

Sermon Parable of the Sower – Soil Analysis – The Hard Folks

Preached at Cloverdale Church 9/24/2023

Matthew 13:1-23

³ And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; ⁴ And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: ⁵ Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: ⁶ And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: ⁸ But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. ⁹ Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

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.

The natural aspects of the story we see four basic elements:

- The Sower
- The seed
- The fowl
- The ground – four different types of soil.
 - Only one type of ground is called good. Only one ground harvests fruit

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 soil is not deep enough. The stones were already there and taking up space so there is not as much soil available. Deep roots are needed to reach moisture.

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.

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.

Mark 4:13

13 And 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.

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When 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. 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet 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. 22 He 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. 23 But 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.

The Kingdom process and perspective. The Kingdom arrives and operates like this. It is through the word and how it is received.

The key is in defining the natural elements into spiritual application and understanding.

- Anyone who hears the word – so the ground must equate to the heart/mind of a person. Your mind is the ground.
- The seed represents the Word of the Kingdom.
- The fowl must represent agents of the enemy. The devil uses others to keep us from our destiny in Him.

Analysis of the first ground or the wayside – the wayside defined is the edge or border of the road.

- They hear, but they don't really understand. They are hardheaded and not broken-hearted about the Gospel.

Key Questions:

Why put the seed out there if they are not ready to receive it? Because God is not willing for any to perish but that all would repent (2 Peter 3:9).

- Matthew 24:14, Matthew 28:19 – God wants the gospel preached to all nations. It is His plan.



- We are not wasting our time; understand that when we share the seed, not everyone will receive it.

Why would the wayside mind take time to hear in the first place? They must know they are in need. Just because you are in need doesn't mean you are broken and ready to change. They are on the edge of a possible break-through.

Why does the wayside mind hear but not understand?

- Sometimes how we (Sower) throws it out there can impact how the wayside mind receives it. We have to understand where folk's mind is when we are planting seed.
- They may not be hearing what they want to hear. They are stuck on the sidelines, stuck in this mindset where they just want to hear something that will help them stay in the same place and with the same mind.
- Survival mode, not really trying to try God's way, trying to keep doing things their way....they are just hard.
- Recognize they are in need, but don't understand they need to change.

Why does the devil come? The devil doesn't want to see us be successful; doesn't want us to serve God righteously; hates God so he hates what God loves....and God loves us. Simply put, the devil wants us to serve him rather than God, so he will work to keep us in bondage...he is the ultimate hater.

- The devil wants to keep us in the hard ground and steal the word from us.
- There must be something about the word of the Kingdom that the devil knows, if you ever truly understand the word, it would set you free, please God, fulfill His plan for your life; promote the Kingdom and do severe damage to his kingdom.

How does the devil come at us?

Let's see how the Bible documents his previous attacks.

Eden Sneak - Casts doubt on the word and the application in your life.

- Twists the word
- Asks questions not because he wants to pursue the truth, but wants you to not know the truth. The motivation behind the questions is wicked and no good.
- God gave them the word of the Kingdom so they would be fruitful; the hater comes to steal and destroy the plan of God on their life.

The devil attacks as outlined in 1 John 2:16 (using the world against God's plan)

- Lust of the flesh
- Pride of life – take the truth of the word and twists it so that God doesn't get the glory
- Lust of the eye

Desert Deception – asks questions to Cast doubt on who you are in God and His plan for you.

He accuses us.

He tries to keep us in the dark. If we can see the light and know how to walk, we will lead others and share the light.



Wants us to stay in bondage (Spiritual Egypt). If the Son sets us free, we will have a story that will set others free.

A deceiver – works through deception and disguise (2 Cor 11:13-15)

Afflicts and oppresses.

David Jeremiah adds:

- After a great spiritual experience – Jesus baptism
- At the beginning of a new spiritual endeavor – wilderness temptation
- When we are physically vulnerable
- When we are alone
- From an unexpected source
- He always comes back

What does the wayside state of mind look like today?

