

“The Kingdom of God is Like....A Sower”

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

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A parable is a story that Jesus used with a Spiritual truth and point. As our scripture is read you can imagine Jesus setting by the lake. Large crowds gathering and coming towards Him. He then gets in a boat and sits while all the people stood on the shore. Just maybe as the people are coming and he is sitting on the boat He notices a man over that a way sowing/throwing seeds. Birds are flying all around the sower, but he continues to sow. Jesus then as He did in parables takes something common and gives a spiritual lesson.

As we unpack this parable of the Kingdom of God we can identify there has to be a Sower. There has to be Seed and there are the soils. Sower, seed, soils. Say that 3 times real fast. Xxx This is the essence of the parable.

Each of these, Sower, seed, soils, represent something. It is a multi-layered unpacking. Each can represent several things. First the Sower. The Sower Jesus is referring to is God. God was the original sower who made things come to life and blossom at the Garden of Eden. And yet in a real sense Jesus is talking about Himself. He is the one sowing, that is throwing and planting the seeds. Jesus is physically gone from us so who is the sower now. It is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit plants these seeds or at least throws these spiritual nuggets our way....as we will see what we do with them will be up to us.

However...in a very real way the Sower is each and every Christian. The Great Commission at the end of Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 28:19-20) is “Go make disciples.” That is everyone's job here. What a privilege, what a joy to share the ‘seed.’ Saved to sow, saved to serve, saved to shine!

“One thing.... I know....Everybody's got a seed to sow.” (Michael W. Smith) Yes everyone. Bibles at the 9:45 service given to 21 3rd graders. We are expecting them to sow seeds. Arthur Pink an early 1900's Bible teacher said this, “A little child may drop a seed as effectively as a man; the wind may carry it and accomplish as much as though an angel had planted it.” Children's Ministry, Student Ministry is extremely important. When you are involved in ministry you are planting seeds. Our Bible Buddies are planting seeds. Adults working with our children and youth are planting seeds (By the way with the booming Children's Ministry we need adults to help after the Children's Moment at 9:45. Would you consider giving Sunday a month or twice a month, or on call to assist in planting seeds within our children's ministry? Contact Robin our Children's Director. One thing I know....what....everybody has a seed to sow. Where are you sowing your seeds?

So you may ask me “So?” xxxx Exactly. Sow....it is our job to sow and then let the Holy Spirit do His work.

If the Sower can be interpreted as God, Jesus, Us, the Holy Spirit...then what is the Seed. The bottom line is Seed is the Word of God. I strive to read the Bible each and every day. I believe the Bible is God's Word. You see I don't know about you, but I have a personal edition of God's word....the B.I. B. L. E...when I read it it speaks directly to me. Now get ready to write this down. I've come up with a profound thought. (I know rare isn't it?) Ready here it is. The Bible can't speak to you if you don't read it!!!!!!

Do you read the Bible daily? Are you involved in a Bible Study group? Continue to check out the bulleting, our website, be in contact with Barbara Odom our Discipleship Coordinator. It's one of Barbara's jobs to organize the sowing and let you know about the sowing of the seed. It only works if you are there to receive the seed. Are you with me? Xxxx

Now this may be a little confusing, but the Seed is the Word of God...and also represents Jesus. Now you may say I thought you said Jesus was the Sower...I did...stay with me.

This is the Word. But look at what the Word says...**John 1:1-10 New International Version (NIV)**
1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^lit.

So the Word is the Bible, but the Word is Jesus. Yes. The Word of life...Bible and Jesus. We must spread the Good News of the Word...the Good News of the Bible the Good News of Jesus.

In reading the Bible I am amazed at how I will look at a scripture that I know I've read before, but when I read it this time it speaks something else and I learn something new. Why is that? Because this is the living word of God.

Hebrews 4:12 New International Version ¹² For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

This living Book judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Oh my...no wonder we don't want to read it. Let's move on.

Sower, Seed,Soils. We find there are 4 soils that the Sower will find. The seed will land on one of these soils. When we are the sower the seed we sow will land on one of these soils. When the Holy Spirit tries to get these seeds to grow it is one of these soils. Beloved we are those soils. Our soil, our heart is what is being talked about here.

The first soil is the path or highway (**image**). When the seed, the word of God, that is, Jesus trying to make an impact on heart/soil is hardened. A closed mind. It says the seed is sown and the evil one comes and snatches away. With the image of the path/highway you will notice that if seed is thrown out on that highway it is going to blow away or be eaten. It can't penetrate. The seed may land on the surface, but it doesn't go any deeper.

The evil one, that is Satan loves that hard path. The seed is thrown out, but Satan just blows it off. Beloved we do not want to have this type of soil.

