

Sower, Seeds & Soils: Fruit or Fire? Mark 4.1-20/ Matthew 13.1-23/ Luke 8.4-15

Mark 4. 2 He taught them many things by parables,

Latin: parabola / Greek: parabolé = "comparison" / to lay along side

Earthly Story with Heavenly Meaning

### 3 Ingredients of the Parable – Sower, Seed, Soil

Sower is Jesus > v. 1 Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge.

Today all who follow Him are called to sow in many ways / Paul: 1 Cor 3

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow"

Seed is Word of God v 15 "word that was sown" / v 16 "hear the word"

Mt 13.19 "message about the kingdom" / Lk 8. 11 "seed is the word of God"

Falling of Seed reflects CONDITION of SOIL Where it Lands

Soils: ways people respond to God's Word

v. 16 hear the word and at once receive it with joy

Matt 13.19 evil one comes & snatches away what was sown in their heart

Luke 8.15 seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word

Parable is Declaration of the Condition of our Hearts

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Proverbs 4.23

Understanding – Affections – Will – Opinions > Center of Personality

THIS Parable Special Importance: Only 1 in all 3 of Synoptic Gospels

v. 13 Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? >> Interpreting this Parable is a Key to All BIBLE

1<sup>st</sup> Command/1<sup>st</sup> Page: "God blessed them and said to them, "*Be fruitful* and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." Genesis 1.28

Last Ch Bible: "The angel showed me the river of the water of life...On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing *twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month*. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." Revelation 22.1,2

1<sup>st</sup> Psalm: “Blessed is the one...whose delight is in the law of the Lord... That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season” Psalm 1.1-3

Jesus: “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” John 15.5

If NOT Understand what Bible says about BEARING FRUIT

Will NOT Know God and Be with God Forever!

Preaching > Looks like ALL Activity is in PULPIT

RESULT of Sermon Depends Preacher: Prepared? Boring? Too Short?

“Sermons are over my head!” / “Maybe you are TOO SHORT!”

1<sup>st</sup> Sermon UGANDA – 20 minutes! Rebuked by Pastor Snack/Not Meal

Believe Preacher SHOULD Be Prepared > Do their Best Job Possible

Jesus > Real RESULT of Sermon depends on Hearers> Soil word Lands

Parable is Not Plea for Good Preaching > Plea for Good Listening

Unseen Activity > Right Where you Sit > In your Mind, Heart > Battle

No Magic in Preaching: Result depends on Soil/Heart: Word Landing!?

Condition of the Soil determines the Receptiveness of the Seed

Our Response of Sermon is Revelation of our Heart

SEED did Not Create Reaction > REVEALED what was Already There

## 1. Hardened path

Jesus and Disciples Walking on a Path – Many Walked There – Hard Soil!

1<sup>st</sup> C Israel > Scattered Seed BEFORE they PLOWED the Ground

Birds FOLLOWED Sower of Seed > getting Ready for FREE LUNCH

Some seed Falls on Hard Soil – Cannot Sink In – Too Hard

*Result* – The seed was eaten by the birds. It did not even take root.

vs. 14,15 Some people are like seed along /path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes & takes away the word that was sown

Matthew 13.19 ...does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart.

Luke 8.12 the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

***Application* “Nothing in that message connects to anything in my life”**

All Pie in the Sky Bye and Bye – Thinking Only of This World

Mind on Problems: Business Failing, Sickness, Death, Marriage on Rocks

Want Quick Fix NOW – Not ready to Think of Heaven after I am DEAD

Justification, Sanctification, Glorification: Many Angels on Head of Pin!?

Not CONSIDER Word worthy of Serious Reflection > Who Needs That?

**People must understand the message before they can be saved.**

Mt 13.19 “hears the message about the kingdom & does not understand it”

> Must get in HEAD before it gets into HEART!

Jesus Praised: Clear & Simple Preacher > No Complicated Theology

Simple PARABLE Everyone UNDERSTOOD...I Wish were TRUE!

Even Apostles Confused by Parables: v. 10 When he was alone, the 12 & the others around him asked him about the parables. He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, *Quoting ISAIAH 6* “they may be ever seeing but never perceiving and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!””

Jesus expects Different RESPONSES from Hearers

Jesus: Parables make CLEAR Who Responds to Him & who does NOT

Seems Parables INTENDED to Block People more than Bring Them Jesus Expected some Hearers would NOT Hear: Blind, Ignore, Reject Distractions / Wandering Thoughts / Phone

Searching / Fans-Breeze / Chairs / Big Head / Whispering / Slumber >> Need to FOCUS

Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

John 3.3

Nothing more heart-breaking than to preach with tears about Jesus and see people looking at their phones, sleeping, talking – there is nobody home!

Preachers are Hard to Listen To > It is a Fight > Soul Depends on It

“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.” 2 Timothy 2.7

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. Psalm 119.18

Prayer for Illumination > Call upon Him for Understanding

Do spend 5 min asking God to teach you? One Minute? Five Seconds?

Need to Take Time – Prayer Before the Word, Prayer After the Word

### **Satan is in active opposition whenever we share the Word.**

We think the Devil is in Bars > Perhaps he is more active in the Church

There is a present activity of Satan wherever the Word is preached

Creature > Limited Space & Time, Not Omnipresent > Lots of Homies

Mediately or Immediately / Directly or Indirectly – Opposition to X

“Be alert & of sober mind...enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith” 1 Peter 5.8,9

## **2. Shallow 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 sun came up, the plants were scorched -withered because they had no root

Shelf of Rock few inches of soil on top // like soil on Volcanic rock!

