

“The Parable of the Seed and the Sower, Part 2” Matt 13:3b-9, 18-23, Sermon Notes
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Saving Grace Bible Church
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Morning Worship Service

Text:

“And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, “Behold, the sower went out to sow; ⁴ and as he sowed, some *seeds* fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵ “And others fell upon the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. ⁶ “But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ “And others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. ⁸ “And others fell on the good soil, and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. ⁹ “He who has ears, let him hear.” (Matthew 13:3-9 NAS)

“Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ “When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. ²⁰ “And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. ²² “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. ²³ “And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.” (Matthew 13:18-23 NAS)

Text Main Idea:

The Parable of the Seed and the Sower describes the various responses people have to the gospel of the Kingdom

Sermon Main Idea:

To describe the four soils and the responses to each soil as it hears the message of the Kingdom of God

Introduction:

We come again to the parable of the Seed and the Sower. I think it should be called the parable of the Soils. Since the parable is about the different responses to the Word of the Kingdom

- Jesus took a normal activity, like farming, and used it to explain how people respond to the message of the Kingdom
- This was a common form of Jewish teaching according to Alfred Edershim
- The Jews would use parables to illustrate ideas they were teaching. Jesus on the other hand used parables to obfuscate His message. That is cloud it. Present the truth dimly.
- He took an idea and cast it into a story that could reveal the meaning of the parable but would have to be searched for as the meaning would not be plainly obvious without understanding the details of the parable.

“And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, “Behold, the sower went out to sow; ⁴ and as he sowed, some *seeds* fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵ “And others fell upon the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. ⁶ “But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ “And others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. ⁸ “And others fell on the good soil, and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. ⁹ “He who has ears, let him hear.” (Matthew 13:3-9 NAS)

The crowd would have likely responded with the desire to have a crop that would produce such a supernatural response

- If the average crop would produce a 7 ½ fold return and a great crop would produce a 10 fold return then 30, 60, or even 100 fold is supernatural
- It is an amazing return with amazing results
- Truly this is great seed that the farmer is throwing

So what does it all mean?

- Well we have Jesus interpretation of the parable
- We are not left wondering what the divine message is

“Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ “When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. ²⁰ “And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. ²² “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. ²³ “And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.” (Matthew 13:18-23 NAS)

Who is the Sower?

- It does not matter
- How do we know that? Jesus does not answer the question. In his explanation he does not tell us who the sower is
- It matters more for us because we know that Jesus is the chief example of seeking and proclaiming
- This could be as Jesus is the model example and the first to bring the message of the Kingdom
- Some have said the disciples as they come teaching the message of Christ and continuing the message of the kingdom
- Still more generally it is any believer who comes preaching the message of the kingdom

Look at verse 19

“When anyone hears the word of the kingdom” (Matthew 13:19a NAS)

The sower is anyone who is giving the news of the Kingdom

- Anyone giving the good news
- Anyone preaching the gospel
- Anyone who is calling another to repentance

So as you see the sower is unimportant because anyone can be the sower

- Sure if you say it is Christ, great we can see wonderful examples in Christ
- We could pick an Apostle as they delivered His message
- We could even pick men from church history but they will simply be examples of those who shared the gospel to sinners.
- You or I could be the sower as we share the message of the kingdom

What is the seed?

"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom" (Matthew 13:19a NAS)

- The seed is the Word of the Kingdom
- The seed is the Word of God
- Luke 8:11 – Jesus says the Word of God is the seed
- The Word of God gives us the message of the Kingdom
- The Word of God tells us about the Kingdom and God's work
- The Word of God is the seed which we spread and it is the Word of God which is received by the soils
- It is the Word of God which then produces fruit of various kinds

So in each example we are talking about how the Word of God is received when it is shared by the sower

What do the various soils represent?

- Each of type of soil represents the various kinds of responses to the Word of God
- Each soil represents the condition of the human heart as the Word of God is preached to it
- Vs 19 "sown in his heart"

"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road."

The soil is our heart. And the results of the Word of God is the response of our heart to the message

- There are various kinds of responses to God's Word
- Here Jesus draws our attention to four different responses

This week as I talked to many of you, you made comments to me that at times your heart has had all of these responses

- To some degree this is true
- And we need to work at conditioning the soil of our heart to be ready to receive the Word of God
- While we could make a case for times each of us has been obstinate when it comes to hearing God's Word. Or we could make the case that we were excited but quickly grew cold.

