

“THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER”

INTRODUCTION

A. Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23

B. Matthew 13:34-35

Fulfilling the prophecy of Asaph ([Psalm 78:2](#)), Jesus frequently taught by parable.

1. The word “parable” comes from Greek, meaning: “to place beside, to cast alongside.”
2. It “signifies a placing of one thing beside another with a view to **comparison**” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words).
3. “It puts the known next to the unknown so that we may learn” (Wiersbe, Windows On The Parables).
4. When the Lord taught in parables, His purpose was to compare spiritual matters to earthly figures people would be familiar with.

C. Mark 4:33-34

Despite the somewhat mysterious nature of the parables, we are assured that all was revealed to His disciples.

D. Matthew 13:10-17

He taught in parables to separate the honest truth-seekers from those who were merely curious, having no intent to look deeper.

- i. The parables would be a novelty to the majority in the multitudes.
- ii. But the disciples who truly desired knowledge would ask, “*Explain to us the parable...*” ([Matthew 13:36](#)), which He would do!

E. Mark 4:13

If we can understand this parable, others will be more easily discerned.

F. Matthew 13:18

“Therefore Hear The Parable Of The Sower...” In this parable, Jesus compares how various hearts receive the gospel to the way different types of soil receive seed.

I. SEED

A. **Luke 8:11**

“The seed is the word of God.”

B. **1st Peter 1:22-23**

1. The seed is imperishable.
2. By it, one may be born again.

A. **John 3:5, 3**

This rebirth takes place of water and the Spirit. By being reborn, one gains access to *“the kingdom of God.”*

B. **Matthew 13:18-19**

The seed is the *“word of the kingdom.”*

C. **1st John 3:9**

Those who allow this seed to take root in their hearts, accepting the word of God, do not sin, being instead the children of God.

II. SOWER

A. **Matthew 13:37; 16:13**

In *“the parable of the tares of the field,”* the sower, *“He who sows the good seed,”* is identified as *“the Son of Man.”* Jesus calls Himself *“the Son of Man.”* Therefore, the sower is Jesus Christ.

B. **Matthew 10:40**

By extension, anyone sent by Christ to bear the word, is a sower.

III. SOIL

A. **Matthew 13:19**

Whereas sowing is normally done in the ground, in this parable, what was sown, “was sown in the heart.” So, the soil is the character of each person who hears the word.

B. The Nature Of The Various Soils

1. “Some Fell By The Wayside”

a. Luke 8:5

The wayside is hard ground, having been “trampled down” by pedestrian or even chariot traffic. In such compacted soil as this, no seed can take root. It may as well fall on asphalt or concrete. Here, the seed becomes nothing but bird food.

b. Mark 4:15; Matthew 13:19; Luke 8:12

i. The birds represent “the wicked one,” “the devil,” “Satan.”

ii. Hebrews 4:7

Those whose hearts are illustrated as the trampled down wayside never do believe, nor do they even understand the word. Like the well-trodden wayside, the heart is hard.

iii. As the seed that cannot sink into soil which is so compacted, the word of God just doesn’t sink into the hearts of some.

iv. They never understand the gospel, and are consequently never saved.

2. “Some Fell On Rock”

a. Mark 4:5-6; Luke 8:6

The stony ground bears an appearance of softness, but is just as hard as the first soil. Here, a layer of soft dirt covers rocky terrain. Just enough dirt is present for the seed to spring up, but for lack of depth, because the rocks are in the way, it can

never reach any moisture, and the sun will scorch it immediately.

b. Matthew 13:20-21; Luke 8:13

i. The gospel **should** be received gladly.

α. Acts 8:39; 16:34

We are provided examples of those who rejoiced following their baptisms, for they were saved!

β. 1st Thessalonians 5:16; Philippians 4:4

Yet, the joy must be permanent!

