

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER *MATTHEW 13:1-23*

Let's read Matthew 13:1-9

Before we discuss the parable let's set some ground rules for understanding them correctly...

- A parable was a common teaching method of Jewish rabbis (Jesus spoke about 40).
 - A parable is a story to illustrate ONE SPECIFIC POINT (Most are comparisons). Be careful not to over-interpret as many fall into the habit of doing.
 - Always interpret in the light of the rest of Scripture.
1. What's your impression of parables? Are they easy to understand or difficult? Why do you think Jesus might have used them? (**Matthew 13:10-17**).

 2. Does Jesus want to harden the hearts of those who will not believe?

The Parable of the Sower explained...

3. This appears to be the first parable Jesus told because he explains it in verses 18-23. Let's read those verses... It would seem that it would be one of the easier parables to understand. But it is one of the most misinterpreted. Which of the choices below serves as the main/only point of the parable?
 - God's Word is sometimes effective in creating faith and sustaining it.
 - Some people are more receptive to God's Word because they are better soil.
 - Believe and grow deeply in God's Word planted in you.
 - By the Spirit's power, believe and grow deeply in God's Word planted in you.
 - People respond to God's Word in different ways.
 - There are things in this life that can separate us from God's Word.
 - We should figure out what kind of soil people are as we give them God's Word.
4. What should every Christian pray that God make of him or her?

5. What are the three dangers Jesus speaks of? Can you come up with real life situations pertaining to each one of the three?

6. What does Jesus mean when he says, "Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him" (MT 13:12b)?

7. Does a Christian who is the good soil not have to deal with temptation, persecution, or worries? Is that why a he or she produces much fruit?

8. Two other Gospels contain this same parable (Mark 4:1-20 and Luke 8:4-15). In the explanation of the parable in Luke the phrase "they believe for a while" is stated (rocky soil). What teaching found in some Christian churches does that refute?

9. In light of the parable, why are we blessed? (Consider verses 16-17)

10. What's one thing we can keep in mind after we have been faithful in witnessing to someone, and they don't believe? (Especially if we begin to beat up on ourselves.)

Three distinct progressions in Jesus' use of parables...

- 1) The initial series of parables followed the Pharisees' charge that Jesus was really an agent of Satan as we earlier discussed (MT 12:24). The parables Jesus told during this period of his ministry emphasized the elementary truths concerning God's kingdom and especially truths surrounding entering the kingdom.
- 2) The second series occur during the period of time after his Transfiguration when the Pharisees' resistance to him continues and intensifies. These parables still talk about entering God's kingdom but with an additional element of warning and judgment.
- 3) The third series occur after the Pharisees plot to kill Jesus. He told them shortly before his death. Their main theme is judgment.

Homework: Luke 10:25-37 – What's the main point of the parable of the Good Samaritan?