Or we could make the case that we were growing but sins and worries choked out our growth. Or we could make the case we have also had much fruit.

- While it is possible to make the case that our hearts may have elements of all the conditions this is not Christ's point here.
- Christ is making the case of ultimate responses to God's Word
 - It may be true that you have seasons of battling unbelief that runs through your heart
 - It may be true that you have seasons of immediate excitement only to pull away at difficulties
 - You may have seasons of weedy soil choked out by the worries and desires of this world
 - You may have all of these seasons but Jesus is speaking about the ultimate condition and response of the soil

These soils then represent the dominate responses of the human heart

- The patterned behavior
- So while you may battle a rough patch in your life this may not be an ultimate description of your condition
- But on the other hand if you never get out of the weeds to bear fruit you should consider the condition of your heart
- If you never endure difficulties to bear fruit you need to consider your faith
- If you turn from the truth and will not obey it is time to evaluate the condition of your heart

The First Soil is the Hard Path

"Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road."

The message given was the Word of the Kingdom

Notice what makes the path hard:

"and does not understand it"

- That is the message comes and it does not make any sense
- The hearer cannot comprehend the meaning of the message of the kingdom
- They hear the truth but it does not make any sense

"In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Corinthians 4:4 NAS)

Before they have any time to make any sense of the message

"the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart."

- The seed of God's word is snatched away so that understanding and faith cannot happen

Where does this take place?

"in the heart"

- That is in our inner man
- In our thoughts

When the truth comes, and we seek to hear it and understand it, the one whose heart is hard will not understand the truth

These are the people who hear the message but will not respond

- They will hear the words being spoken but will not understand
- They will not seek to know the truth
- They will not come to a point where they comprehend the message of God because they do not want the message
- They will not be broken over sin
- They will not be humbled
- They will not turn and follow God
- They have no desire for good
- They will not show any remorse over sin

This is in contrast to the true believer who has the Holy Spirit in him and is able to understand the Word of God

Look at 1 Cor 2:7-14

“but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom*, which God predestined before the ages to our glory;⁸ *the wisdom* which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;”

vs 8 if the rulers of this world would have understood God's Word they would not have acted in the way they did

- People live in ignorant unbelief
- They make decisions and act but are clueless to the work of God

Professing to be wise they are fools, ignorant of the ways of God

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD.⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9 NAS)

- The natural man does not understand God and cannot understand God
- He cannot know God apart from God's divine revelation

Here the unbeliever hears the message and before they ever get the chance to respond in understanding to the truth the seed is snatched by the evil one

- The atheist who is never convicted of His sin has the seed of God's Word snatched
- The rebellious and proud sinner never bows the knee in humility to God because he never comes to know God and His ways

The natural man is described in verse 8 and 14

Notice how the believer is described in verses 11-13

⁹but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And *which* have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him." ¹⁰For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." (1 Corinthians 2:7-14 NAS)

The believer on the other hand knows God BECAUSE the Spirit of God is at work in him to help Him know God

- Vs 11-13

You see then the difference between good soil and soil of the hardened path is understanding of the truth

- The hard path never comes to the point of understanding
- Satan works to keep it this way:
 - Through false teachers
 - Evil worldly system bent away from God Eph 2:1-3
 - Pride, Doubt, or Stubbornness

So how should you respond if this is the condition of your heart

- What if you are saying I want to understand but I cannot understand?
- I want to know and to believe by I cannot believe?
- I want to accept the things of God because I know I should but I cannot find understanding within myself?

Stop looking to yourself for understanding

- Stop looking to finding a feeling of understanding and plead to God for help
- Listen again to 1 Cor 2:11-13

¹¹"For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*."

- Ask God for His spirit
- All those who seek will find, all those who knock it will be open to you (Matt 7:7)
- All those who wish to know will receive the Spirit of God

God is not withholding His Spirit from you. Turn to God, admit your emptiness and seek His help

- His Spirit will testify to you about the truth

- I love this because I know God's people will hear the truth because the Spirit speaks truth and the Spirit pulls us to the truth and gives us understanding of the truth
- This is why we simply preach the truth and then we watch the work of God

Every time you leave here understanding the Word of God you leave having been ministered to by the Holy Spirit

- Is this not a marvelous ministry of the Spirit?

Second Soil is the Rocky Soil

²⁰ "And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away."