- I hear the word, I hear ya' preacher, but I don't know if this will work for me.
- I don't see how I can ever recover from my past.
- I can't let my guard down to trust God because so many people have let me down.
- I gotta be hard to defend myself.
- I have a lot of resources and I can do this on my own; I don't see the need for change.
- I hear you, but I'm not ready to change.
- I'll listen and hang around, but it doesn't really take all of that to serve God; this is good enough.
- Somebody just ticked me off; someone just broke my heart; somebody just disrespected me, so I have to have a hard response in return.
 - I'm not going out like that; I'm going to protect my image in the world and who I am on social media, etc.
- I know Him, but I can't take Jesus into this situation.

Caution – just because you are not there today, doesn't mean you can't be hard-headed in another area of your life. You can trust Jesus in one area and be hard-headed in another. The devil looks for these openings.

Note: You don't have to be down and out to be hard. You can be rich in the world and still be hard against the Kingdom and outside of the plan of God.

The enemy is coming to steal your joy and ADT cannot protect you like G-O-D.

How ya' living?

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.

What is the process to ensure I'm planted in the good soil? Follow the steps.

Sermon Parable of the Sower – Soil Analysis Part 2 – The Stoned Folks

Preached at Cloverdale Church 10/8 and 10/15/2023

Matthew 13:1-23

³ And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; ⁴ And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: ⁵ Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: ⁶ And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: ⁸ But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. ⁹ Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

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.

The natural aspects of the story we see four basic elements:

- The Sower – represents Jesus and believers spreading the word.
- The seed – the Word of the Kingdom.
- The fowl – the devil and his helpers.
- The ground – four different types of soil – the mind (how each of us processes the word in our heart)
 - Only one type of ground is called good. Only one ground harvests fruit

Last week we discussed the first soil or the wayside or hardheaded mind set. This is the mind that hears but doesn't understand how to apply the word of God. The devil quickly comes and attacks to steal the word from their mind—before they can understand.

Stony places are areas where rocks are in the way. The soil is not deep enough. The stones were already there and taking up space so there is not as much soil available. Deep roots are needed to reach moisture.

Let's take a look at Jesus; breakdown of what the elements of the parable mean and how it applies to us today.

¹⁸ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

¹⁹ When 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. ²⁰ But he that received the seed into stony places, the same

is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; ²¹ Yet 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.**

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.

As we discussed last week in our analysis of the first hard soil, the Kingdom has a process and perspective. The Kingdom arrives and operates like this. It is through the word and how it is received.

The key is in defining the natural elements into spiritual application and understanding.

- The ground must equate to the heart/mind of a person. Your mind is the ground.
- The seed represents the Word of the Kingdom.

Analysis of the stony ground is there is not much earth to begin with. In the natural stones in the soil makes it harder for plant growth in general.

Research results – rocky ground can inhibit plant roots from getting proper nutrients. Large rocks provide little to no nutritional value to the soil and make it difficult for plant roots to spread. There are some benefits like soil erosion and drainage, but overall, stones restrict spread of roots which limit water uptake.

So in the natural, the seed fell in stony places which took up space. Because it didn't take long for the roots to develop, the plants sprung up quick but didn't have roots deep enough to reach moisture, so the sun burned the growth up and they died.

In the spiritual realm, what does this mean?

The word enters the mind and produces immediate positive results. The understanding is better than in the hard-headed mindset, but not deep enough in their understanding to survive tribulation and problems because of the word they received. They can only last for a short time and then they stop producing, fall away or are enticed to sin.

We can easily understand that this mindset lacks faith when challenges come because the word of the Kingdom doesn't settle deeply in their mind.

Seed = Kingdom message

Root = Our understanding; the depth and strength of faith of a person

Rocks/Stones = something already in your mind when you heard the word and received it. It may be a memory, and experience. Something you may be carrying in your heart/mind.

- In the natural, the stones are already in the ground. What is already in your mind that may get in the way of you standing on the promises?

