

Sower, Seeds and Soil

Kingdom Parables

Matthew 13:1-23

1. The Power of Parables: They Reveal the Condition of our Heart

- Parables invite the listener into the story.
- They use relatable people and situations—a sower, a farmer, a field—to reveal profound truths.
- The parable of the sower is a story about the condition of our heart and our receptiveness to the Gospel.
- The goal is not to judge others but to honestly evaluate ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to work in us.

Matthew 13:1-9 NET

On that day after Jesus went out of the house, he sat by the lake. And such a large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat to sit while the whole crowd stood on the shore. He told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground where they did not have much soil. They sprang up quickly because the soil was not deep. But when the sun came up, they were scorched, and because they did not have sufficient root, they withered. Other seeds fell among the thorns, and they grew up and choked them. But other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty. The one who has ears had better listen!"

2. The Sower, the Seed, and the Soils

- **The Sower:** The sower, representing Jesus and His followers, broadcasts the seed indiscriminately to all.
- **The Seed:** The seed is the Word of God, the Gospel message, which contains the power of salvation.
- **The Soil:** The soil represents the human heart, and its condition determines whether the seed takes root and bears fruit.

Four types of Soil:

- **The path:** This soil has been compacted and packed down by travelers, so the seed cannot penetrate it. The birds come and devour the seeds.
- **The rocky ground:** Here there is little soil for the seed to mix in and plant its roots. While there is some growth, it never reaches maturity. It has shallow roots and cannot draw enough nourishment, so it is quickly scorched by the sun and withers away.
- **The thorny ground:** Thorns grow up and choke the young plant and kill it. There is some growth, and the root may even be deeper than the roots in the rocky ground, but the thorns prevent the plant from ever producing fruit.
- **The good soil:** This is soil that has been cultivated. The rocks and thorns have been removed, making it pliable. The seed can easily mix in and receive the nutrients it needs to grow. That tiny little seed grows into a stalk of grain that produces not only grain, but also more seed.

3. Jesus reveals the meaning of the Parable

Matthew 13:18-23 NET

"So listen to the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches what was sown in his heart; this is the seed sown along the path. The seed sown on rocky ground is the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. But he has no root in himself and does not endure; when trouble or persecution comes because of the word, immediately he falls away. The seed sown among thorns is the person who hears the word, but worldly cares and the seductiveness of wealth choke the word, so it produces nothing. But as for the seed sown on good soil, this is the person who hears the word and understands. He bears fruit, yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown."

- **Hears but doesn't understand:** The person who hears the word about the Kingdom but doesn't understand it. The evil one swoops in and snatches away what was sown in their heart.
- Faith is first and foremost a matter of the heart.
- **Hears but has no roots:** This person hears the Word and, at first, their heart is filled with joy. But they have no deep roots.
- When trouble or persecution come **on account of the Word**, they immediately fall away.
- **Hears but get's distracted by worldly things:** The seed sown among thorns is the person who hears the word, but worldly cares and the seductiveness of wealth choke the word, so it produces nothing.

- The Kingdom of God is now, not later. Putting it off until you have your plans in order is simply putting it off entirely.
- **Hears, receives and endures:** This is the heart that is receptive, repentant, and humble. It hears what Jesus says about the Kingdom, receives it with joy, gives up everything to possess it, and endures to the end.

James 1:5 NET

But if anyone is deficient in wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without reprimand, and it will be given to him.

4. Observations and Application

- The Gospel message—the Word about Christ—goes out to everyone. But it is only truly received by a few.
- The Gospel seed, when it is planted in good soil, always produces the fruit of righteousness and salvation in abundance.
- Faith is first a matter of the heart and not the head.
- We must never become complacent in our faith or allow ourselves to become distracted by lesser things and lose our sense of urgency.
- The power of transformation does not rest in the messenger or the way the message is delivered. The power is in the message itself.