

Sunday, September 8, 2024

Matthew 13: The parable of the Soil (aka parable of the Sower) Part 2

Matthew 13: 1-23

1 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." 10 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. 18 "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.

22The 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. 23But 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.”

1. Introduction/Part 1 Recap

Colossians 1:3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people— 5the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel 6that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace. 7You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, 8and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

This was our foundational scripture at MillCity Church back on September 13, 2015. The Gospel of Jesus Christ bears fruit, grows, multiplies, and is applicable today as we finish the study of the Parable of the Soil.

Recap of the elements in the parable:

- Seed: The Gospel of Jesus Christ
- SOWER: God, the Holy Spirit, Jesus and Believers who Share the Gospel
- SOIL: HARD, ROCKY, WEEDY.

All three of the first soils have two things in common:

- They all HEAR the Word.
- None produced FRUIT.

We finish by looking at the GOOD soil.

2. If there is no FRUIT, is there ROOT?

James tells us:

James 2:17 Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.
18But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. 19You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Paul clearly says you are saved by Grace not Works:

Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9not by works, so that no one can boast.

Romans 3:21 But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.

Romans 10:9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

While they seem contradictory, they are both right. James does not contradict Paul. James never says that you are not saved by grace. Paul does not contradict James at all. In other places in scripture, Paul is emphatic about the lifestyle you should live once you receive Christ as your Savior.

Jesus is also states what both James and Paul are saying which is repent and believe.

Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

It is BOTH/AND. Repent which means recognizing the sin in your life and taking steps to remove that sin from your life, AND Believing the GOOD NEWS which is that 'God has a plan for helping you with the sin in your life.' First, providing the payment for that sin. Second, paving a way for you to help share that GOOD NEWS with others.

Spreading SEED? Being a SOWER? Isn't that grace by works? No!

3. Why do we sow seed?

Directed to:

Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

II Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

The concept could be wrapped up in the word 'Lordship':

Luke 6:46 'Why do you call me Lord, Lord and not do as I say?'

Matthew 7:22–23 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you.'

So how can I know? Jesus gives us an answer: crop.

'If your saved and you know it, then your life should surely show it.'

3. Good Soil

As we look at the good soil, there are three types of good soil for a total of six soil types in this parable.

Matthew 13:23 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.”

Mark 4:20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

1. Hard
2. Rocky
3. Weedy
4. Good Soil: yielding 100 times
5. Good Soil: yielding 60 times
6. Good Soil: yielding 30 times what was sown

Mark 12: 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Colossians 1:6 ...In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace.

4. Why do some BELIEVERS, and some CHURCHES, produce different crops?

Luke 8:15 But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

The verses surrounding this passage in all three Gospels (Matthew, Luke, Mark) help to explain the difference between the GOOD SOILS and can help us understand why there is a difference in the CROP in the lives of BELIEVERS and of CHURCHES.

Matthew 13:24 Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

Matthew 13:31 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. 32 Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

Hear it, retain it, persevere. The Kingdom will grow through OBEDIENCE. Hear it, understand it, accept it... OBEY! Just begin! God will do great things with a willing and submissive heart.

The passage right before this in Matthew 12:48

He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

Immediately after this passage in Luke 8 and Mark 4, Jesus says:

Mark 4:21 He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? 22 For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear." 24 "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. 25 Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them."

Similar verses are found in the parable of the talents and bags of Gold in Matthew 25 and Luke 19.

5. Who is Jesus?

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was with God in the beginning. 3Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 8: 12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

John 9:5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

John 12:46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

A common description used by Paul is of Believers 'IN CHRIST.'

Galatians 3:26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus

Ephesians 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world."

Jesus says in Mark 4:21 He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand?"

What can we infer? In Jesus' day, to light up a room, they would use a lamp. You would put that lamp in the middle of a room in the middle of the house so that the light could penetrate the greatest darkness.

Mark 4:22 For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.

Colossians 1:25 ...the word of God... — 26the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. 27To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Jesus is saying when we receive Christ as our Savior, we become The Light (we are In Christ, Christ is In Us). We are not to hide our faith. We are to expose it. We are to let that LIGHT SHINE as bright as possible.

Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

John 9:4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

II Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

I Corinthians 11:11 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

6. How does this pertain to Good Soil?

What is the difference between 30-, 60- and 100-times yield? Why do some Christians produce more fruit? Why are some churches more effective?

Mark 4:24 "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. **25**Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them."

Luke 8:18 "...Even what they **think they have** will be taken from them."

You reap what you sow. What are you sowing? Because, "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more."

- Do you pray daily?
- Are you in The Word?
- Do you surround yourself with people who give life?

It's sowing and reaping.

Proverbs 11:24-25 Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.

You reap what you sow. And "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more." We will miss the blessing of God if we do not sow. God has given each one of us talents, gifting's, and passions. He expects that we will use them to help further His kingdom.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

You have a gift. God gave you that gift. God has prepared a job, only you can accomplish, for you to do.

7. Sowing at MillCity Church

Our purpose at MillCity is to fulfill the Great Commandments (Matthew 22:37-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-30). Our vision is to change history one person at a time as we carry out our mission to Love God, Love People and Love Life... TOGETHER!!

We need YOU. As we prepare for MillCity Oshkosh, we have a season of preparation ahead of us. God needs you to engage in sowing seed as part of your calling of being a Christian and as part of your belonging to the family at MillCity church.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of church? You may wake up on Sunday mornings and decide to go to church. But is church simply a place you go? Is church a destination or is it something more? Take a moment and define "the church." Someone once said, "Church is something we are." What does that mean to you? How might your life look different if you lived as though church was not a destination or an event, but something you are?

2. Do people have a choice as to what type of soil they are? Can the type of soil change? What might help:

- break up hard soil?
- get rid of rocks?
- pull up weeds?

3. Where are you in this parable? Can you think of a way to only sow on the good soil? How can you get a better crop? What will you do to make sure you have a firm root that can withstand persecution? What will you do to bear fruit? What will you do to become a more faithful sower?

4. How have you communed with God recently in the corporate gathering of the church? How have you felt true community recently? What would be some positive attributes of "community" in the context of the church? Do you know your gifts or talents? When you read the statement:

"I will serve in the ministry of MillCity Church by discovering my gifts and talents and serving in some capacity, and by developing a servant's heart.,"

What do you agree or disagree with and why? What encouraged you and what challenged or convicted you? Must serving always be something that others can visibly point to/see being done? What ways might you serve "in the quiet"?