#  Sermon Parable of the Sower and the Seed

# The Soil Check Process

Preached August 2021

# Matthew 13:1-23

**3And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:**

Parables – comparison of one thing with another; likeness, an earthly story with a heavenly meaning; a placing of one thing by the side of another.

When you plant and are scattering seeds, it will fall in various places. Some on the wayside -- kind of soil is hard packed. This is important to note….that seed fell even in hard places.

* Birds we know will feed on seeds easily exposed and not covered up by the soil.

 Stony places are areas where rocks are in the way. The stones were already there and taking up space so there is not as much soil available. The seeds will shoot up quickly but they don’t have enough good soil to produce deep roots. Deep roots ae needed to reach moisture.

* You can’t really tell that there is a problem the sun hits them.

Thorns are the third soil type. You get results and growth but there are thorns which eventually outgrow the good plants and it chokes them out and these plant don’t produce what was expected. I’ve seen this in the natural in my yard where we had an apple tree and there grew up some vines which literally overran the tree and it stopped producing apples and just a short time later….it died.

**8But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.**

The story continues with the fourth field where the seed fell on good ground. These seeds when planted in the right soil produced what was expected. There were varying degrees of success; some plants produced more than others but all in this soil were successful. Note this, there are no unsuccessful plants in this soil….all of them produce.

Let’s pause for a minute and see in the story, the characteristics of good soil is:

* Not hard packed, broken up so the seeds can be covered.
* No stones in the way an enough soil and depth so roots can grow deep.
* No weeds or thorns to compete with the plants.

**18Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.**

Mark 4:13

**13And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?**

Jesus ends the parable with a call for those hearing this teaching, to fully understand and not just listen, but hear and apply. In other words, this is more than a story. In Mark, Jesus states why this parable is so important….if we don’t understand this parable…will have a hard time with the other parables.

**19When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.**

Jesus breaks down the parable using the natural example….referring to something they would be familiar with, and now shows how it reveals spiritual truths.

Wayside – represents people who hear the word and good news of the Kingdom, but they don’t understand what they heard.

Stony places – represents people who get excited when they hear the word. They may be in the amen corner. But they don’t have a good foundation….they are just not that deep. They have early success. But Christ states that they don’t last due to tribulations or rough times that result because of the very word they received and after a while they are offended. It means when pressure or problems arise because of the word, they stumble.

* What does this look like today? I can hear a good word, like Isaiah 26:3, and apply this immediately and experience God’s peace. But when tough times come and I focus more on the problem than keeping my mind on Him, and I stop trusting Him, then I may hang in there for a little while, but my growth and progress won’t last.

Thorns – represents people who hear the word and they produce or were capable of producing fruit. You can see their accomplishments and success in the Kingdom. But Jesus explains, that the cares of this life and this world competes for their attention. The word that they had applied previously now gets choked out and instead of producing fruit for the Kingdom, they start focusing on the world and riches….they become unfruitful.

* This is a dangerous place for Christians to be in my opinion. Because there is understanding here and success, but they become deceived. What are some of the things today in the world which can cause the word to be choked out in believers causing them to be unfruitful? Money, power, influence, pride, culture, politics, government, etc.
* Your earlier success doesn’t guarantee you remain fruitful. There is a difference between faith and faithfulness.
	+ Just because you say amen on Sunday, doesn’t mean you are still in the right ground/soil by Thursday. Why is that?
	+ Why is it that some kids do well in school early, but somewhere along the way, they rebel and are no longer good students? Some remain strong students but some do not. Why? I think they either fail because subjects get harder with more pressure and they fail because of the earlier expectations, can’t handle it, are offended and fail (stony). Perhaps they shift their focus from grades and being successful, to chasing different priorities that the world uses to deceive them (thorns).

Good Ground – this ground represents those Christians who do three key things.

1. They hear the word. Faith comes by hearing the word.
2. They understand the word. They understand the truth, purpose and meaning of what has been taught.
3. They apply the word by faith and it produces results and success. They accomplish what the word was designed to do. They don’t fail.
4. Let me add a fourth key thing….they don’t stop. They keep producing. I wonder how they keep producing. They must keep repeating the same steps over and over. I wonder how often they have to complete these steps in order to be continuously producing fruit and success. Daily!

Key Points:

* Nowhere is it stated that the seed is at fault; it is the ground and the receiver where the problem and differences lie.
* While some sad points, it should be an encouragement to believers that our work in spreading the seed is not in vain. Not all will get it; but some will. Are you a Sower? Where do you get your seed?
* Don’t just hear the word, get an understanding and know how to apply it.
* Just because you start out on the wrong ground, doesn’t mean you have to stay there.
* Just because you start out on good ground, doesn’t mean you will stay there.
* What does the ground in this parable represent today? We are not talking about a physical heart here, we are instead talking about the mind.
	+ Therefore, the ground represents a state of mind in my opinion.

What is the process to ensure I’m planted in the good soil?

In the natural, I experienced a process, reference my mom’s garden.

* I had to breakup the ground. The ground needed to be broken….first step in the process.
* If I found rocks in the soil, I had to remove them.
* Had to get the weeds out.
* The soil looked different after this process. Then the seed was planted.
* Mom had me add fertilizer.
* Didn’t stop there, I had to periodically go back and pull weeds; daily Mom would check the garden and would water the ground.

Likewise, there is a spiritual process we need to follow to ensure we are in good soil. Without this process, we cannot produce Kingdom fruit.

1. We must be broken and humble. Daily picking up the cross. What does that mean – acknowledging I need God. It is surrendering to Him.
2. We must repent. It means turning away and changing your mind about holding on to things you need to let go. It is removing those rocks and stones from your mind.
	1. The hurt from a rocky relationship – removed
	2. The desire to throw stones at others you don’t like or agree with – gone
	3. Trusting in your self – dismissed
	4. Just as God removed the Children of Israel from Egypt we have to leave some things behind….these stones can’t follow you into the good soil.
	5. Add some fertilizer after the seed is planted. All that old dead stuff from your past will work.
3. Focus on your new resurrected life in Christ. Placing trust in Him to produce results. When I do the first two steps, by faith I’m trusting God to start producing something new and different. God can and wants to use me to produce Kingdom fruit when I’m in the good ground.
4. Use living water on your ground. Trust in the Holy Spirit to provide relief and strength. This means doing those things that make God proud of what you are producing…..for His glory.
5. Help others to find good ground; share the seed and results with others.
6. Go back and check the soil to make sure nothing else is competing with your Kingdom fruit. Don’t fall into the temptation of the world or your ground/mind may become unfruitful.
	1. I Googled several soil test kits on the market. But you don’t need Google, the Holy Spirit is the best soil test kit you have….and it doesn’t cost you anything. Already paid for.
7. Enjoy the harvest to come.

How often do I need to follow this process to ensure I’m in position to produce Kingdom fruit? Daily.

Transplanting tips

1.) The sooner you make a needed move, the better. Recently planted plants move a lot better than big ones with well-established roots.

2.) Timing is important. Transplanting in spring or in early fall is less stressful on plants than moving them in the heat of summer or in winter when roots can't penetrate the frozen ground. Transplanting early in the morning or early in the evening is also better than transplanting in the middle of a hot, sunny day.

4.) Get the plant in the new location as soon as possible.

5.) Keep the plant well-watered after the move.

It starts with the soil. It starts with you.