Sun = tribulation or persecution



Moisture = Holy Spirit

Questions:

What are some rocks in our lives that make it difficult for us to trust God and stand in faith during difficult times?

- Memories, hurt, fear, doubt, failures, pride, etc. These things hinder your understanding of the word.
- The stones were already there, you just didn't know you had a problem with them until you are tested and face trials as a result of the word.

Why is the sun necessary for plant growth? Why are trials and persecution needed for our spiritual growth?

- Sunlight is vital for plant growth. Photosynthesis provides energy.
- Tribulations and challenging experiences contribute to spiritual growth and maturity.
- Develops qualities and faith in believers.

1 Peter 1:3-9

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

James 1:2-4,12

²My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

¹²Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Romans 5:3-5

³And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, ^[c]character; and character, hope. ⁵Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Matthew 4:1

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

- Jesus shows us how to effectively use the word to defeat the devil and stand during trials.

What do plants need when the sun gets hotter? Plants can become stressed under intense heat and require additional care to survive. Shade, water is needed.

Water is a representation of the Holy Spirit.

John 7:37-39

³⁷On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

How can you deal with a stoned mind?

Follow the steps. Gain a deeper understanding of the Kingdom process, how this works. Have the mind of Christ. Understand this parable. Go deeper.

- Emotions alone will not help you stand.
- Remove the rocks.

Seek understanding!

Knowing is static, referring to discrete facts, while understanding is active, describing the ability to analyze and place those facts in context to form a big picture.

Knowing is an awareness. Understanding is the interpretation, processing, and then application of that awareness.

Will the devil show up here, like he does in the wayside mind? Yes.

Why does the devil come? The devil doesn't want to see us be successful; doesn't want us to serve God righteously; hates God so he hates what God loves...and God loves us. Simply put, the devil wants us to serve him rather than God, so he will work to keep us in bondage...he is the ultimate hater.

- The devil doesn't mind you getting excited about God, or coming to church; but he doesn't want you to stand on the word.
- There must be something about the word of the Kingdom that the devil knows, if you ever truly understand the word, it would set you free, please God, fulfill His plan for your life; promote the Kingdom and do severe damage to his kingdom.



- The Kingdom message can produce a life changing miracle. But the effectiveness is impacted by your state of mind and depth of understanding (the soil where it lands).

How does the devil come at us?

The devil attacks as outlined in 1 John 2:16 (using the world against God's plan)

- Lust of the flesh
- Pride of life – take the truth of the word and twists it so that God doesn't get the glory
- Lust of the eye

Notice Matthew 4 and the temptation of Christ, the same pattern is used by the devil (and also in Eden).

What about strongholds? You can be successful overall in several areas but still have a stoned mind and attitude in other areas where you lack understanding.

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

Sermon Parable of the Sower – Soil Analysis – The Unconscious Mind

Preached at Cloverdale Church 10/22/2023

Matthew 13:1-23

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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.

The natural aspects of the story we see four basic elements in the hard-headed soil:

- The Sower – Christ, whoever spreads the Kingdom message
- The seed = Kingdom message
- The fowl – devil and his agents
- The ground – four different types of soil (states of mind)

We added several other elements when analyzing the Stoned Mindset:

- Root = Our understanding; the depth and strength of faith of a person
- Rocks/Stones = something already in your mind when you heard the word and received it. It may be a memory, or an experience. Something you may be carrying in your heart/mind.
- In the natural, the stones are already in that will get in the ground. What is already in your mind that may get in the way of you standing on the promises?
- Sun = tribulation or persecution
- Moisture = Holy Spirit

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.

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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.

The Kingdom process and perspective. The Kingdom arrives and operates like this. It is through the word and how it is received and applied in our lives...this is how the Kingdom gains dominion.

The key is in defining the natural elements into spiritual application and understanding.

Analysis of the third mindset or ground – The choked out unconscious mind.

