

The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1-23

Matthew 13:10-17 After Jesus tells the parable of the sower, the disciples ask Him why he teaches in parables. He tells them that the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven have been given to them while remaining unclear to those with hardened hearts.

Isaiah 6:18-13 Isaiah's message is not encouraging. Isaiah tells the people that though they have heard and seen God's work, their hearts have become hardened because of their sin. Judgement is coming.

Jesus quotes this text from the book of Isaiah to explain his point. If the Pharisees hearts had not been calloused and hardened, they would have seen, they would have heard and would have understood. God's desire is for all to come to be able to understand the mysteries of the kingdom and be saved.

Matthew 13:3-9 Jesus tells a basic story that everyone would be familiar with and could understand. The parable is about a farmer who goes out and throws some seeds far and wide. Some of the seed falls on good ground and some on different types of bad ground.

4 Types of Soil

The Path: vs 4 "As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up." The path is not soft soil but a hard spot where the seed lands and something takes the seed away.

The Rocky Soil: vs 5,6 "Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root."

The seed sprouts up quickly but unable to get depth for its roots so it withers away.

The Thorny Soil: vs 7 "Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants." The seed takes root and begins to grow but it gets choked out by the things around it

The Good Soil: vs 8 "Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

The seed was able to grow and produces a crop multiple times greater than the original seed.

Jesus Explains the Parable

Matthew 13:18-23 The story also has a much deeper meaning that was meant for those with open hearts to His words. Jesus breaks down the story for his disciples and explains what it means, and the different hearts that the soil represents.

The Seed: vs 18,19a "Listen then to what the parable of the Sower means: "When anyone hears the message about the kingdom

The seed is the message about the kingdom of God, the Good News, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Path Soil: vs 18,19 “When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.”

The Path represents the first kind of heart – a hardened heart. The word of God on a hardened heart won’t break in and take root. Satan snatches the truth of the God’s Word away hardening the heart with other desires.

Rocky Soil: vs 20,21 “The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

The Rocky Soil represents a shallow heart. A person hears the Word and responds emotionally to Jesus as Savior with joy but has no root to sustain Jesus as Lord.

Thorny Soil: vs 22 “The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.”

In the Thorns represents a distracted heart. A person hears the good news but temptations and worries of the world choke the word out, making it unfruitful. The roots have not been fed by the Holy Spirit allowing the person to grow strong in the Lordship of Jesus.

Good Soil: vs 23 “But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

The Good Soil represents the receptive heart. Those who receive the word, accept it, proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior. It produces a crop multiple times what was sown, fruitful.

Application:

- Take an honest look inside. What type of soil does your heart represent?
- How can you cultivate the soil of your life?
- What are daily practices of living out God’s word that help us to be fruitful?
- What rocks and thorns need to be removed to give the planted seed an opportunity to grow and produce fruit?
- Consider being disciplined to help you grow strong in your walk with Jesus.

Sow the Seed:

- Be fruitful. Partner with God to tell others about Jesus and his Kingdom.
- We cannot make the seed grow but our responsibility is to sow the seed.
- God will cause the growth in someone’s life.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 Paul can plant the seed. Apollos can water the seed. Only God can make the seed grow. We are to produce good fruit by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with others and discipling them as they grow in their journey with Christ.

If you like to learn more about being disciplined or becoming a Disciple Maker, please contact jay@occchurch.org We would enjoy meeting and talking with you about discipleship.

Small Group Discussion Questions

The Parable of the Sower Matthew 13:1-23

1. Do you have a green thumb? Share a story to back-up your answer.
2. What does the seed refer to in the parable of the seeds?
3. In the following verses, identify and discuss each kind of soil and what it represents?
 - Compare Matthew 13:4 with 18,19
 - Compare Matthew 13:5,6 with 20,21
 - Compare Matthew 13:7 with 22
 - Compare Matthew 13:8 with 23
4. What must happen for the roadside soil to be changed Hebrews 3:15
5. How can unproductive, rocky ground be made productive? 1 Corinthians 10:13
Proverbs 29:25
6. How can individuals described as thorny soil become vital and effective Christians?
1 Peter 5:7 Matthew 6:19-21
7. What condition in a Christian results in abundance of fruit? Mark 4:20 Luke 8:15
8. How must the soil of your life be changed to become good ground or to increase in its fruitfulness?

Personal Study Guide

The Parable of the Sower

Read the parable of the Sower found in the following gospels. Compare the similarities and the differences between them. How would you describe the various soils in terms of today's world? How would you describe the fate of the seed that falls on the four different soils.

Matthew 13: 1-23

Mark 4:3-20

Luke 8:4-15