

Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23 “The Four Types of People”

2.12.17

Last Sunday we introduced the teaching method that Jesus begins to use with the crowds and His followers known as parables. You may remember I used the analogy of an “audible” in football to describe that. Now, 5-time, super bowl champion, Tom Brady is shown here at the line of scrimmage...



He’s calling an audible and an audible is like a parable. He’s calling out intelligible and well-articulated words and numbers, but only the Patriots understand it. Why? Because they’ve been taught what the audible means and that’s what a parable is.

Remember, a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. It’s a story that’s used to illustrate greater truths. And Jesus is now going to tell 7 parables to describe what’s going to happen in His kingdom. So, as we talked about last week...Jesus taught in parables and He began to reveal to the committed followers the truths of His kingdom. Scholars often call these 7 parables: “The Kingdom Parables.”

Now you will remember where Jesus is as He is teaching these parables. See the map...



He’s teaching on the shoreline of the town of Capernaum, which is at the northern end of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum is about 11 o’clock on the Sea of Galilee. Now think with me... Jesus has been teaching and preaching for over a year and the crowds have continued to grow larger and larger, so much so...that on this occasion, He’s had to get into a boat along the shoreline of Capernaum just to accommodate the crowds. Here’s the artist’s depiction...



Obviously, there were no stadiums in Jesus’ day in Galilee, so a boat served as His floating pulpit, and the hillside running down to the beach, served as an amphitheater for His teaching. Let’s look at the first parable together...

Matthew 13:1-9

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, 6 but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears, let him hear."

Now Church family, one of the things that we need to be reminded of as we begin this morning, is the simple fact that the Apostle Matthew is writing to a Jewish audience and they had no idea about us. Who is us? The Church...the body of Christ. They could not see this age...the Church Age. They only saw in the OT that the Messiah would come and then immediately set-up His kingdom and that's what caused so many problems for Jesus because He didn't do that did He? He came to die for the sins of the world. That had to happen first and the Jews couldn't see that.

It was a mystery to them. **Jump down to verse 34** and see this again... Matthew records the words of Jesus, who is quoting the prophet Isaiah, who said the Messiah would teach in parables...

Matthew 13:34-35

34 All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. 35 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."

Part of these "hidden things" was us! When Isaiah recorded that the Messiah would utter that which has been hidden since the foundation of the world, he was talking about what Jesus would make known. He would make known the fact that the Church Age would come into being after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and then, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

You see, the Old Testament prophets could never see the Church Age...they couldn't see us. And so, Jesus is now beginning to reveal to the people what His ministry was truly going to be. In other words, He's letting the people in on the fact that He hasn't come to set up His kingdom yet...that's to happen after the Church Age. That will happen when He returns to the earth in His Second Coming. Therefore, He's now beginning to explain why so many people are rejecting Him.

After all, haven't the people already seen this? Sure they have...for the past year these guys...



the Pharisees...the religious leaders of the Jews had totally rejected Jesus... They hated Him and despised Him and were now planning His death. And so, it

caused the people to ask, “If this is truly the Messiah, why are our leaders rejecting Him?” And that is now part of what Jesus will explain in this first Kingdom Parable.

You may have noticed that I titled this message: “The Four Types of People,” and that might seem odd to you because what we read earlier was about four types of soil. Well, here’s what Jesus is going to explain about His kingdom... There are going to be people who receive Him and those who won’t, just like the ground receives seed. And it’s this parable about four types of soil that’s really a parable about the **“Four Types of People”** or possibly even the **“Four Types of Hearts.”**

Now think with me...in what we just read, Jesus describes a man going out to sow seed and the one He is speaking of as the sower, is Himself. But, He’s not sowing seed like this...



What a massive outfit that is! Nope...that’s not how it was done in the first century... This is how it was done...



It was a man with either a leather bag or cloth bag tied around his neck or waist and he “broadcast” or spread the seed with his hand. And as Jesus sat in that boat teaching the people on the seashore of the Sea of Galilee, He could have easily looked to the fields behind the people as He pointed off in the distance at a sower doing exactly that...broadcasting seed... Take a look at the landscape of this area...