Oh how the church gets excited when it sees the rocky soil

- We see someone come and have a quick response to the Word
- They hear the truth and they say things like
 - I cannot believe the Word of God teaches that
 - They are excited to tell everyone about their faith in Christ
 - They are willing to come to Church and enjoy fellowship and learn

We, in the Church, get excited to see this kind of response to the Word of God. How could this be wrong?

- But there is a problem, we do not see what is under the surface

This is an important point we should all understand

- It will help us from being tossed here and there by empty doctrine
- It will help us from being confused about truth

We should understand that we do not see what is happening underground

- We do not know what is happening in the heart
- We do not know what people are thinking and perceiving
 - We only see the external actions
 - And we could be confused or misled by the actions
 - We could see the positive response and be convinced that this person must be a child of God
 - We are not omniscient, we cannot see the heart, we can only see the results of the heart
- True knowledge of one's condition is seeking to understand the condition of the human heart
- OR in terms of this parable, the condition of the soil

Here is the key of the second soil

- "yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary,"
- It is not able to endure

When roots are unable to find good soil to grip the plant is going to fail when pressures come

- The plant is unable to anchor itself

The second soil is the rocky soil that has a problem. The problem is that it cannot endure the difficulties of rejection

- We should be prepared to be rejected

"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹"Blessed are you when *men* cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. ¹²"Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:10-12 NAS)

"But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, *you are* blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled." (1 Peter 3:14 NAS)

The second soil responds to the Word of God but does not endure because the Word never sinks in

- The Word only goes so deep. It is not allowed to penetrate deep into the heart

If the first soil fails because the Word does not get in, then the second soil fails because it does not get deep enough

- This would be a superficial acceptance of the truth
- An excitement over the benefits of the gospel but ignorance over the cost of the gospel
- The gospel is free but will cost you your whole life
- The gospel sets you free to be a servant of Christ
- The gospel calls you to walk like Jesus and die to self
- The gospel calls you to a kind of love that is foreign to the natural man

Ways people superficially accept the Word:

1. Believe what others say but never develop your own convictions
2. Never memorize what the scripture actually says. Hold to a general idea of the truth
3. Hold on to the truth but mix it with other ideas. Let the wisdom of man be equal to the wisdom of God
 - a. If this is the case the Word will never sink in as other ideas will be in the way
4. Speak the Word, hear the Word, but never live by the Word. Look even Satan knows the scripture. Remember Matt 4 and the temptations of Christ. You can speak the scripture and yet never have it in you. It is not about memorizing the scripture it is about resting upon and living the scripture
5. Resist believing the Word when you are cornered to believe. That is when the bible speaks to an issue in your life you fail to obey it. But willingly hold on to those other areas you have mastered
6. Let other loves get in way: entertainment, work, other relationships, idolatry. The Word cannot seek in because other loves have anchored in the heart and when pressures come you will turn to these other loves

The point is the Word never gets in deep into the heart because it is unable to penetrate the hard ground

- From the outside we may think great things are happening
- Though the wise farmer would be leery of this kind of growth
- The wise and mature would be warning people to form convictions

Young people don't rest on your parent's faith

- Don't rest on the faith of your pastor and elders
- Don't rest on the faith of your internet heroes or the hall of Christian faith

Make your faith your own. Drive the Word deep into your heart. Hold on to it firmly

The Third Soil is the Weedy Soil

- I don't know about you but I hate weeds
- They kill the grass
- They grow when I don't want them to grow

Some weeds even grow and have a nice flower too. Then I feel sorry for them that they are a weed and I start to like them, but I remember they are weed and they should be ripped out

The weeds are native to the soil and war against the good seed

²² "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."

Here the weedy soil receives the Word but has the roots and seeds of weeds ready to spring up with the good seed

- The Worry of the World
- The deceitfulness of Riches

One pastor tells a story of a man who came to Christ who used to produce pornographic videos

- The man repented and turned from his former life
- He came to Christ and dedicated his life to following Christ

The problem was that the man had a reputation of making these videos and was unable to find different employment. After a period of time he returned back to his former work because he needed to make money

- He left Christ because of the worries of this world

The weedy soil can work in many ways

- Choose our jobs over Christ
- Choose vacations over Christ
- Choose a new home over Christ
- Choose a new car over Christ

You might say, well this does not apply to me because I am poor, you are wrong

This is not just a problem for those who have money

- It is not the rich who play the lottery it is the poor and desperate

Any one of us could be more concerned about the things in this world than about Christ and have our loved choked out

