

Parable of the Sower

NLT: Mt 13:3-8; 18-23; Mark 4:4-8, 14-21; Luke 8:5-8, 11-15

Mt. 13:18 "Now listen to the explanation of the parable about the farmer planting seeds:

3 He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one: "Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds.

- **1 Peter 1:23** "Your new life will last forever because it comes from **the eternal, living word of God.**"
- **1 John 3:9** "Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life [**seed**] is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God."
- **Romans 10:14** "But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?"

4 As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them.

- **Luke 8:5** "where it was stepped on,"
- **vs 19** The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and **don't understand it**. Then **the evil one** comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts.
- **Luke 8:12** "prevent them from believing and being saved."
- "All of redemption and sin and grace and holiness is unintelligible to him and without significance. But how has he come to the state? He has brought himself to it; He has exposed his heart to every evil influence of the world so it has become hard as a pavement..."
- **The devil**, like the bird, simply waits until the seed is sown on this hard heart, comes and snatches it away.
 - **Mark 4:15** "only to have Satan come **at once** [immediately -not quickly] and take it away." We know by this Satan is watching near by while we witness. Delay in his mind can be costly to his efforts or else this reveals his intense interest in denying anyone he can the Gospel message.
- **Acts 15:8** "God knows people's hearts."
 - And in Lydia's case in **Acts 16:14** " One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth, who worshiped God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted "

◦ "I have often reflected on the strangeness of the task to which Paul devoted his life: telling pagans that there was a single creator God rather than a multiplicity of gods was bad enough, but adding that this God had made himself known in a crucified Jew, who had then been raised from the dead, was bound to cause hoots of derision, and, If Acts is to be believed, sometimes did. Yet Paul found that when he told his story, when he proclaimed that this Jesus was indeed the world's true Lord, people (to their great surprise, no doubt) found this announcement making itself at home in their minds and hearts, generating the belief that it was true, and transforming their lives with a strange new presence and power." N. T. Wright

5 Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow.

6 But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died.

- The KJV says "**stony** places" while in Mark and Luke it is a single rock. The Greek uses this word for both stones and rocks.
- In Palestine there are places where a **thin superficial coating of mold** covers the surface of a rock. On walks in the woods in western PA I often notice tree saplings sprouting on large rocks covered in moss. They would grow so high and then topple over in a wind.
- **Vs 20** The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with **joy**.
- A joy that overlooks **the cost** of discipleship. The hearer's commitment lacked depth like the thin layer of soil on the rock.
 - **Luke 14:26-28** "Anyone who wants to be my follower must love me far more than he does his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters—yes, more than his own life—otherwise he cannot be my disciple. And no one can be my disciple who does not carry his own cross and follow me. "But don't begin until you count the cost"
 - **Pliny** noted that in Syria: They press the plow into a thin, light furrow, because there is a rock underneath, burning the seeds in summer.
 - **Matthew 13:6** "The burning heat of the sun" is Jesus' description of persecution.
 - **Luke 8:6** the seed germinated and then withered for lack of moisture." [no Christian fellowship and prayer?] The same sun the melts wax, hardens clay!
 - **Trench:** "The moral loveliness of its doctrine; but not its answer to the deepest needs of the human heart."
 - **Roots:** The invisible lifestream of the plant. Faith in the soul not on display. *My Maple tree.*
- **Vs. 21** But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.
 - Through persecution and the confrontation [tribulation-stress] that arises in a hateful culture they are offended [**scandalized**].
 - **Romans 5:3, 5** "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to be patient. And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady. ... for we know how dearly God loves us, and we feel this warm love everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love."
 - Who would have thought that temptation refused and tribulation endured could be tools in God's care to reveal to us God's love for us and our love for Him.
 - **Luke 8:13** TLB "The stony ground ... those who enjoy listening to sermons, but somehow the message never really gets through to them ... doesn't take root and grow. They... sort of believe... but ... they lose interest."
 - The text does not say they sort of had **faith** but that they did believe for a short time.
 - **Trench:** temporary faith.
 - The phrase "lose interest" fails to capture the emphasis of the Biblical term: "to **renounce** or revolt against" They are in total denial. The word used in the KJV most often is "depart".

- Were they ever "saved"? The same **Son** that grows faith, causes *undeveloped* [fake?] faith to die. Our relationship with Christ is not just positional but must deepen or wither.

7 Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants.