In the natural world:

- Seed falls among thorns.
- Thorns spring up with the growth from the seed. The thorns are allowed to grow up with the plants.
- Thorns eventually choke out the plants.
- The bigger they get, the harder it is to remove them.
- Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines a weed as a plant that is not valued where it is growing and is usually of vigorous growth — especially one that tends to overgrow or choke out more desirable plants.
- Weeds compete with plants for resources.

The thorns or weeds must have already been in the soil. They rob the soil of nutrients and water that the good plants need. Weeds produce nothing of value. The thorns are hidden in the ground until they germinate and then they spring up.

In the natural, the seed has success (there is nothing wrong with the seed). The plants spring up as expected. They are on the path to producing fruit. But they never make it to the intended purpose. They are intercepted and fail to produce good fruit.

The spiritual analysis is as follows:

Thorns = cares of this world, including riches. Money and riches must be a tool to deceive believers from bearing fruit.

Seed = the word of the Kingdom. So, Mark 4:19 describes the thorns as choking out the word.

The Unconscious Mindset – represents people who hear the word, and they produce 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. It is not just riches, but it is the lust or unhealthy desire for the things of the world that become the primary focus of the believer.

- This is a dangerous place for Christians to be in my opinion. Because there is understanding here and success, but they become deceived. They may be unconscious as to the danger they are in.
- 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.
- Notice they are fruitful and successful at one point because they become later, unfruitful.
- 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?

Add the word to the weeds or their current life and as a result, God's word takes a lower priority.

Key Questions:

What does this mindset look like today?

- They are people who know the word and have a higher degree of understanding of the word than the hard head and the stoned mind.
- They will likely be at church and Bible study. They will have a resume of some success.
- However, their primary focus will shift from God to the cares of the world.
 - Pursuing worldly lusts and desires becomes first in front of God and the word.

What are some examples of pursuing the cares of the world?

- Worries of the world; safety, success, status, holding onto the stuff, etc.
- Promotions, jobs and careers, money, relationships, cars, houses, riches, power, fame, etc.
- Anything not of God, selfish wants.

How do these cares choke out the word? What does that look like today?

- Diverts time, resources and energy away from the things of the Kingdom.
- No time for the word because I'm pursuing worldly things.
- We become unconscious to learning and gaining a deeper understanding of the word; blinded by our previous success.

- I call this the unconscious mindset as a reference when a wrestler places a choke or sleeper hold on their opponent and if they maintain the hold too long, the person being choked will fall unconscious or even die.
- I think there are many unconscious believers in this mindset.
- We limit or produce less of the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control).

Why are riches deceitful? How?

- You make it a priority because you think you need riches to be successful in this life.
- You may feel shame when you have less than someone else.
- You may feel proud when you have more than others.
- You may feel that your gain of riches is a result of your efforts alone.
- Riches fool us into thinking we have it made when we possess it, when in fact pursuing it will have us not pursue everlasting fruit.
- We go after a good thing the wrong way. Matthew 6:33.
- Matthew 6:24 – Can't serve two masters.

Just like thorns in the natural, the pursuit of riches and the world competes for resources and time that should be spent on the things of the Kingdom and helping to bear Kingdom fruit.

When I placed my primary emphasis on my job, career, and money, it choked out my desire for the deeper things of God. I became unconscious to the problem and how it was causing me to become unfruitful in areas of my life.

Note: I don't think there is anything wrong with having nice things, possessing riches, pursuing a career, making money, etc. The problem lies when the pursuit of these things becomes your top priority rather than the word of God in your life. You pursue them in your own strength rather than doing it in a manner that glorifies God and relies on and trusts in Him.

Will the devil show up here, like he does in the other minds? Yes.

How do we know this? Our personal experience and the Kingdom examples in the word. If we understand the word, we can understand how to prepare against this mindset.

Why does the devil come? The devil doesn't want to see us be successful; doesn't want us to serve God righteously; hates God so he hates what God loves....and God loves us. Simply put, the devil wants us to serve him rather than God, so he will work to bring us back into bondage...he is the ultimate hater.