Now personally I am glad Jesus called these the weeds

- There are weeds in every garden
- They are a constant fight

We all battle with the weeds, but notice the condition of this soil

- It is over run by weeds
- The weeds are allowed to grow up and choke out the plant

The plant is unfruitful. This is the proof that the soil is a waste. The weeds do not allow it to bear fruit

“and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful”

- When the burdens and concerns of the world pull you to the point of not bearing spiritual fruit there is a problem

Where the first soil the Word cannot get in, the second soil the Word cannot go deep, in this soil the Word is rivaled by the worries and concerns of this world

What does this look like in our lives?

“For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.” (1 Timothy 6:10 NAS)

- We get caught up in magazines and books or the internet about things in this world and fail to grow in sound doctrine and faith
- We invest all of our efforts in earthly treasure and fail to value the heavenly reward
- We look for earthly satisfaction before heavenly return

The weedy soil rivals the good of the seed and keeps it from growing deep to build conviction and bear fruit in our lives

Love of the world and a love for Christ cannot coexist

“Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.” (1 John 2:15-16 NAS)

Anyone who refuses to let go of the world will find it impossible to hold on to Christ. For they are like two trains heading in the opposite direction. There is no one able to link the two together

It is fitting this soil is said to have thorns. When you pull away from thorns they cut and slice you. Pulling away is hard and uncomfortable

- So too is pulling away from this world. Like thorns the desires of this world dig into our flesh and to pull away we will be cut and scratched
- The moment we first get out the pain of having the thorns removed can be intense
- But remember the pain only starts all over if you jump back into the love of the World

The final soil is the good soil

²³ "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

- Look at how the soil receives the word
- They hear it, and they understand it

You cannot bear fruit unless you are hearing the Word of God AND understanding it

- This is the importance of hearing the Word faithfully proclaimed
 - Hear it and understand it

A preacher must give God's Word and help people understand it to see the fruit

True believers bear fruit

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10 NAS)

"Having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God." (Philippians 1:11 NAS)

"which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as *it has been doing* in you also since the day you heard *of it* and understood the grace of God in truth;" (Colossians 1:6 NAS)

Again the fruit is supernatural not earthly

- Produced by the Word of God in you

It is the evidence of the Spirit of God transforming a sinner

- Love of the Brethren 1 John 3
- Following the Truth 1 John 4
- Understanding the Truth 1 Cor 2:11-13
- Fruit of the Spirit, Gal 5
- Walking in Holiness 1 John 1; Gal 5:16; 1 Pet 2:11-12
- Confession of Sin 1 John 1:8-9
- Hunger for the Word of God 1 Pet 2:1-2
- Have been born again and there is evidence of a new nature within you 2 Cor 5:17, 1 Pet 1:23-24
- Use your gifts to build up the body of Christ Eph 4:11-16

The fruit will be a supernatural work

We can bear fruit by:

- Loving others
- Walking in the truth
- Walking in Holiness
- Loving Christ

- Being filled with the Spirit
- Hungering for the Word of God
- Living in Love
- Using our gifts
- Living in light of our new nature

This soil allows the word to go deep in. The word here has no rivals to choke it out and it then produces good fruit, abundant fruit

Isn't this the glory of the ministry? The more we minister God's Word the more we see people who need the truth

- The more the body grows the more we have the opportunity to encourage others to grow
- The more others grow the more they push us to grow
- You may not know who to love and then you see needs in the body
- You may not know what truth to follow then you hear the preaching and see the message of truth proclaimed by the Church so you grow in understanding
- You are taught how to handle the scripture and grow in studying and teaching others. The result is more fruit in you and in others

On and on the faithful soil goes as God drives the Word of God deep into our soil

Conclusion:

Remember soil is to be cultivated

- We can prepare our hearts
- We can break up the hard ground
- We can pull up the rocks
- We can pull weeds
- We can make sure the Word is ready to go deep into our hearts and lives

The Spirit takes the Word and drives it in so don't resist God's Work

- He convicts you to let go of sin, let it go
- Calls you to serve, so serve
- Calls you to give so give
- Calls you to proclaim so proclaim

Get in and get to work bearing the fruit of a transformed life. Demonstrate that you are the good soil before it is revealed that the Word has not sunk in, or has not gone in deeply, or is choked out by rival love

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