

Lesson 1: Parable of the Sower

Reference: **Please Read:** Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23; **Mark 4:3-20**; Luke 8:4-15

Theme: Seedtime and Harvest

Context: Jesus was Teaching a Large Group of People by the Lake

Introduction:

Jesus made an extraordinary statement in Mark 4:13, *“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?’”* This remark makes the parable of the sower a centerpiece parable in the Gospels- let's find out why!

The Seed is the Word of God

- Luke 8:11, “This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God.”
- Let's now take a look at two laws of Genesis that'll absolutely changes our lives
- **Law #1** – Everything produces after its own kind and the seed is in itself
 - A cat and dog cannot reproduce nor a fish and a bird
 - A apple tree produces fruit that has seed to produce more apple trees
 - **Please Read: Genesis 1:11-12, 29**
- **Question:** “If we want a harvest of wheat, what kind of seed would we sow?”

John 12:23-24, “Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

- **Law #2** – Seed time and harvest; we reap what we sow
- Before every harvest, there is always a season of planting
 - **Please Read: Genesis 8:20-22; Galatians 6:7-10**

The spiritual law of sowing and reaping not only refers to speaking the Word of God, but also to our own actions as well. Repetitive actions have a corresponding consequence-good or bad.

- Sometimes we try to do through prayer what only the Word of God can do
- Instead of saying, “pray for me” we should first say, “teach me God's Word first”
- It's the truth of God's Word, acted upon that sets us free
 - **John 8:31-32; John 17:17; Hebrews 4:12**
- All words are seeds, but God's Word stands alone as incorruptible seed
 - **Isaiah 55:10-11; Matthew 24:35; Psalms 119:89**

1 Peter 1:23, “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.”

- **Question:** “So what are we supposed to do with the Word of God?” Eat it!

Jeremiah 15:16, “Then your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty.”

Psalms 119:103, “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

- **Please Read:** **Joshua 1:6-9; Psalm 1:1-3**
- Meditating on the word, speaking it out of our mouths is how we eat the Word
- The sowing is in the saying; when we speak God’s Word we are sowing it- Ro.10:17
- Seeds contain life within itself, when planted, that life is released and grows- change!
- Sown through the preaching and teaching of God’s Word- **Acts 18:24-28; 11:19-26**

John 6:63, “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”

James 1:21, “Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.”

James 1:21 AMP, “...in a humble (gentle, modest) spirit receive and welcome the Word which implanted and rooted [in your hearts] contains the power to save your souls.”

The seed of God’s Word is sown into the human heart whenever it is heard. As we have just read, the condition of a person’s heart will determine if that seed will grow, and produce a harvest. What I want us to appreciate is the fact that the seed has the power within itself to bring about its own fulfillment, and produce after its own kind. As long as the conditions of faith are operating in a good, and noble heart are present, God’s grace will bring the increase and harvest in time if we faint not.

Conditions of the Human Spirit – Four Types

Before we examine the different types of soil, we must first identify what the soil represents. We already illustrated that the seed represents the Word of God. So the soil speaks of the human heart, spirit of man- Mark 11:22-23 “...*does not doubt in his heart but believes...*”

Romans 10:10, “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

The Seed along the Path: Mark 4:15

The path Jesus was talking about are the rows in the field that the farmer would walk on when he sowed his seed. So when the seed is accidentally scattered on these areas, it could not penetrate due to the hardness of the soil- the birds would spot the exposed seed and eat them

- The context here is Gospel seed, hearing the message of Salvation
- Hard hearts are the result of offenses and sin making one calloused
 - o **Proverbs 18:19; Hebrews 3:7-13**
- The devil is a thief who is after the Word so people can't be saved

Mt. 13:19 "When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand"

Luke 8:13 "takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved"

Seed Sown on Rocky Places: Mark 4:16-17

Now Jesus addresses those folks who receive the Word at once with joy, but their commitment to the Word and His Kingdom is shallow.

- The key word here is shallow ground, no root in themselves
- Here is where discipleship, follow-up, prayer and spiritual cultivation is important
- Jesus warned us to count the cost and carry our cross- **Luke 14:25-30**

Seed Sown Among Thorns: Mark 4:18-19

If you read Matthew 13:24-30 about the parable of the wheat and weeds, we see that weeds are sown by the devil. The problem with weeds is they steal nutrients and choke what is good.

- Genesis 3:18, weed are a result of the fall of man and result in painful toil to remove
- Like yeast, weeds are a type sin; either individuals, behavior or weights in our lives
- Weeds are people or things in our lives that hinder and trip us up in running our race
- Satan is continually seeking to plant weeds in our lives; roundup- Hebrews 12:1

The Good Soil: Mark 4:20

All four examples of human hearts begin the same way, they hear the Word. What happens with the seed next is the result of the kind or condition of the heart that the seed is sown into.

- Remember there is nothing wrong with the seed, God's Word is perfect- **Psm 19:7**
- The issue is with the quality of soil and cultivation- affects the harvest outcome
- Good ground or heart: Accepts, Understands & Retains the Word- perseverance
- Reasons why people don't receive- 3 out 4 types of hearts 75% do not receive at all