

**Sowing the Seed**  
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Good morning, Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

**Matthew 13:1-9**

- 1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.
- 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.
- 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 a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.**
- 9 **Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.**

Today we enter the amazing world of the parables of the Bible.

Before we get into what the Lord is sending to us, His Church, today, let me give you a heads up about parables and those who would preach them.

Parables are probably the most commonly abused and misrepresented of all the scriptures; the reason being that they are designed by the Lord, on purpose, so that most cannot understand them.

Thus, something you may not understand in the first place can be more easily misrepresented by those choosing to do so.

Jesus tells us this as we read on; and He goes on to tell us why.

### **Matthew 13:10-15**

- 10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?
- 11 He answered and said unto them, **Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.**
- 12 **For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.**
- 13 **Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.**

- 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:
- 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and **their eyes they have closed**; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

We preach the Word of God; the Word is going forth right now as I speak.

Most of you will picture in your mind this sower going forth and you will picture the various environments into which the seed falls; yet some may not see what Jesus is showing us.

All of you will hear it spoken with your ears, but some may not really hear it nor understand it; even when it is explained.

Jesus says this is **because their eyes they have closed**. If you have the power to close your eyes to the scriptures, it seems reasonable to me that you could also choose to open them.

This I pray that you will do right now; open your eyes; open your heart to what the Lord has to say to us today.

What do you have to lose? You may still do with it what you will, but at least you might just understand where you are in this picture; because **you are in this picture.**

As we read on, we get to hear the Master Teacher Himself explain to us the parable of the sower.

### Matthew 13:18-23

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 endureth 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 a hundredfold some sixty, some thirty.

As I said earlier, parables are not the easiest passages of scripture to clearly understand. So to enhance our understanding, what do we actually know for sure about what Jesus is teaching us today?

1. We know for sure that **the seed** in our picture **is the Word** of the Kingdom; vs. 19; it's the Word of God.

2. We know that the sowing is the Word going forth or being preached. The Word of the Kingdom is being sown right now.

3. We know from the context that in this case as in most cases, that the Word is being preached to a mixture of saved people and lost people; leading us to believe that some in this picture are saved and some are not.

4. We know that the ground in which the seed is sown; described as four types; the wayside, stony places, thorny places and good ground...are metaphors for the heart; as vs. 19 tells us; **"that which was sown in his heart"**.

With few exceptions, in every service in every real Church where the Word of God is preached being rightly divided, there are four factions present; four different conditions of the heart; each being represented here in our picture of the sower going forth.

They are easy to see; it is even easy to see yourself because you are in this picture.

You may not like what you see; you may resist admitting what you see; you may get upset at my pointing it out to you; the better response would be to simply go about changing it.

First we are going to look at those by:

## I. The Wayside.

*A. Those by the wayside are the lost which hear and reject the Word of God.*

1. Remember that the ground represents the heart; his heart is out there somewhere; it's by the way side; it's set on the world, not the things of God.

2. Satan literally steals the truth from those by the wayside who do not understand it.

3. **Matthew 13:19** 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.

4. This one is lost and headed for a Devil's hell even though Jesus died for Him.

5. There may be someone here today who is still by the wayside.

*B. Who is responsible for this lost man who is by the wayside?*

1. Is it God's fault because He did not protect him from the Devil?

2. Is it the preacher's fault because he did not explain it well enough?

3. Is it his parents fault or society's fault.

*C. I think we all know the answer; it's his own fault!*

1. When you are falling for eternity in a bottomless pit of torment in fire and brimstone with all factors considered; it will be because you closed your eyes to the truth.

2. **Matthew 13:15** For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and **their eyes they have closed**; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

3. There will be no one to blame but yourself.

4. But like I pointed out earlier; if you had the choice and the power to close your eyes, you also have the choice to open them.

5. Your sinful condition is obvious; what Jesus did to save you is proven...change your mind! You can be saved; you could begin that journey even today.

Next we will look that those represented by:

## II. The Stony Places.

*A. Again, remember that this is a metaphor describing the condition of the heart.*

### 1. **Matthew 13:20-21**

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 endureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

2. This is a heart that is delighted to discover that the Bible really is true; delighted to discover Who Jesus is and what He has done for them; they with joy receive the Word.

*B. Some of you are wondering if this is describing lost people or saved people.*

1. It is both. After 37 years of watching this play out, in the process of being drawn to Christ; some of these get offended before they get saved and some afterward.

2. Teaching Basic Bible Truths for all these years, I've seen people get offended at all different stages.



3. A couple just recently finished Lesson 5 and the guy got offended over God's requirement of being an accountable member in a local Church.

4. I've seen parents get saved and then get offended over something and quit just before their children get saved; it doesn't get any sadder than that.

*C. Why do some people in Church get offended and others simply do not get offended?*

1. Is it because of what someone said to them or about them or something someone did to them?

2. Do you suppose the unoffended ones have just never had anything offensive said to them or done to them?

3. I think we all know the answer to this; Jesus said those who get offended do so because their heart is hard (stony) and they have no root in themselves.

4. When these conditions exist, it is only a matter of time: "by and by [sooner or later] he is offended."

*D. Is there a cure for this?*

1. There is a cure, but you won't like it.

2. You have no root in yourself because there are two things you lack.

a. Love.

