

Parable of the Sower

A story of the heart

Introduction

The Parable or Story - Of The Sower

- This passage can be divided into three parts
- The parable, Why Jesus uses parables, the meaning
- And then we will look at the application

First the parable

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. [2] Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. [3] Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. [4] As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. [5] Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. [6] But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. [7] Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. [8] Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop---a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. [9] Whoever has ears, let them hear." **Matthew 13.1-9**

Second - Why Parables

The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" [11] He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. [12] Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. [13] This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. [14] In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: " 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. [15] For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' [16] But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. [17] For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. **Matthew 13.10-17**

Third - the meaning

"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: [19] When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed

sown along the **path**. [20] The seed falling on **rocky ground** refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. [21] But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. [22] The seed falling **among the thorns** refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. [23] But the seed falling on **good soil** refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.” **Matthew 13:18-23**

- Sower sows the seed - The farmer is the Lord and seed is his word
- Some fell on the path - Birds ate it, a very real enemy steals it
- Some fell on rocky places - Shot up first but because there was no depth of roots it withered
- Some fell among the thorns - Even though it grew the thorns choked the plant
- Some fell on good soil - Grew and produced a crop

I think this story could be called the story of the Heart

Kind of Soil	Condition of the Heart	Results
Path	Hard heart	Satan comes and steals the word
Rocky place	Rocky, shallow heart - Other things are present	- No root, - shallow, - persecution, trouble, hardship because of the Word - withers
Thorns, weeds	Contaminated heart (Mark 4.19 adds, cares of this world, other things) - Mixture - Loves other things	- Cares of this world, - deceitfulness of riches, - desires for - other things, pleasures
Good Soil	Clean, surrendered, no mixture	Good, Retain, persevering

- How is your heart?
- Which of the four conditions describes your heart?

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Proverbs 4:23

What is a hard heart

- The crust around the heart becomes thicker
 - Through neglect of my heart - weeds begin to grow, dust turns to layers and hardens
 - Through disappointment - That i then leave undealt with
 - Could be unforgiveness - i may not even voice it but a barb or root has taken root
 - Sin - Diminishes, blinds and hardens
 - Cynicism, sarcasm
- Life become a drudge
- Not sensitive to the Lords voice
- Not moved by the pain of others
- The Bible becomes a book rather than a love letter

Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, [52] for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened. **Mark 6:51-52**

- They didn't recognise Jesus
- They were amazed because their hearts were hardened

Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? [18] Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? **Mark 8:17-18**

- No understanding
- No ability to perceive
- Because their hearts were heart

Signs of a tender heart

- Tender - soft, pliable, easily moved
- Moved by what moves Gods heart
- Your more tender to receive hear. Sensitive to the voice and leading of The Lord
- Connect with others - community
- Love abounds more easily
- Aware of other peoples feelings and needs more than my own
- Emotional intelligence
- It is a power connection.

Dangers of a hard heart

- Entrance and growth of pride
- Pride hardens the heart and blinds the eyes
- Unforgiveness turning to offence and bitterness
- Lukewarm apathy - Laodecian spirit

- Begin to grow weaker on the inside
- Talk a lot and mostly about self - Not good at listening
- Insensitive to situations
- Insensitive to other people
- Quick to pass judgement
- Cold love - extremely dangerous

Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. **Matthew 24.12,13**

How to cultivate a tender heart hearing heart

1. Embrace brokenness or trial

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. **Isaiah 53:7**

Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. [24] Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. [25] Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. [26] Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me. **John 12:23-26**

or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. [8] Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. [9] But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. [10] That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

- Change my circumstances Lord? - No not this time
- I will give grace to cover you, hold you
- My power made perfect in weakness
- I boast in my weakness so that Christ's power may rest on me

Don't waste a good trial.