- The devil doesn't mind you getting excited about God, or coming to church; or being fruitful, but he doesn't want you to stand on the word or keep God first. He wants to choke you out.
- There must be something about the word of the Kingdom that the devil knows, if you ever truly understand the word, it would set you free, please God, fulfill His plan for your life; promote the Kingdom and do severe damage to his kingdom.
 - The Kingdom message can produce a life changing miracle. But the effectiveness is impacted by your state of mind and depth of understanding (the soil where it lands).



How does the devil come at us?

The devil attacks as outlined in 1 John 2:16 (using the world against God's plan)

- Lust of the flesh
- Pride of life
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A deceiver – works through deception and disguise (2 Cor 11:13-15)

Caution – just because you are not there today, doesn't mean you can't be hard-headed in another area of your life. You can trust Jesus in one area and be hard-headed in another. The devil looks for these openings.

How ya' living?

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.
- 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.

How can you deal with an unconscious mind?

Follow the steps. Gain a deeper understanding of the Kingdom process, how this works. Have the mind of Christ. Understand this parable. Go deeper.

- Watch and stay alert. Recognize when the weeds pop-up.....they are coming.
- Remove thorns. Remove them early before they get too large.

Seek understanding.

Knowing is static, referring to discrete facts, while understanding is active, describing the ability to analyze and place those facts in context to form a big picture.

Knowing is an awareness. Understanding is the interpretation, processing, and then application of that awareness.

Check the seed. Weeds come in through seeds.

- Lawn under-watered
- Cut grass too low
- Soil not healthy
- Soil compacted
- Not enough sunlight
- Lawn service is weak



Sermon Parable of the Sower – Soil Analysis – A Beautiful Mind

Preached at Cloverdale Church 10/29/2023

Matthew 13:1-23

³ And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; ⁴ And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: ⁵ Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: ⁶ And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: ⁸ But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. ⁹ Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Jesus is teaching them in the form of a parable. A natural story that we can relate to which provides a spiritual understanding and application. It is placing an earthly story side by side for a deeper spiritual revelation. This means the parables are important to understand because they not only open up your spiritual understanding of the Kingdom of God, but they can help to convert you to believe in Christ and be forgiven and redeem you from death to everlasting life....converted to new life.

When you plant and are scattering seeds, it will fall in various places.

We have looked at three previous mindsets or three different ways people process and apply the word of the Kingdom.

The Hardheaded Mind – hear the word but have no understanding of how to apply it or how the word works. They don't experience the transformational change the seed/word can have.

The Stoned Mind people hear the word and understand enough to get started. They follow the first three steps of the process and the transformation process begins. However, they don't have enough understanding to know how to use the word when trials and persecution comes. They don't know how to hang in there and use the power of the Holy Spirit to keep trusting God and the word. Even though they start out great, they will quickly fall away and produce nothing. The problems and the stones from their past prevent them from being able to understand deeply today.

The Unconscious Mind are people who have a good understanding of how the word works. They understand the transformation and are further along in the process of producing fruit. However, they become unaware of the thorns. They start pursuing cares of this life and these worldly options draw attention, time, and resources away from the things of the Kingdom. As a result, they are unaware that the transformed life they started to have in Christ is choked out and they don't produce the fruit expected for the kingdom. They are unaware that these cares pose as a distraction to your development in the Kingdom.

Today we analyze the good ground or the beautiful state of mind as it relates to understanding the word of the Kingdom.

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 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.

¹⁸ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

Finally, Jesus starts to explain the meaning of this key parable.

Matthew

²³ But 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.

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

Good Ground – The Beautiful Mind – this mindset 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. The transformative power of the seed changes their lives and produces fruit.
4. Let me add a fourth key thing....they don't stop at just one successful moment. 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!

Notice something else about the Beautiful Mind....Jesus never mentions the problems of the other soils in this one.

- There is no evidence of hard packed ground.
- There is no evidence of stones being in this ground.....so roots can grow deep.
- There is no mention of weeds or thorns to compete with the plants.

In the natural, no matter how nice the lawn or garden looks, you still have to watch to ensure that the ground stays broken, stones are removed, and weeds are plucked up early.