- **Mark 4:7** "it yielded no fruit."
- **Luke 8:7** "the thorns sprang up with it,"
- The soil was good; what **lacked** was a careful husbandry.; "a diligent eradication of the mischievous..." [Trench].
- The **pyrokanthus** -a non-native, invasive shrub [Firethorn]
 - Despite being invasive, its effects are not pernicious enough to be labeled a true threat to native species.
 - Primarily grown as an ornamental shrub in gardens and landscapes, it has been known to spread aggressively, outcompeting native vegetation.
 - Pyracantha can overshadow and outcompete other plants for light, water, and nutrients. Its dense growth habit can shade out smaller, less robust plants, inhibiting their growth.
 - While Pyracantha isn't typically a direct threat to crops like cereals or vegetables, its aggressive growth in natural or disturbed environments could negatively impact native plant species, thus affecting local ecosystems. If you're growing crops near firethorn, it's essential to keep it well-maintained and prevent it from spreading ... aggressively.
- **Vs 22** The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced.
 - **Mark 4:19** [NET] "... but worldly cares, the seductiveness of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke [Luther:: ersticken 'sufficates'] the word, and it produces nothing."
 - **Living Bible**: But all too quickly the attractions of this world and the delights of wealth, and the search for success and lure of nice things come in and crowd out God's message from their hearts, so that no crop is produced.
 - **Luke 8:14** "and bring no fruit to perfection."
 - **Trench** "After a temporary obedience to the truth there is an evident falling away from it, such as the withering of the stalk indicates: the profession of a spiritual life is retained, the 'name to live' still remains; but the life and power of godliness is by degrees eaten out and has departed"
 - Anxious about things pertaining to this lifestream
 - **1 Peter 5:7** NLT: "Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you."
 - Deceived by wealth
 - **Ephesians 4:22** "that you put off, concerning your former conduct, which corrupts according to the carnal desires that deceive" [Living Bible calls them: a sham].
 - Any number of other lingering (selfish) desires.
 - **Romans 6:12** NLT "do not give in to sinful desires."
- **Trench**: "The old man is not dead in them; it may seem dead for a while, so long as the first joy on account of the treasure found endures; but, unless mortified in earnest, will presently revive in all its strength anew." [Romans 8:13 "mortify the deeds of the flesh" and live.]
 - "Unless the soil of the heart be diligently watched, the thorns and briars, of which it seemed a thorough clearance had been made, will it again grow up a piece, and choke the ... seed."

8 Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!

- **Genesis 26:12** "Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him."
- **Vs 23** The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"
 - 30, 60, or 100 percent return crop? "The fertility of Esdraelon end of the volcanic soil of the Hauran was prodigious, and there were rich cornfields about the lake which may have justified these figures."
 - **Mark 4:20** "These are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."
- **Luke 8:15** "That which is in good earth are those who *upon* hearing the Word patiently possess it in a good and true **heart** and bear much fruit [in the Spirit]."
 - **Trench** "The heart is good through receiving the word; not that it receives the word because it is good"
 - "And thus the preaching of the Word of the gospel may be likened to the scattering of sparks, which, where they find tinder, fasten there, and kindle into a flame; where they find it not, expire...."
 - The soil of the heart prepared to receive the seed of the Word.
- **Trench:** "The disciples might have been in danger of supposing that these four conditions of heart, and which the word found is hearers, permanent, immutable and fixed forevermore; and therefore that in one heart the word must flourish, and another that it could never germinate at all, and others that it could only prosper for a little while."
 - **Hosea 10:12** "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you."
 - **Isaiah 5:1-2** "Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine."

The heavenly seed ennobles "each of these inferior soil's, til it has become that which man's heart was at the beginning and before the Fall, good ground, fit to afford nourishment to the divine word, the seed of everlasting life.

- **1 Peter 1:23** " Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abides for ever."

Four Types of (soil) Heart or Spiritual Conditions

Matthew 13:19 "sown in his heart."

Acts 15:8 "God, which knows the heart"

Acts 11:23 "Who, when he [Paul & Barnabas] came [to Antioch], and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

Acts 28:24 "some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not."

Acts 16:14 "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

Hard heart [**Exodus 8:32** "Pharaoh hardened his heart"]

- **Romans 2:5** But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasures up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;
- **Acts 28:27** "This people's heart has become calloused [fat, dull] "
- **Ezekiel 36:26** "I will take away the stony heart... "

Anxious heart

- **Matthew 11:29** "lowly [humble] in heart: ... shall find rest..."
- **Psalms 108:1** "my heart is fixed [firmly established]"

Foolish heart [**Ezekiel 11:21** CSB "hearts pursue their desire for abhorrent acts and detestable practices,"

- **Romans 1:21** when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish [morally insensible] heart was darkened.
- **Matthew 6:21** "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

New Heart [**Ezekiel 36:26** "A new heart also will I give you"]

- **1 Samuel 13:14** " the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart,"
- **Matthew 5:3** "Blessed are the pure in heart"
- **Hebrews 10:22** "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,..."