

Sermon 1

The Parable of the Sower

Sermon Series: The Parables of Christ

Sermon: #1 of 32

Title: The Parable of the Sower: *The Condition of Our Hearts*

Scripture:

Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:4-15

Introduction: Dear brothers and sisters, today we begin our series on the parables of Jesus, exploring the profound lessons they hold for us today. We start with the Parable of the Sower, a powerful story that challenges us to examine the condition of our hearts in receiving God's Word. Let us delve into this parable through the Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and reflect on its spiritual implications.

I. The Parable of the Sower Explained

A. The Story (Matthew 13:1-9):

The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spoke many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and immediately they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who has ears to hear, let him hear. (Matthew 13:1-9 KJ2000)

Jesus tells the story of a sower who scatters seeds, which fall on different types of soil: the path, rocky of soil represents a different response to the Word of God.

II. The Types of Soil and Their Spiritual Implications

A. The Path (Matthew 13:19):

When any one hears the word of the kingdom, and understands it not, then comes the wicked one, and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. (Matthew 13:19 KJ2000)

Supporting Scripture:

> “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14 ESV)

The path represents those who hear the Word but do not understand it. The enemy quickly snatches away the seed before it can take root. This heart is hardened and unreceptive, preventing the Word from having any impact.

B. The Rocky Ground (Matthew 13:20-21):

But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that hears the word, and immediately with joy receives it; Yet has he not root in himself, but endures for a while: for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he is offended. (Matthew 13:20-21 KJ2000)

Supporting Scripture:

“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.” (Mark 4:17 ESV)

The rocky ground represents those who receive the Word with joy but have no deep roots. When trials or persecution come, they quickly fall away. This heart is shallow and lacks the depth needed for the Word to grow and endure.

C. The Thorns (Matthew 13:22):

He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. (Matthew 13:22 KJ2000)

Supporting Scripture:

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.” (1 Timothy 6:10 ESV)

The thorns represent those who hear the Word but allow the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches to choke it. This heart is distracted and preoccupied, preventing the Word from producing fruit.

D. The Good Soil (Matthew 13:23):

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that hears the word, and understands it; who also bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.
(Matthew 13:23 KJ2000)

Supporting Scripture:

> “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23 ESV)

The good soil represents those who hear the Word, understand it, and bear fruit. This heart is receptive and fertile, allowing the Word to take root and produce a bountiful harvest.

The numbers symbolize **degrees of fruitfulness** in the lives of believers who receive and act on the Word of God. They highlight that not everyone will produce the same level of spiritual fruit, but all who truly receive the Word will bear fruit in varying measures:

- **30-fold:** Represents a modest level of fruitfulness.
- **60-fold:** Represents a greater level of fruitfulness.
- **100-fold:** Represents the highest level of fruitfulness.
These numbers emphasize that:
 1. **Fruitfulness is expected:** True understanding and acceptance of the Word will always result in some level of spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22-23).
 2. **Fruitfulness varies:** Depending on factors like faith, obedience, and circumstances, believers will produce different levels of fruit.
 3. **God’s grace is sufficient:** Whether someone produces 30, 60, or 100-fold, what matters is faithfulness and a genuine response to the Word.

III. Reflecting on the Condition of Our Hearts

A. Self-Examination:

The Parable of the Sower challenges us to examine the condition of our hearts. Are we like the path, the rocky ground, the thorns, or the good soil? Are we receptive to God’s Word, allowing it to take root and bear fruit in our lives?

Supporting Scripture:

“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!” (2 Corinthians 13:5 ESV)

B. Cultivating Good Soil:

To cultivate good soil in our hearts, we must be intentional in our relationship with God. This involves spending time in His Word, praying for understanding, and seeking to remove any obstacles that hinder spiritual growth. We must be willing to let the Holy Spirit work in us, transforming our hearts and minds.

Supporting Scripture:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2 ESV)

C. Bearing Fruit:

The evidence of a receptive heart is the fruit it produces. A fruitful life reflects the character of Christ, demonstrating love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. As we allow God’s Word to take root in us, we will see a harvest of righteousness and impact the lives of those around us.

Supporting Scripture:

“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” (John 15:8 ESV)

Conclusion:

As we reflect on the Parable of the Sower, let us consider the condition of our hearts in receiving God’s Word. May we strive to be like the good soil, receptive and fertile, allowing the Word to take root and bear fruit in our lives. Let us commit to cultivating a heart that is open to God’s truth, seeking to grow in our faith and produce a bountiful harvest for His glory. To Him be all glory, honor, and praise, now and forevermore. Amen.