What do you see, even today? Fields. Little has changed along the northern end of the Sea of Galilee in 2000 years. There are still fields there to this day. And so, Jesus used something very familiar to explain the four types of people.

Now, the first type of person Jesus describes is the “Hard-Hearted Person.”

Matthew 13:19

19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.

Now, let’s make sure we understand exactly what’s happening and the players on the field. What we see here in Jesus’ parable of the sower is: #1 a Sower #2 Seed #3 four different kinds of Soils. Let’s get that in our minds: Sower, Seed, Soils.

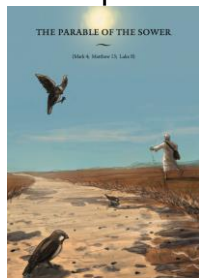
You see, this parable is really about preaching the gospel. That’s the idea of the sower. Because Jesus is the sower and He’s been sowing the seed for a year. And He’s gotten basically four kinds

of responses...which are the four kinds of soils or people or hearts. But, you might ask, "What is the seed?" Well, look back at the first part of verse 19. The seed is the "word of the kingdom."

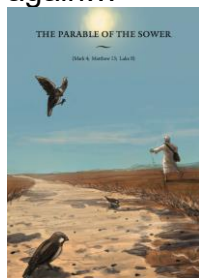
Matthew 13:19

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So, the seed is the Word of Jesus...or to say it another way, the seed is what can potentially be received by the human heart, which can lead that heart to salvation. But, for this First heart (or the first soil), Jesus describes it is HARD. Why? Because the seed fell along the PATH. You say, "What path?" Well, take a look at the picture...



In Galilee, paths were along the perimeter of the fields in that area of Palestine. These paths were usually narrow strips about 3' to 4' wide. Narrow... because they wanted to use all of the land they could for growing their crops. They didn't want to waste land on paths. Yet, they had to get from field to field, so there had to be paths to do so and therefore...these paths were hard as concrete because of all the foot-traffic. Invariably, as seed was broadcast by the sower, some of the seed would fall along these paths. And what would happen? Look at the picture again...



Birds would come and eat the seed. Jesus described the birds in verse 19 as "the evil one." Who is that? Satan! So, for the hard-hearted person...which AGAIN, the people of Jesus' day had seen over and over again were the Pharisees...they allowed Satan to steal the seed that could have saved their souls.

Now think with me for a moment. Think about dirt. Dirt is dirt, whether it's hard dirt, soft dirt, dirt with rocks under it, or dirt with weeds in it, dirt is dirt is dirt, okay...we've got that. The issue is what has happened to the dirt. The issue is what has influenced the dirt. It's the condition of the soil...of the human heart as to whether or not seed can grow there. Can you see that?

Listen, the result of hearing the gospel (the seed) in the life of an individual depends upon the condition of that person's heart. That's what Jesus is teaching here. And for this first heart...it's hard...like those paths around those fields and it can't receive the seed. In it's hardness, it refuses to receive the seed and therefore, it never produces any fruit, and it's the fruit that indicates if there has truly been salvation in that human heart. Fruit is evidence that you've been saved.

May I ask this morning: Are there any hard hearts in the room, this morning? You see, in about 25 minutes, some will walk out of this room the same way they came in, because not only will they refuse to act on what they hear, they will not even think about what's been said in here ever again. And Satan will win. Because he'll distract that person...possibly you, (even right now at this moment), he could be trying to distract you with what you'll do this afternoon or tomorrow, or some other kind of "daydream," so as to keep you from salvation.

The Bible in the OT calls that person "stiff-necked." The Psalmist calls that person who denies God a "fool." In our day, we might say that person is: unresponsive, obstinate, indifferent, stubborn, or even belligerent ... Therefore, the word of God just bounces right off that hard heart.

Could that be you? Could you come in here week after week and be on the fringes of Christianity...like the paths next to the fertile fields and because of indifference or pride or even sin...you've allowed your heart to be like dirt that's just pounded and pounded and pounded until it is utterly unresponsive to God? Nothing moves you!

