



**Sermon Series:** Mysteries: The Greatest Stories Jesus Told, part 3

**Sermon Title:** 4 Soils

**Speaker/ Date:** Scott McCrea, September 20, 2020

**Matthew 13:1-9, 16-23**

This is a critically important parable for two reasons:

First, it establishes and sets the groundwork for understanding the other parables. Jesus said to his disciples - if they understand this parable, they will understand the rest because this one lays the foundation for the other ones.

The other reason is because it is a very practical parable that gives a framework to understand the different ways people respond to the gospel.

**Big idea: How people respond to the gospel is determined by the condition of their heart**

Jesus uses this story to explain the types of hearts that people have toward the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus had a large crowd following him that wanted to see miracles not hear teaching. Jesus knew this, and it's on this day when he started speaking in parables in order to conceal the truth from those who were looking to be entertained and only revealed the meaning to his true followers.

Jesus he presented the parable to the crowd. He starts out, **"A sower went out to sow**

This is a story about a farmer planting his field. Farmers would plant their fields by hand by grabbing a handful of seeds from a leather pouch and broadcasting the seed out in front of him.

These fields had paths that were packed down dirt - as hard as concrete. When the seed landed on this path, the birds would come down and eat the seed. **Matthew 13:4**

In that region, there are large plates of limestone rock just a couple of inches below the soil. When seed fell on those places, it would burrow down into the ground but it couldn't establish roots. **Matthew 13:5-6**

The farmer would plow the field, but just below the surface lies the roots weeds ready to pop back out and take over the land. **Matt 13:7**

This is good ground. It's rich soil, full of nutrients. It is an ideal place for seed to grow. **Matthew 13:8**

So, Jesus was done presenting this parable, so He finished by saying this, "**he who has ears let him hear.**" He urged those who were seeking truth and who had their spiritual listening ears on to understand and ponder what he said. **Romans 10:17**

And then Jesus just left the crowd - without explaining the parable! Later he explained it to his disciples. He revealed the seed is the gospel of Jesus Christ The sower represents followers of Jesus spreading his word. The different types of soils in the parable are analogies for different kinds of hearts that people have when they hear the word of God.

### **1. Hard Heart Matthew 13:19**

This was the hard soil where the birds ate the seed. This is referring to the person who, when you tell them about Jesus, he or she just doesn't understand the gospel. This person's heart is hard, and it resists allowing God's word to even begin to take root. Then Satan comes in and snatches away the seed of God's word that was presented.

### **2. Shallow Heart Matthew 13:20-21**

This is the person with the shallow heart. This is the person who decided to follow Christ but abandoned their faith when they were persecuted. There was no established root

### 3. Divided Heart *Matthew 13:22*

Now we come to the person with the divided heart. This is where the thorns are – the weeds. It's the person who hears the gospel and is receptive to it, but the cares of the world overpower him or her.

### 4. Fruitful Heart *Matthew 13:23*

The soil of this person's heart is greatly different than the other three – it has been broken up just like the soil in a field is plowed and broken up before planting. This is the person with a heart that hears the gospel, and it is planted in their heart, and it grows and flourishes.

**How people respond to the gospel is determined by the condition of their heart**

The condition of another person's heart as to whether or not to accept the gospel is not up to you. As a follower of Christ, your responsibility is to sow the seed.

The seed is indifferent to the sower. The potential is in the seed regardless of how it is sown. The results of someone embracing of the gospel depends on the condition of the soil, not the skill of the sower.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- When was the last time you shared the gospel with someone? How was the message received?
- Are there any situations where you are hesitant to share the gospel? Explain.

- **In Jesus parable, do you think the people with the shallow heart and the hard heart are saved? Explain.**
- **How would you counsel someone who is living with a spouse with a hard heart? With children who are not currently fertile soil?**