

=THE PARABLES=

Lesson 6 The Sower

POINT OF CONTACT: Since this is the parable of the sower, you could bring to class several things. Bring a package of seed, a rock, some soil and some thorns. As the lesson is taught, you can illustrate visually by putting the seed on each particular type of ground in which it was sown. Now let us notice the teaching of the parable as told in Matthew 13:1-23.

- I. THE MEANING OF THE TERMS. Read Matthew 13:3, 4.
 1. The sower in verse 3 represents the soul winner.
 2. The seed in verse 4 represents the Word of God.
 3. The fowls in verse 4 represent false teachers sent by Satan.

- II. THE SEED THAT FELL BY THE WAYSIDE. This ground represents the careless or indifferent hearer upon whom the Word makes no impression, like seed by the wayside which is picked up by the birds. So Satan takes the Gospel out of the heart of these people. "Falling by the wayside" represents people who hear the Word of God but do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and make no profession whatsoever. These are the people who say, "I'm not interested; leave me alone! I'm not going to be saved. I'm going to wait. I know I'm not saved, and I'm not ready yet."
 1. "...then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." Matthew 13:19. This represents the fact that any time the Word is preached, the Devil is going to fight it. Any time a person wins souls, the Devil is going to fight him. Consequently, if we do God's work, we must do it in the energy of the Holy Spirit. The flesh cannot combat Satan. The Holy Spirit is our only power with which we can combat the words of the Devil.
 2. There is, however, a certain satisfaction in sowing the Seed. Though the person is not saved and perhaps never will be, we at least have washed our hands of his blood. In Ezekiel 3, we are called "watchmen." If we do not warn the wicked man of his way, his blood will be required at our hands. Therefore, we should not be discouraged if all the people do not accept the Gospel. At least we have discharged our responsibility and have been obedient to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- III. THE SAME WORD IS PREACHED, BUT IT FALLS ON STONY SOIL. Let us notice this seed. In Matthew 13:5 notice the words, "...they had no deepness of earth." Notice verse 21a, "Yet hath he not root in himself." This represents the unsaved person who professes his faith in Christ, but did not mean it with his heart. With his mouth and mind he received the truth, but there was no root. It did not get down to his heart. These are those who have received the Gospel but have no real change of heart.
 1. This kind will not stand the test. Matthew 13:6. A person who is not a real born-again believer will be found out. One who is a church member and has made a profession of faith, but has not really been born again can fool some for a while, but he will be found out sooner or later.
 2. Tribulations find out the one who is not sincere. Matthew 13:21b. Notice the words, "for when tribulation." This means trials, problems, burdens, etc. This person joins the church and professes his faith in Christ but is not really sincere. Consequently, when trouble comes, he will fall by the wayside.
 3. Persecution will reveal a false believer. Matthew 13:21b. Notice the words, "or persecution." Notice that the persecution comes because of the Word of God. This person says he is saved but is not really born again. When criticism and persecution comes, he finds out it is not popular to be a Christian. He falls by the wayside.
 4. This person ends up becoming offended. Matthew 13:21, "...by and by he is offended." This is very interesting. He says he falls by the wayside because of something that makes him mad and no doubt he thinks this is so, but the real reason is that he was not genuinely converted in the first place. (Teacher, at this point, sprinkle a little dirt on the rock--not enough to where a seed could take root. Then put in the seed. Point out to the class that you cannot dig enough in the dirt to get the seed to take root.)

IV. THE SEED THAT FELL AMONG THE THORNS. Matthew 13:7, 22. This seed represents people who are genuinely converted but do not bear fruit for Jesus Christ. These folks are born again and will go to Heaven but receive no rewards. Notice the progression. First, the man that makes no profession; second, the man who makes a false profession; third, the man who is saved, but barely; and fourth, the man who is genuinely saved and bears fruit. See Matthew 13:23. Let us see why some do not bear fruit.

1. This man does not bear fruit because of the “care of this world.” See Matthew 13:22b. In other words, he was a Christian but has become so concerned about his material life that he does not ever reap the fullest in service for Jesus Christ. He is more interested in his job, his home, his friends, his possessions, his car, etc. than he is in his service for Christ. Hence, he is saved and will go to Heaven, but his rewards will be few because he did not use his talents for Jesus.
2. The second reason that people do not bear fruit is found in verse 22c, “and the deceitfulness of riches.” The word here does not mean “many riches,” but simply “riches, money, making money with which to buy things.” This reason and the aforementioned reason choke the Word, and he becomes unfruitful.
3. Notice the words in verse 22d, “and he becometh unfruitful.” The word “becometh” is very interesting. He is fruitful at first, but he gets so wrapped up in making money and being concerned with the cares of life that he becomes unfruitful. He is fruitful and then gradually, unfruitful. How many people are this way! They used to serve God, they used to do better, but they have become involved in material, secular matters so much until soul winning and bearing fruit mean very little. (Teacher, at this point, put the seed in the ground but have thorns and thistles to keep it from growing, and show how difficult it is for a fruitful plant to grow among thorns and thistles. Especially should we emphasize here the fact that Christians ought to be in the right environment. Here is a person who got in the wrong crowd, who ran with the thorns and thistles instead of with the fruit-bearing trees and plants, and he became unfruitful.)

V. SOME PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM THIS PARABLE.

1. This should be a warning to the unsaved church member. Remind your class that if there is one present who is a church member but not really saved, he should be saved now and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ask if he would be saved now. Sit with him in the service and walk the aisle with him.
2. This should be a warning to unfruitful Christians. There are probably some in your class who are saved but are running in the wrong crowd and are more concerned about the cares of the world than about the Word of Christ. Warn them of the loss of their rewards.
3. This parable should be a helpful explanation to soul winners. It teaches that we cannot win everybody, but we are to sow the Seed and try to win as many as we can. Anyone who has done much soul winning has dealt with each of these cases. This certainly should be an encouragement as well as an exhortation to all soul winners.

CONCLUSION: Ask the pupils which of the four kinds of soil they are. (Teacher, at this point, put the seed in the good ground and show how it can spring forth and bear fruit.) Read Matthew 13:23 and stress the fruitfulness which resulted in “the good ground.” Some of the class are no doubt unsaved and know it—lead them to Christ. Some are unsaved but have professed faith in Christ—lead them to Christ. Some are saved but not bearing fruit—lead them to a deeper fruit-bearing life, and some of the class are faithful fruit-bearing Christians—thank God for them.