Church family...Oh how I pray every week that our hearts wouldn't be hard. Truly, I believe I made that burden of mine abundantly clear in last week's message. I begged you to see God...the Biblical God and I pray that same prayer today. Will you see Him? Will you **See Him** in what's being preached right now and allow your heart to be open and receptive to Him? Oh please, don't allow Satan to steal what the Lord wants to do in your life right now! Don't be hard-hearted. Please don't be that type of person today. Don't let Satan deceive you! I pray you won't!

Look at verse 20, and we'll see the **heart of person #2**.

Matthew 13:20-21

20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, **21** yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.

Now something that jumped out at me as I read those verses was the fact that the seed sown on rocky ground sprang up immediately and I wondered why? Why did that seed fire out of the ground so quickly? Well, it's pretty simple. If you ask a farmer who plants seed, he'll tell you if there is shallow soil with a layer of bedrock under that shallow soil, the seed can't drop deep roots, so it sends all of it's energy up out of the ground and that little plant looks like it's got it going on!

But, the farmer will tell you he knows he's got a problem. If he's got a field like that, he'll notice those plants come up first and they are 3" taller than his other fields and he knows that field will die. Because there's rocks under that soil and the plants will never be able to develop to the depth they need to because of that rocky layer.

I've seen people like this and so have you. It seems that they get saved. They receive the word with joy and it looks like they are the real deal. But, within a short period of time...



they wilt under the pressure from the world. The heat of persecution scorches them.

Years ago, I had someone whom I was close to appear to get saved. He seemed so excited and pumped up, but within a couple of weeks he was running back with the same rough crowd as he was before. He was back drinking and partying and I called him and I said, "What are you doing?" He said, "Oh, I'm fine! I got saved...don't worry about me...I'm just having a little fun."

To this day, he's never stepped foot into a church, but if you ask him if he's saved, he'll say, "Sure I am and he might even say, 'Kevin Brown was there to see it.'" But, you know what...he walked away...and Jesus describes him in verse 21...see it again...

Matthew 13:21

21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.

That phrase "falls away," is one word in the Greek: **skandalizō**. And it means to leave. It's a deserter...it's a Judas. He looked like the real deal...but, he walked away.

So, according to this Scripture, my young friend never got saved. Why, because he never produced any fruit... Take a look at the picture again...



...the scorched plant never bore any fruit. Therefore there was never any salvation.

Listen carefully Church family, persecution and trials will reveal if a person is the real deal. Persecution shows us the truth about people. If they wilt over and over again...never standing for truth-they were never the real deal. If they stand...they are confirmed in their faith. It's that simple.

The Bible is clear:

2 Timothy 3:12

12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Church, if you desire to live a godly life...count on it...you will be persecuted in this day and age and that causes my heart and prayers to go out to the young people in our culture today. Persecution is as hot on them as any generation has ever experienced and if you claim to be a Christian in our day and you choose to live by the words of this book, you WILL BE persecuted and

it will get hot. But, if you are truly the Lord's, He will give you the strength to endure it, but if you aren't the Lord's you WILL wilt and go the way of the world. **Indeed, persecution destroys the false, while confirming the authentic.**

So, the hearts that were hard and the hearts that were rocky never produced fruit... How about the third heart...the third soil? What about that person?

Matthew 13:22

22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

This one is easy to understand. We all know what will happen to a garden if we don't plow it and hoe it after the plants come up. The weeds will overtake the garden. Here's a small "raised bed" garden that's been totally overtaken by the weeds.



So, we should ask: "What are the weeds and thorns that Jesus is talking about?" Well, Jesus said they were "...the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches." In other words, it's a person who places their confidence and their hope in the stuff of this world.

It's people who might even come to church but they never seem to get committed? They always seem to be preoccupied with: money, or their career, or popularity or good looks or personal prestige. Their goal in life is to "make it," but the truth is...they are being choked out by the stuff of this world and eventually they'll just fade away.

And there's likely some sitting here right now and you've never plowed up the weeds. You are entangled in the world and it's choking you. The Bible says?

