

Opening: Last week we proclaimed the gospel and identified the parameters of the real gospel. We did this to encourage the Church to stand and proclaim the greatest message of all time. Today let us understand how our adversary works to rob the truth from people when we preach it so that we can help the seed of God's truth to bloom in our own lives and in the lives of those we are trying to reach with the good news.

Key Verse: The Parable of the Sower Matthew 13:1-9 1That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. 2Such large crowds gathered around Him that He got into a boat and sat down, while all the people stood on the shore. 3And He told them many things in parables, saying, "A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4And as he was sowing, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. 5Some fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow. 6But when the sun rose, the seedlings were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the seedlings. 8Still other seed fell on good soil and produced a crop—a hundredfold, sixtyfold, or thirtyfold. 9He who has ears, let him hear."

Jesus explains the Parable of the Sower Matthew 13:18-23

18Consider, then, the parable of the sower: 19When anyone hears the message of the kingdom but does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21But since he has no root, he remains for only a season. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. 22The

seed sown among the thorns is the one who hears the word, but the **worries** of this life and the **deceitfulness of wealth choke the word**, and it becomes unfruitful.²³ But the seed sown on **good soil** is the one who hears the word and **understands it**. He indeed bears fruit and **produces a crop—a hundredfold, sixtyfold, or thirtyfold.**”

1. The need to receive and understand the gospel **Matthew 18:19**
 - a. A hearer must make room within them to comprehend the gospel to give it a place to grow.
 - b. Understand in the Greek is *synientos* it means to “put it together” to act upon it intentionally.
2. **The unprepared soil, and unintentionally sown seed Matthew 13:3-4**
 - a. We are each called to be spiritual farmers, intentionally sowing the message of salvation into the lives of people.
 - i. The spiritual farmer has plenty of opportunities to share the gospel.
 - ii. The giver of the gospel has a responsibility to work to prepare the soil for the seed to be received well.
 - iii. Still some seed “fell” according to Jesus along the road. As the spiritual farmer journeys with God, they will plant seed unintentionally.
 - b. Often while you are witnessing one personally, intentionally others will listen to the message at the same time. This is the unintentional seed that was sown. The seed fell from the bag of the sower to the ground that was not ready to receive it. Sometimes it will but often it will not.
 - c. The Birds come, the evil one is Satan and takes the soil away, so it has no opportunity to germinate.
 - d. Many times, our evangelistic endeavors are spent on people who are not looking for Jesus, who are still blind in pride to

the message of salvation, who are not ready to receive Christ.

- i. While these people still need the gospel, it would be better to sow your time energy and effort into those who God sends you to, or who show signs of humility and a heart ready to receive.
- ii. Do not get discouraged when someone rejects the gospel presentation. There may still be hope for them to receive it later. Pray for them that they may see the hope of salvation.
- iii. They do not receive because they are blinded in their spirit to the truth, they do not understand it because the demons have blocked them from the truth.

3. **The Shallow rocky soil Matthew 13:5-6**

- a. Shallow soil allows for quick germination, but it does not allow for perseverance.
- b. If we preach a shallow gospel message, we will get a shallow following of Jesus.
- c. When we preach the gospel, we must let the hearer know that, following Christ is not easy and that it will cost them everything to run the race.
 - i. The gospel will be tested in the heart of everyone who receives it.
 - ii. Persecution, temptation, trials, pain are a part of serving Jesus.
 - iii. The truth is not always convenient, comfortable, or easy. Jesus is the path less traveled.
 - iv. Jesus is the opposite direction of the world and to follow Him we must lose to gain, die to live, and go down in humility to rise above our pride.

d. They had no root: They had no spiritual depth in Jesus.

- i. Many churches have found that they can fill the seat on Sunday if they minister a watered-down gospel, sweetening the message without providing the difficult truths of following Jesus.
- ii. This kind of preaching seems beneficial, but it does not allow the believer to struggle with the harder issues Jesus wants to deal with in their life.
- iii. The doors this preaching often leaves open for the believer will become the opportunity Satan needs to “burn” out the gospel in a person’s life.
- iv. Salvation is a free gift, but following Jesus sincerely will cost the Christian everything. If we preach anything less, we are doing a disservice to the Jesus.

e. To have a root in Jesus

- i. Worship Him sincerely, with a heart that seeks to abide in His presence.
- ii. Pray to Him continuously, for your needs and for the needs of others.
- iii. Serve Him deliberately, giving your hands to bless your brothers and sisters in Christ and in sharing the faith with unbelievers.
- iv. Grow past the milk of the word which are the beginning truths of Jesus into the meat of His word which is for the spiritually mature.

4. The thorny soil and choked seed. Matthew 13:22

- a. Thorns are competing interests that reside in our heart and life. They are things that are directly opposed to the message of the gospel. They entangle the hearer of the gospel holding them back from growing to full maturity.

- b. The seed produces the beginnings of life but does not grow all the way to harvest of reproduction. Life begins but the purpose of that life is not reached.
- c. **“The worries of life”** Jesus does not say that we should not have cares, only that the believer must develop the kind of faith that transfers our worries to faith in God.
- d. What are the cares of this life? The context is that the choked soil was overly concerned with deceitfulness of wealth bringing momentary pleasure at the cost of eternal reward.
- e. Jesus is saying that the disciple must develop a spirit that does not need instant gratification but is willing to forsake present comforts that wealth provides for eternal rewards that money cannot buy.
- f. **Life Lesson: If we are always satisfied by earthly treasures that only comfort our natural man, we will never allow the divine dissatisfaction to compel us upwards to discover heavenly treasures that only satisfy our spirit man.**
- g. There is a Joy in living, a purpose in God that are more important than earthly pleasures, Christ provides an eternal value that supersedes this life. Do not let this world choke out your time for God.

5. **The Good Soil and the reproducing seed Matthew 13:23**

- a. The seed is perfect, but the soil must be prepared.
- b. A human soul has many pitfalls, chains, cares, hurts, worries and the propensity to get off track easily.
- c. Before we share the gospel, we must pray to prepare our hearts to share, and to prepare the lost soul to not just hear but to listen with a heart to understand.
- d. The soil was good because it was ready.
 - i. Rocks were removed, things that cause men to stumble easily, offenses were overcome.

- ii. Soil was deep, giving the person the opportunity to produce roots. This soil had the capacity for depth. The soil was broken up before. Humility was present in the listener. Life has a way of humbling us all.
 - iii. Weeds were removed, competing interests were settled, bad relationships bringing bad influences were limited. Evil pursuits were put to death. This gave the seed time to grow.
 - iv. Time and consideration were given, the one who shared the gospel made sure the person understood.
 - v. The motive for receiving Christ was correct, the hearer understood and counted the cost.
 - vi. The opportunity to grow was provided, the presentation of the gospel came with the opportunity to become something new through the process of discipleship.
6. **Things to remember when sharing the faith.**
- a. Only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the seed sown produced a harvest. Do not get discouraged when you are rejected.
 - b. The harvest from $\frac{1}{4}$ was more than enough to cause exponential growth. Rejoice with every soul saved.
 - c. The soil must be ready before we plant. Pray for those God has called you to reach.
 - d. The true gospel will always prosper when it is given. Leave the results to God.
 - e. Give yourself to not only share the gospel but to be a disciple maker to those you share it with.

Conclusion: Guard the soil of your life, remove the weeds, when necessary, cultivate a deep relationship and never stop growing in Jesus. The hard work of surrendering to growth will pay off with an abundant harvest of righteousness!