The second soil is the Rocky ground (**image**) which refers to someone who hears the Word and is so joyful and excited about hearing it. Woo-hoo!!! I've got it! However...this is the emotional heart. It is the superficial feel good Christianity. It may feel good...but what about the faith? Seed thrown here will have no root. You must be firmly planted. You are known by your roots...that's what hairdressers say anyway.

We can get so excited and feel great...but it won't last without being rooted in God's Word and the community of faith. When trouble or hard times comes...we don't last.

One preached had his congregation so pumped up, emotionally high, but then he said, "I don't care how loud you shout or how high you jump as long as when you land, you walk straight." You see we can clap, we can shout, we can raise our hands...but when you leave or you going and living the way of the straight and narrow. Jesus said early in Matthew (7) that the way that leads to life is narrow. "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way.

Rocky ground. No roots. I'm a seed, I'm growing, yay, look at me....oh no there's trouble...okay I'll go back to my old ways. Friends...there is a lot of rocky times out there. It is tough to be a Christian. If you have rocky times and have a rocky time....it ain't pretty.

We now have the thorny ground (**image**). This refers to the seed falling and people hear the Word, but the worries of this life choke the word. Oh the worries of this world. We have so many things that try to get out attention. I'm sure I've probably said this before, but what gets your attention gets you! Are you with me? Xxxxx

There was a movie back in 2009 made by Pixar named "Up." It had the older man Carl, voiced by Ed Asner. His house takes off with balloons thanks to a boy by the name of Russell. A wonderful try to do gooder Scout. Well, when the house lands they end up meeting a dog by the name of Doug...spelled Dug. Dug speaks, of course. And a famous quote of his is this, (**image**), "Squirrel." You see Dug has a problem paying attention. He begins talking and...Squirrel...tries to finish but...Squirrel, he keeps getting distracted. Those on thorny ground have many squirrels. Here's a heavy theological question for you. What are the squirrels in your life? You see the thorny ground represents a wandering mind. There is a root but it is choked out because of the preoccupation of the cares of this world.

And it is not only the cares and worries of this life but also scripture says the deceitfulness of wealth that chokes the word. Oh, it seems to be about having more. There is more to life than money. Here's a little poem that to me makes sense:

“Money Can’t Buy You Everything!”

Money can buy a house, but not a home.

Money can buy a bed, but not sleep.

Money can buy a clock, but not time.

Money can buy a book, but not knowledge.

Money can buy food, but not an appetite.

Money can buy position, but not respect.

Money can buy blood, but not life.

Money can buy insurance, but not safety.

You see, money is not everything!

You see I know something far more important than money? Oh it is valuable. Oh it involves riches. But it is riches in heaven.

Well, finally we have the Good Soil **(image)** This is where the seed falls, the person hears the word and understands.

I guess you could say the seed was On, In, Down, and Up. It develops roots. It grows and is nourishes. It is fruitful. And you know something about these plants when they grow they bless others. They are a beauty to behold.

It comes down to this. Which soil are you?

The Hardened path **(image)**

The Rocky Ground **(image)**

The Thorny Ground **(image)** or

The Good Soil **(image)**

The Good Soil is fruitful. It produces a crop. Some 100, 60 or 30 times what was sown. That seed is a blessing to others.

Imagine the effect of a seed being sown and multiplying and multiplying. **(image)**

How do we have Good Soil? Well, clear it and remove the stones, stumbling blocks and rocks. Get some spiritual Weed-be-gone. Some ‘Miracle’ Grow even. Water that seed with Living Water. Let the Son (S-O-N) shine on you. Offer your heart completely to God. Develop some spiritual roots. And then bloom. Bloom, bloom, bloom and multiply.

You will know a difference. You will feel a difference. And to think this is eternal business. These are kingdom issues.

As you know I like to use The Message Bible as a contemporary paraphrase. Sometimes it just cuts to the chase and makes the case plain.

In the New International Version that we read from this morning the subtitle for this section is “The Parable of the Sower.” However in The Message Bible it is listed as “A Harvest Story.”

Here is the explanation of the parable from The Message Bible:

A Harvest Story

18-19 “When anyone hears news of the kingdom and doesn’t take it in, it just remains on the surface, and so the Evil One comes along and plucks it right out of that person’s heart. This is the seed the farmer scatters on the road.

20-21 “The seed cast in the gravel—this is the person who hears and instantly responds with enthusiasm. But there is no soil of character, and so when the emotions wear off and some difficulty arrives, there is nothing to show for it.

22 “The seed cast in the weeds is the person who hears the kingdom news, but weeds of worry and illusions about getting more and wanting everything under the sun strangle what was heard, and nothing comes of it.

23 “The seed cast on good earth is the person who hears and takes in the News, and then produces a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.”

And then I want to end with how The Message Bible paraphrases verse 9 of this chapter.

9 “Are you listening to this? Really listening?”