ **Which soil best describes your heart today?**

---

Your comments are welcome. Please [CLICK HERE.](#)