

THE SEED, THE SOWER, AND THE SOILS

Introduction

- 1) **Matthew 13:3** – Jesus “spoke many things to them in parables” (cf. Mk. 4:33-34)
- 2) **Matthew 13:34-35** – Jesus’ use of parables in His teaching was a fulfillment of prophecy

I) **Parable**

A) **Parabole** (Gk) – “to throw by the side of”

- 1) Central idea is the *comparison* of one thing with another; a likeness
- 2) Hebrew word (*mashal*) referred to proverbs, riddles, stories, metaphors, similes, etc.
 - a) see Lk. 4:23; 6:39; Mk. 3:23

B) Common definition of a parable: “An earthly story with a heavenly meaning”

- 1) Using the physical (familiar, known) to teach the spiritual (unknown)
- 2) Two levels of meaning – move student from one level to another (known to unknown)
- 3) God using the *seen* to illustrate the *unseen* – expand knowledge and understanding
- 4) Harmony of spiritual and material; earthly world is picture/pattern of spiritual/heavenly

II) **Why Jesus Used Parables**

A) Matthew 13:10-17 – reveal, make known the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven

- 1) Awaken perception and understanding of spiritual concepts
- 2) Encourage personal application of spiritual principles

B) “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (Mk. 4:9)

III) **The Parable of the Sower** (Matt. 13:18)

A) **Matthew 13:1-8** – parable; vv. 18-23 – Jesus’ explanation of the meaning

- 1) Parallel passages – Mark 4:1-9, 13-20; Luke 8:4-8, 11-15

B) Important Elements of the parable

- 1) **Seed** – the word of God (see Lk. 8:10) sown in the hearts of men (Matt. 13:19)
- 2) **Sower** – the one who sows the seed, spreading the word of God to hearers
- 3) **Wayside** – person who does not understand spiritual truth and Satan steals it away
 - a) Natural, carnal minds that are not interested in spiritual truths (1 Cor. 2:12-14; Rom. 8:7)
- 4) **Stony Places** – receptive person who does not develop deep roots of faith; easily and quickly stumbles in the face of tribulation and persecution
 - a) Stones that hinder root growth: worldly wisdom, self-interests, material pleasures, etc.
- 5) **Among Thorns** – receptive person whose growth is choked by thorns and bears no fruit
 - a) Thorns that hinder fruitfulness: carnal desires, lies of wealth, struggles and difficulties
- 6) **Good Ground** – person who understands and accepts the truth due to a noble and good heart
 - a) 30, 60, 100-fold – each one produces as he is able (Lk. 8:15)

C) The different soils illustrate different conditions of the *hearts of men*

- 1) The word of God can be ineffective because...
 - a) We are not interested, or we are not rooted strongly, or the thorns of life choke it out
- 2) It must be fully absorbed by a noble and good heart – ready to hear, learn, and change

Conclusion

The main point of the parable is that our heart must be in the right condition to receive the word of God (Jas. 1:21). Only the ones described as good ground were prepared to receive the word and bear fruit – ***what is the condition of your heart?*** Hear, trust, and obey God today.