How it works in the spiritual realm

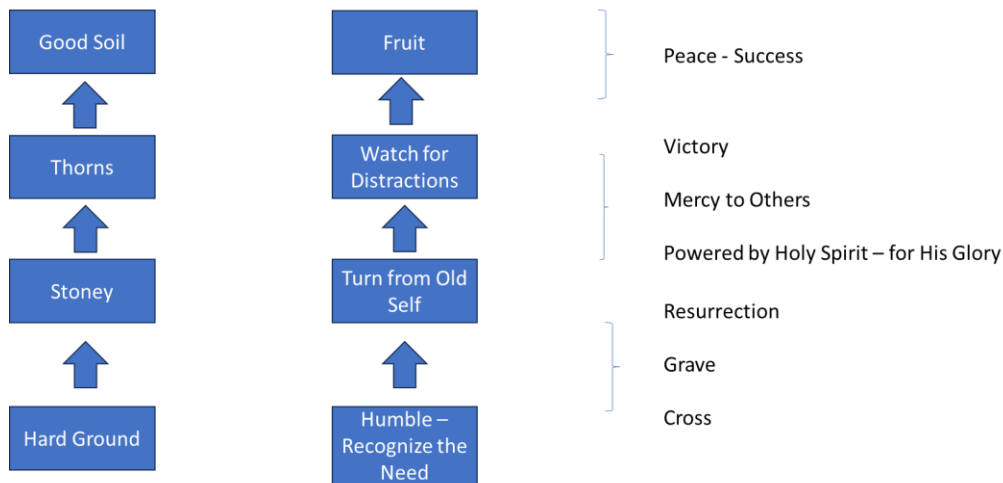
- The Kingdom is a process that is repeated and God gains more control in our lives through this process.

- The parable of the Sower seems to follow a similar process. As you move through each mindset, you grow in maturity.
 - First, you receive the word of the Kingdom in your mind and you hold onto it. Seek understanding. You develop the need and desire to understand how the word works.
 - Next, you remove the obstacles in your mind and you turn from trusting in these stones and habits, and turning to trusting in the word of God by faith. The transformation process begins as the word takes root in your mind and you receive greater understanding. The Holy Spirit starts to guide you so you don't turn those stones into bread. You don't rely on the stones or your power, you understand and apply the Holy Spirit to guide you by faith.
 - Next phase, you are producing fruit. You hear and receive the word, you understand the word, you receive the word with joy, you know how to use trials to grow stronger and operate under the power of the Holy Spirit, you are on the look out for weeds and distractions to ensure that God is always first everyday.
 - You produce fruit for the Kingdom and for His glory. You don't compete with other people or ministries in the same field if they produce more or less than you do.

The Maturity Model

Side by Side Comparison – Maturity Process

What works in the natural applies in the Spiritual Realm



Note: You don't just step into the good ground in the natural. You have to first till the ground, remove the stones and watch for weeds competing with the growth. Then you arrive at good ground. It is clearly a process. The Kingdom grows like this, following the same process. Our spiritual growth works the same way....it is the same process....follow the steps. It is a continuous process we must follow daily.

Question – what does the fruit they produce look like? What does Christ mean by fruit?

- Fruit of our labor, where we produce more than what we started with for the Kingdom.
- Evangelism – helping people find Christ and get in the right ground/mindset so the seed can perform its transformative work in their lives (John 4:35-36).
- The Fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5).
- Christian character, conduct, converts.
- The outcome we expect from the word of God.
- Romans 14:17 - For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Summary Points:

- Nowhere is it stated that the seed is at fault; it is the ground and the receiver where the problem and differences lie. The problem is often us.
- 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.

Beware of strongholds. You may be in the good ground and producing fruit for the Kingdom in most areas, but there may be some areas of your life where God doesn't yet have dominion. Surrender these areas to Him by following the same steps as the word of the Kingdom addresses these areas.

Watch for opportunities to bear fruit.