Parables

Parable of the Four Soils

Matthew 13:1-23

**Intro:**

Jesus used many illustrations, or Parables, when speaking to the crowds. A parable compares something familiar to something unfamiliar.

It helps us understand spiritual truth by using everyday objects and relationships.

Parables compel listeners to discover truth, while at the same time concealing the truth to those too lazy or too stubborn to see it.

To those who are honestly searching, the truth becomes clear.

Matthew 13:34 – *“34 Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. 35 So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:
"I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world."*
This comes from **Psalm 78**.

Ps 78:2 - *“I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter hidden things, things from of old.”*

**Warning:** We must be careful not to read too much into parables, forcing them to say what they do not mean. All parables have one meaning unless otherwise specified by Jesus.

**Big Idea: Two Fold:**

1. **Encourage spiritual “sowers”** – those who teach, preach, witness and lead others.

2. **Challenge listeners** to cultivate the soil of the heart.

Read the Parable: Mt. 13:1-9

Read the Interpretation: Mt. 13:18-23

**I.** **This parable should encourage those of you who sow spiritual seed! (V. 8)**

The Farmer sowed good seed, but not all the seed sprouted, and even the plants that grew had varying yields.

The point is the SEED is GOOD but the quality of the soil varies.

***8****Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred sixty or thirty times what was sown*.

Don’t be discouraged if you do not always see results as you faithfully Teach, Raise Kids, Serve…

Belief cannot be forced to follow a mathematical formula (ie. A 4:1 ratio of seeds planted to seeds sprouted)

Rather it’s a MIRACLE of God’s Holy Spirit as he uses your words to lead others to him.

I Cor. 3:6-7- *“ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.”*

Keep throwing the seed! Keep speaking into the lives of your kids, keep loving your neighbor, keep being a faithful witness at work….you may not see the growth immediately and in some cases never see it…but keep planting!

**Trans:** Soil plays a major role in the fruitfulness of the seed.

As a teen worked on a farm…had to pick up rocks in the field…all day…we had to prepare the field for seed.

Some soil is ready and receptive…other soil is partially ready…other soil is infested with weeds, some soil is shallow...

The point is – The same seed (Good) falls on four different types of soil and produces different results. People respond differently because they are in different states of readiness

I want us to personalize the parable and look at the soil of our own hearts this morning…what kind of soil are you?

**1. Roadside Soil:**

*Matthew 13:4 “As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.”*

**V. 18** – the message of the kingdom is not understood...

When it is not understood….the enemy (always ready to pounce on you) seizes that opportunity and snatches away what was sown….well before it ever gets a chance to germinate…

**2. Shallow – Rocky Soil:**

**Matthew 13:5-6** *“Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.”*

**V. 20** – *“The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy.
21 But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.”*

This seed springs up quickly but is scorched by the Sun and dies…

Some people receive the Word with joy…are attracted to the worship music, the fellowship, the friendliness of the people, the sense of mission/purpose….but when the hard times come….TROUBLE (Conflict) or PERSECUTION (Criticism at Work or family) BOOM….They QUIT! The Seed shrivels up and dies!

*“…withered because they had no root.”* – I’ve learned that the only way to get roots is to Persevere….stick with the growing Cycles…NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, Give up!

Receiving the Word with Joy is like coming up to the boundary of the Kingdom…you really like what you see/feel…

But if you don’t step over the line (the Boundary) you never really enter the Kingdom…stepping over the line means – “I’m following God come good and bad!”

**3. Thorn-Infested Soil**

**Matthew 13:7** – *“Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.”*

**V. 22** – *“The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.”*

Life is full of opportunities to worry:

Family, Kids, health, finances….

Some People just never get past worry – and today the medicated up, physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted!

Worry will kill you Physically and Spiritually.

At a minimum it will stunt your spiritual growth!

**Jesus Antidote to Worry:**

**Matthew 6:25-34 – Read**

*“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?****26****Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?****27****Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?*

***28****“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.****29****Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.****30****If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?****31****So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’****32****For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.****33****But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.****34****Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

**Paul’s antidote to Worry:**

**Philippians 4:6-7** *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

**Life has a way of swamping you**….and when you are swamped…when the proverbial “boat is sinking” You become vulnerable to…Take things into your own hands (Prov. 3)

**Money begins to charm you**…it seems to be the answer….and you subtly become deceived into thinking that leaving your small group for a PT job is ok. Sunday AM Security Guard Job is the best thing for your family….

**Worries of Life & Deceitfulness of Wealth Choke the seed** and it becomes Unfruitful!

**Distracting Worries:** Is that how you want to live/define your life?

**4. Fertile Soil:**

Matthew 13:8 ***“Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop--a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”***

V. 23 *– “But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."*

This soil is ready and receptive for the Word of God.

**Good Soil is cultivated:**

* Hard soil is broken up.
* Rocks are removed.
* Thorns & Weeds don’t take control

**Jeremiah 4:3** *“This is what the LORD says to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem: "Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns.”*

**Hosea 10:12** – *“Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.*”

**Altar Call:**

Come to this Altar this morning and break up the hard soil of your heart!

Throw out the rocks of unforgiveness, anger, resentment, unbelief!

Surrender the Worries/Fear that are choking your spiritual life!

Step over the Boundary this morning…enter the Kingdom!