Sun came Up > Scorched > No Roots > No Chance for Fruit

### ***Application* –Joyful response to Word is not always a saving response.**

“ones who receive the word with joy...They believe for a while” Lk 8.13

Eager HEARERS find JUST what Needed > Peace, Forgiveness, Life

They say “I found it” – this is what I want! – I am finally Home!

Some Happiest Memories My Life > Youth Group: Fun, Friends, Healthy!

Wealthy Suburban Americans – World of Choices & Opportunities

‘Jesus Revolution’ 100’s of Young People came to Coffee Hse, Concerts

Only God Knows – Dozens NOT Walking with God TODAY

REALITY Kicked In – Bills, Responsibility, Sickness, Death, Challenges

**So eager for the blessings they never count the costs of the Kingdom.**

“Jesus calls a man to come and die” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Count the Cost > Jesus spoke this way to Great Multitudes

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Luke 14.26,27

Cost of Being a True Christian / Builder who does Not Count the Cost /King who does not calculate the Cost of War

**Troubles reveal true state soul: Tribulation, Persecution, Temptation.**

8 years Uganda – 4 coup’s - Shooting, Confusion, Running, Fear  
 Small Country / 20 Armies running around – No Order – Kids with Guns  
 Churches got Filled – Many prayed be Saved!  
 Peace Restored > Pastors taught Walk w/ God: Bible, Worship, Love God  
 Do you mean Jesus Christ wants all of me all the time!? Oh, I see!  
 I’m Glad Not get shot during Coup – New Gov’t, Don’t Need church!  
 Letter Hebrews > Persecution for following Jesus > Some Quit Following  
 Many Parents > Kids wandered away from God > Blame Bad Friends, etc.

Problems, Adversity, Failure, Disappointment > Drove them from GOD

Everything FINE until Problem > NO, Problem Reveals Shallowness

Sun scorched and shriveled plant in Shallow Earth

Plant was Flourishing! All Conditions were there Grow...but Deep Soil

v. 21 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.

Sun Not CREATE any Condition in Soil or Plant > Reveals it is Shallow

FAIR Weather Christians will Never grow to MATURITY

Problems can make you THRIVE or Shriveled Up

Tribulations work for GOOD in Real Believers w/ Deep ROOTS

True Xtian Roots in X: Trials, Persec, Suffering brings Life & Maturity

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. James 1.12

**Time is great revealer of the reality of the work of God's grace.**

v. 17 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.

They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. 1 John 2.19

Kid Raised Hand 5 yrs Wonderful! Not Walking w/ God 35-45-95 Lost!

Person can accept Historical Fact > Jesus died on Cross and Rose from Dead

Sure I Believe That > I can Pray to Thank God for That

Some People are Gullible / Some People are Trusting

Another thing to DIE w/ Christ – Repent // ALIVE in Christ – He lives in You

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”

3 John 4 Joy to be Born Again > Greater Joy see them Keep Walking

### 3. Thorny Soil

Matthew 13.22 thorns...worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Luke 8.14 choked by life's worries, riches & pleasures...do not mature.

**Person who never truly repented of sin, thorns were already there.**

“some fell among thorns” – they were already there – thorny bushes used for nightly fire /  
tumbleweeds? – oily, flammable – Keawe?

Root system of thorns stronger than roots of Sower's seed > Choked Out

Repentance is Insincere and Incomplete

Unchallenged Weeds killed the Growing Plant > before FRUIT Born

Youth Jobs paint Houses: Hardest Work PREPARATION

Remove old paint > Clean > Sanding > Hard Work

Easier Make Quick Money > Paint over Old Paint with No Prep

Better Do That in another town! Home Owner will soon see your con!

Why Jesus MEAN? Loves so Much wants Salvation Deep Roots – Fruit!

Give me this water! .... Go call husband! .... She repented and rejoiced! John 4

Jesus removed her thorn bush so Seed of Word of God: Go Deep & Fruit

People want to Follow > Not yet Repented: Jesus: “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.” Luke 9.57-62

Pleasure does not come from things of the world >

Real joy comes from God alone.

**Be warned against the dangers of being damned by innocent things of this world. Do you trust God to meet your needs?**

Housing – Food – Health Care – Education – Vacation – Not bad things!

Anxiety over Needs of life / do you trust God to meet your needs?

Desire > So focused on these good things they choke the Word

Have a House full of Things – YOU still in House! – Heart full of Vanity

Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 1 Timothy 6.9

#### **4. Good Soil**

v. 20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

Matthew 13.23 hears the word and understands it

Luke 8.15 the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

***Application* – State of the soil determines the fate of the seed.**

Good soil, well plowed, broken, soft, no roots of other plants, deep

Seed falls on this excellent soil and grows, quickly, fruit is born

Soil Unseen / Heart Unseen > Only see the Plant – Growth? Fruit? Death?

**Only proof of a saving response to the gospel is bearing fruit.**

Only the Good Soil brings Good Fruit that Lasts

Paul: “I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.” Acts 20.21

Have you repented and believed? True Answer NOT looking Back

Look Mirror Now – Repentance Not Your History > Your Heart Now

Look in your Heart NOW for Living Relationship with Jesus

Gratitude, Love, Kindness: Sorrow for Continuous Sin and Failure

“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” Galatians 5.22-25

**Only a direct work of God can produce salvation.**

Jesus to Paul: “I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins’ Acts 26.17,18

Illumination neces for Salvation/ Not understand w/out God’s revelation

The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2.14

**Know person truly believes when they continue in fruit-bearing faith.**

Eternal Purpose of Father is our Fruitfulness: “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned...This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” John 15.5-8

Fruitless > Removed / Fruitful > Refined / Fruit or Fire?