Every trial is the means to lift you to a higher place in God

- The brokenness of seeing your own weakness
- The brokenness of others' disappointments

When asked what his secret was to walking in demonstrations of God's power, Wigglesworth responded, "I am sorry you asked me that question,

but I will answer it. I am a brokenhearted man. My wife who meant everything to me, died 11 years ago. After the funeral I went back and lay on her grave. I wanted to die there. But God spoke to me and told me to rise up and come away. I told Him if He would give me a double portion of the Spirit —my wife's and my own—I would go and preach the gospel. God was gracious to me and answered my request. But I sail the high seas alone. I am a lonely man, and many a time all I can do is to weep and weep." **Smith Wigglesworth**

Every trial is a blessing. There have been times when I have been pressed through circumstances and it seemed as if a dozen road engines were going over me, but I have found that the hardest things are just lifting places into the grace of God. We have such a lovely Jesus. He always proves Himself to be such a mighty Deliverer. He never fails to plan the best things for us. **Smith Wigglesworth**

Before God could bring me to this place He has broken me a thousand times.

This like precious faith is for all; but there may be some hindrance in your life that God will have to deal with. It seems to me as if I had had a thousand road engines come over my life to break me up like a potter's vessel. There is no other way into the deep things of God but a broken spirit. There is no other way into the power of God. God will do the exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think for us when He can bring us to the place where we can say with Paul, "I live no longer, and Another, even Christ, has taken the reins and the rule." **Wigglesworth**

2. Full Surrender - Living in utter abandonment to God

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. **Galatians 2:20**

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **Ephesians 4:1**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God---this is your true and proper worship. [2] Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is---his good, pleasing and perfect will. **Romans 12:1-2**

George Mueller

In an address given to ministers and workers after his ninetieth birthday, George Mueller spoke thus of himself: "I was converted in November, 1825, but I only came into the **full surrender of the heart four years later**, in July, 1829. The love of money was gone, the love of place was gone, the love of position was gone, the love of worldly pleasures and engagements was gone. God, God alone became my portion. I found my all in Him; I wanted nothing else. And by the grace of God this has remained, and has made me a happy man, an exceedingly happy man, and it led me to care only about the things of God. I ask affectionately, my beloved brethren, have you fully surrendered the heart to God, or is there this thing or that thing with which you are taken up irrespective of God? I read a little of the Scriptures before, but preferred other books; but since that time the revelation He has made of Himself has become unspeakably blessed to me, and I can say from my heart, God is an infinitely lovely Being. Oh, be not satisfied until in your own inmost soul you can say, God is an infinitely lovely Being!" **George Muller**

"There was a day when I died;
died to self, my opinions, preferences, tastes and will;
died to the world, its approval or censure;
died to the approval or blame even of my brethren or friends;
and since then I have studied only
to show myself approved unto God." **George Muller**

3. Meet God relationally every day - Create personal history

A life in the Bible - Living in his word day by day

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. **Psalm 119:105**

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. **Joshua 1:8**

A life of prayer - learning to come and talk to the Lord

Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him! [19] ...How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. **Isaiah 30:18-19b**

pray continually - **1 Thessalonians 5:17**

We have through the Lord's goodness been permitted to enter upon another year, and the minds of many amongst us will no doubt be occupied with plans for the future, and the various spheres of service in which, if our lives be spared, we shall be engaged. The welfare of our families, the prosperity of our business, our work and service for the Lord, may be considered the most important matters to be attended to; but, according to my judgment, the most important point to be attended to is this:

Above all things, see to it that your souls are happy in the Lord. Other things may press upon you; the Lord's work even may have urgent claims upon your attention; but I deliberately repeat, it is of supreme and paramount importance that you should seek, above all other things, to have your souls truly happy in God Himself. Day by day seek to make this the most important business of your life. This has been my firm and settled conviction for the last five-and thirty years. For the first four years after my conversion I knew not its vast importance; but now, after much experience, I specially commend this point to the notice of my younger brethren and sisters in Christ. The secret of all true effectual service is, joy in God, and having experimental acquaintance and fellowship with God Himself. **George muller**

- Washed in the word - daily
- Meet him in prayer.

4. True Biblical Community - Koinonia

Biblical fellowship, community, intimate spiritual communion with other believers. It is a Holy Spirit joining. A work of the Spirit.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit –just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4.1-6

For we know in part and we prophesy in part. **1 Corinthians 13.9**

Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you" **1 Corinthians 12.14-21**