

The Parables of Jesus #4
The Parables of the Sower
(Mt. 13:3-9; 18-23)
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INTRODUCTION

A. When Jesus told a parable, it was most often a story right out of the daily life of his audience

1. He used familiar scenes, people and activities
2. The word pictures he drew were often so simple, that the very simplicity may have made them difficult for people

B. Tonight we will look at one of the most familiar of all the parables -- that of the Sower (or farmer)

1. Mt. 13:3-9; 18-23
2. Though it is a very simple story, it is full of truth and challenge
3. In it, Jesus says that those who hear the message of God are responsible for how they hear it

I. THE PARABLE AS JESUS TOLD IT

A. The sower (or farmer)

1. In the context, it must be Jesus, but it would apply to anyone who teaches the word of God
2. 1 Cor 3:6 -- I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. (NKJ)
3. 1 Cor 9:11 -- If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? (NKJ)

B. The seed

1. Luke 8:11 -- Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. (NKJ)
2. Mark 4:14 -- The sower sows the word. (NKJ)
3. 1 Pet 1:23 -- having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, (NKJ)

C. The wayside soil (a traveled road or path - hard, packed down by travelers)

1. Matt 21:8 -- And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. (NKJ)
2. John 14:6 -- Jesus said to him, ""I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (NKJ)

D. The rocky soil (stony ground, full of rocks - ledge of rock covered by soil)

1. This is a soil that isn't very deep
2. Whatever grew here couldn't live because there was no place for the roots to grow

E. The thorny ground (covered with briars or bramble bushes)

1. Matt 27:29 -- When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, ""Hail, King of the Jews!" (NKJ)
2. Thorns make it hard for anything else to grow

F. Matt 13:9 -- He who has ears to hear, let him hear! (NKJ)

1. Now this seems to be the point Jesus is trying to make
2. As the same seed fell on different kinds of soil, it was the condition of of the soil that determined whether it grew or not

II. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE EXPLAINED BY JESUS

A. The seed is the word of God (Lk 8:11)

1. Gk - LOGOS
 - a. It is the same word John uses of Jesus
 - b. John 1:1 -- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (NKJ)
2. Matt 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. (NKJ)
3. Rom 1:16 -- For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. (NKJ)

B. Jesus was concerned with what people listen to

1. Mark 4:24 -- Then He said to them, ""Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. (NKJ)
2. Col 2:8 -- Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. (NKJ)
3. II Jn 1:7-8 -- For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. (NKJ)

C. Jesus was concerned with how well we listen

1. Luke 8:18 -- Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him." (NKJ)
2. Matt 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." (NKJ)
3. Mark 4:20 -- But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." (NKJ)
4. Luke 8:15 -- But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience. (NKJ)

D. The different soils illustrate the different ways people respond to the word

1. Wayside soil represents the heart that never has much of a chance because Satan comes along and snatches the seed away
 - a. Prejudice (2 Thess 2:10-12 - they do not love truth)
 - b. Convinced, but wrong (Rom 10:1-3 - zeal but no knowledge)
 - c. Captured by sin (Heb 3:13 - hardened by deceitfulness of sin)
 - d. Stubborn (Acts 7:51 - stiffnecked and uncircumcised heart/ears)
 - e. Procrastination (Heb 4:7 - today do not harden your heart)
 - f. Pride (Jn 12:43 - loved praise of men more than praise of God)
 - g. Arrogance (Col 2:18 - puffed up in his mind)
2. Rocky soil represents the heart that is superficial and without depth
 - a. 1 Tim 1:19-20 -- some make shipwreck of their faith
 - b. 1 Tim 4:1-2 -- some depart from the faith
 - c. 1 Tim 5:8 -- some deny the faith
 - d. 1 Tim 6:10 -- some are led astray from the faith
 - e. 2 Tim 4:10 -- some forsake the faith
 - f. Heb 10:39 -- some draw back from the faith
 - g. They endure for a while, but struggles of faith cause failure

3. Thorny ground represents the heart that is entangled by worldly concerns
 - a. they are wrapped up in the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches
 - b. 1 Jn 2:15 -- love not the world nor the things in the world
 - c. Col 3:3-3 -- set your mind on things above instead of earthly things
4. The good soil is that for which the sower is aiming
 - a. Matt 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." (NKJ)
 - b. Mark 4:20 -- But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." (NKJ)
 - c. Luke 8:15 -- But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience. (NKJ)
 - d. key words
 - 1) good (genuine, sincere, honest, approved)
 - 2) fruitful (bears a crop for harvest)
 - 3) some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty (difference is individual potential, not comparison to others)

CONCLUSION

A. When you think about it, this is a considerable challenge

1. God has done his part
2. Jesus gave himself as the perfect sacrifice
3. We have the message of the gospel
4. What will you do with it? The condition of your heart will determine what happens to the seed planted in your heart

B. Invitation