

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Living out the gospel with
one another in our homes

Matt. 13:1-23 - Bearing Fruit

The parable of the sower is one of Jesus' most popular parables. In it a man is planting seeds and some of the seeds fall on the path, but birds come and eat them. Some of the seeds fall on rocky ground where they can't grow deep roots, so when the sun rose, they were scorched and died. Some seeds fell among some thorns and when the thorns grew, the seeds were choked out. Some seeds, however, fell on good soil and produced a lot of grain. Jesus explains that this parable is a metaphor for those who hear the gospel. The first seeds represent those who hear it, but don't understand it, so the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in them. The seeds that fell on rocky ground represent those who hear the gospel and receive it with joy, but don't develop any deep roots and so when trials come, they fall away. The seeds that fell among thorns represent those who hear the gospel, but allow themselves to be distracted by the world and by riches, and so they don't produce any fruit. Finally, the seeds that fell on good soil represent those who hear the gospel, understand it, and live according to it, bearing fruit.

Discussion Questions:

1. Before you can study Jesus' parables, you have to know what their purpose is. What is a parable? Read Matt. 13:10-17 (if you haven't already). Why did Jesus use parables when he taught?
2. The first group in the parable (the seeds that fell on the path) teach us that bearing fruit requires understanding the Word (v. 19). How do we get this understanding? What are some ways your community group can help each other better understand God's Word?
3. Bearing fruit also requires deep roots (vv. 20-21). What are some of the trials and persecutions that threaten to "scorch" you? How can you work to develop deeper roots?
4. Finally, bearing fruit requires a singular focus on God (v. 22). Confess to one another (as you feel comfortable) the affections and desires in your heart that compete with God. How can you help each other focus on glorifying God throughout the week?
5. Ted's final question reminds us that the focus of this parable is not our own ability, but Christ's: Are you abiding in Christ? What does it look like for Christ to bear fruit in us?