γ. Philippians 3:1

To immediately receive the gospel with joy is good, but to finally rejoice is better!

ii. Like the seed that finds no depth of earth above the rocks, the word of God will never be well established in the hearts of the shallow-minded. They react with excited interest, but because they have no deep conviction, their joy quickly fades. Their response is purely emotional, not intellectual. The heart remains unconverted, without change.

iii. Eventually, usually sooner than later, these will fall away.

α. Colossians 3:3

Like the poorly planted root, these haven't hidden their lives with Christ in God.

β. Luke 14:26-29

These are the ones who haven't counted the cost, having never truly contemplated the commitment involved in being a disciple.

γ. They fail to persevere in the face of persecution and temptation.

3. *“Some Fell Among Thorns”*

a. **Mark 4:7**

- i. A constant threat to any garden or farm is the thorn.
- ii. Normally, weeds grow faster and heartier than anything else around, so it’s no wonder they choke the life out of the produce that was planted.
- iii. The seed which grows with the thorns will not be fruitful; it yields no crop.

b. **Luke 8:14**

- i. The thorns which prevent fruitfulness in Christ are:

α. *“The cares of this world.”*

① **Luke 21:34-36**

The cares of this world are dangerous because they weigh down our hearts, causing us to be unprepared.

② **Matthew 6:31-34**

This world’s cares should not concern us, for God provides what we need here when we trust in Him and do His will.

β. *“The deceitfulness of riches.”*

① **Proverbs 23:5**

Wealth is deceitful, for it is often gone before it can be appreciated.

② **Luke 18:24-25**

Riches increase the difficulty of entering heaven because they distract from the eternal purpose.

③ **1 Timothy 6:9-10, 17**

Greedy itself is just one sin, but it causes so many others! Our trust should be in the certainty of God, not the uncertainty and deceitfulness of material gain.

γ. *“Pleasures of life.”*

① **1st John 2:16-17**

Worldly lusts end in doom.

② **Galatians 5:16-21**

To avoid fulfilling these lusts, one must walk in the Spirit.

③ **Galatians 6:7-9**

Make no mistake: whether fleshly or spiritual, one reaps what he sows.

ii. **John 15:1-6**

Fruitfulness in Christ is imperative!

4. *“Others Fell On Good Ground”*

a. **Mark 4:8**

Despite the majority of the seed going to waste, the sower fortunately finds some decent soil, wherein the seed grows and bears fruit!

b. **Matthew 13:23; Luke 8:15**

i. The good ground is the noble and good heart which hears the word of the kingdom of God, keeps it, and bears fruit.

α. **Acts 17:11**

The fair or noble-minded Bereans received the word with all readiness, comparing the scripture to what they heard to verify its accuracy.

β. **Colossians 1:5-6**

The Colossians heard the grace of God in truth and **knew** it, which required understanding, and consequently, they bore fruit!

- ii. As the wasted seed met ground upon which nothing could grow, little could grow, and some could grow, so the seed that found profitable soil sprouted in gradation, *“some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”*
- iii. There are a variety of fruits to bear.
 - α. **Romans 1:13**
Work done by a preacher in a local church is a type of fruit.
 - β. **Romans 6:22**
Practical, holy living is another fruit.
 - γ. **Galatians 5:22-23**
The fruit of the Spirit consists of virtuous attitudes.
 - ε. **Colossians 1:10**
Our various good works are fruits, as well.
 - ζ. **Hebrews 13:15**
Verbal thanksgivings amount to fruit, too.

CONCLUSION

- A. What kind of soil has the seed of the gospel found in your heart?
 - 1. Are you like the wayside? You aren't a Christian and you're really not interested in becoming one?
 - 2. Are you like the stony ground? You're happy about having recently become a Christian, but you won't remain with the church much longer?
 - 3. Are you like the thorny soil? You became a Christian some time ago, but other matters are distracting you now, and you aren't bearing fruit?

4. Are you like the fine soil? You're noble in heart and your effort proves it?

B. Matthew 13:9

Are you listening?