**Ephesians 3:17-19**

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being **rooted and grounded in love,**

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

b. Learning.

**Colossians 2:6-7**

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

7 **Rooted and built up in him,** and established in the faith, **as ye have been taught,** abounding therein with thanksgiving.

3. Being offended is a choice; just like love is a choice.

4. People choose to be offended; the good side of that is that you can simply choose to not be.

5. You are really not going to like the cure for the stony heart.

Next we see:

### III. The Thorny Places.

*A. Again remember this is a metaphor describing the condition of the heart.*

1. **Matthew 13:22** 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.

2. These don't often get offended; they are usually not around enough to get offended.

3. These are so wrapped up in the cares of the world, the best they can do is make a little time for the Lord once in a while.

4. They are wrapped up in their kids' sports; have you noticed how that more and more these games are now on Sundays?

5. They are wrapped up in secular, social and community doings and events; rodeos, cook-offs, lodges, clubs, motorcycle rides, bike rides; oh yeah; don't leave out hunting, fishing and the ever popular golf.

6. They are wrapped up in making money; got to keep up; got to have the car, got to have the house, got to have the clothes and all the appearance.

7. None of which is bad or evil in itself; but out of balance becomes devastating.

*B. Jesus said it is God's Word that gets choked.*

1. **Matthew 6:33-34**

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof. [cough, cough, cough] Can't we talk about the love of Jesus?

2. **2 Corinthians 6:17** Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you. [cough, cough, cough] Can't we talk about how to be a better me?

3. **Hebrews 10:25** Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*. and so much the more, as ye see the day *approaching*. [cough, cough, cough] Can't we talk about how to have my best life now?

4. The sad part is that everything you are looking for can be found in God's house bigger and better and more abundantly than in the world.

5. God will give you real friends that won't forsake you.

6. God will establish you as men and women of integrity, worthy to be respected.

7. God will make you rich; occasionally He will even do it with money.

*C. What is the cost; what is this thorny heart costing me?*

1. It's not so bad; it's only "and he becometh unfruitful."

2. Not usually sickness or death or poverty; just being unfruitful. I guess that's not so bad.

3. Two words come to mind from

**Luke 12:20-21**

20 But God said unto him, *Thou fool*,...

21 So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

4. To be successful in the world requires talent, commitment and hard work; you could be using all that to bear fruit for the Kingdom instead.

5. If you understood the value throughout eternity of even one soul won to Christ, I doubt you would ever miss Church again; you would be wasting your time and your talent on the world and you would be satisfied with whatever God chooses to give you and do it gladly!

*D. What is the cure for this?*

1. I really don't think there is one.

2. This involves the freedom that God gives every believer.
4. You can live your life for Jesus or you can live it for yourself.
3. For you to live your life for Jesus instead of for yourself has to simply be your choice; otherwise it just doesn't mean a thing.

Then there is:

#### **IV. The Good Ground.**

*A. Again remember this is a metaphor describing the condition of the heart.*

1. **Matthew 13:23** 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 a hundredfold some sixty, some thirty.

2. Wouldn't we all like to see ourselves as pictured in this verse?

*B. What does it take to be "good ground?"*

1. Hearing the Word; joyfully, gladly, seriously...all of that.

2. Understanding the Word. Absolutely!

3. "Alright preacher, I've got it, I'm good ground!"

4. Wait a minute...it also says "**which also beareth fruit**"...

5. The man with a heart of good ground not only hears it and understands it; he goes out and uses it to bring forth fruit for the kingdom.

6. There is a lot of potential good ground in here today; just don't stop short by just hearing and understanding it; go out and use it!

7. The fruit spoken of here is the kind that can be counted by number.

8. How many people do you know who could introduce you to thirty believers they have personally led to Christ?

9. Sixty? A hundred? There are few men or women alive who have personally led a hundred people to Jesus; some of you could be one of that number if you are willing to pay the price.

### **In Conclusion:**

**I can love you, but I cannot make you love me back.**

**I can teach you, but I cannot make you learn.**

**I cannot make your heart into good ground, only God can do that and God will not do that against your will.**

**If you are lost and you don't want anything to do with Jesus; fine, you can have it your own way. The Lord will not force Himself on you.**

**And just for the record; if you want nothing to do with Jesus; knowing that He has suffered and bled and died for you; knowing the anguish He went through to save your worthless sinful soul from a devil's hell; frankly, I've got no use for you either. I just hope that at some point you will come to your senses.**

**If you are saved and have hardened your heart; the Lord is going to exercise the only cure there is for a stony heart; He is going to break it; He will bring you to your knees.**

**Oh, you are glad to receive the love but you are not willing to give it in return.**

**I know you have seen yourself in this picture today. If you don't like what you see, change it!**

**You may not be a part of the picture of good ground...but you could be.**

**All of these consequences, all of these stony places, all of these thorny places;**



**even the wayside...can be cured by simple choice. Will you make that choice today?**

**Change your mind and let Jesus make your heart into good ground.**

**Love and learning will get you rooted and grounded and will keep you where you need to be.**