1 Timothy 6:6-10

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain, **7** for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. **8** But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. **9** But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. **10** For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

It's sad isn't it?!! 3/4's of the seed has been tossed and broadcast by the sower and there's been ZERO fruit from any of that seed. So sad! Those hearts produced no fruit. So now, there's only one type of soil left. It's the person with the receptive heart. The one who has "ears to hear."

Matthew 13:23

23 As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

Finally, we get some good soil. We get hearts that aren't hard, or stony or filled with weeds and thorns... We get hearts that are receptive. And guess what...it's that heart...it's that person that will produce fruit. Some will produce 30, some 60 and some 100 times that which was sown...simply meaning that the quality of the fruit is the same...it's just the quantity that's different. Some will have impacts that are further reaching than others. The Lord uses people in different ways...and to different degrees...that's the point...it doesn't change the fact that people are producing fruit and blooming where they're at. It's just that we might do so in different quantities based on circles of influence.

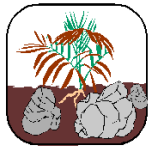
Now listen, the point of the parable of the sower is very simple. Jesus has been preaching for over a year and some, like the Pharisees, have chosen to walk away in hard-hearted obstinance... some couldn't handle the persecution...it got too uncomfortable and they wilted under the pressure... and some simply couldn't walk away from the stuff of this world...like the Rich Young Ruler. But, some listened and received the seed of Jesus' teaching and were transformed.

How do we know they were transformed? Take a look.

A Sower Went Out to Sow



packed soil



stony ground



thorny ground



good soil

See those yellow flowers...that's the fruit of the plant... Those who are saved produce fruit. The hard soil produced no fruit. The stony ground and thorny ground produced no fruit. But, the good soil produced the flowers...the fruit. In other words, those who are truly saved will live for Jesus and seek to follow Him and take seriously His admonition when He said: "If you love me, you'll keep my commandments...you'll live like me."

Ephesians 2:10

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Take a look at the screens at the bottom two questions...

The Parable of the Sower

The Seed is the Word of God



The Path



The Rocky Soil



The Weedy Soil



The Good Soil

What type of Soil are You?

Is God Growing in Your Heart?

What type of Soil are you? Is God growing in your heart?

Are you producing fruit?

Maybe you are here today and you might honestly ask: "Pastor Kevin, how do I change my heart?" Maybe you are here today and you admit that you are hard-hearted, stony or thorny? And you want to change and you want to know how.

Well, it's really easy...you have ears to hear. You have to get to the place that you choose to listen and then obey. You choose to repent of your sins and when you do...God then comes and breaks that hard ground and He digs up those rocks and He plows up those weeds and thorns. But, you've got to make that decision. He won't do it for you. But, He will do it the moment...the very second you ask. But, here's the hard part...here's the truth... you won't ask until you are sick and tired of living a fruitless life. I pray some of you today have finally that point.

One last thing as we close... In this parable, as we've talked...we know Jesus was the sower. Church, do you know who the sower is today? It's us! It's those of us who are saved...fruit bearers...we've now got to go and make disciples of all nations and we do that by sowing seed... So now...this is us...



We are the seed sowers.

Church family, may we understand this today...in being like Jesus...when we spread the word...we're going to get resistance. Count on it! And we're going to get some short-term converts, who really look real deal, but they can't give it up and they eventually wilt and will get others who will be choked out by the stuff of this world. Count it. The same will happen us as happened to Jesus.

But, I know what some of you are thinking. You're thinking, "Well, I'm not Jesus and I don't have any talent...I'll never be a good seed sower." Well, you'll be glad to know this parable is not about the talent of the sower.

You see, you can take a little boy, who's barefoot, five years old, and wants to go out and sow in a field with his daddy. His father knows how to do it beautifully. But, the boy... he just throws that seed everywhere!

And you know what? There may not be as much seed hitting good soil, but some will. And you know what else, it doesn't matter to the soil who threw the seed. If it's good soil, it's going to grow, no matter who the sower is. Thankfully Church, it doesn't depend on the talent of the sower...no...it's just important that we throw the seed everywhere we go. Oh Church, let's sling the seed, shall we?! Let's sling the seed!
