

Jesus On Purpose: The Path Of A Resurrected Heart

SERMON 14: THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER: THE HEART THAT CAN SURVIVE THE HARVEST

Texts: Matthew 13; Luke 8; Mark 4

Prelude:

The Parable of the Sower is not merely about hearing God's Word.

It is about what kind of heart receives it.

Jesus places this parable first because it unlocks every other kingdom parable that follows. The issue is not the quality of the seed. The seed is always good. The issue is not the power of the sower. The sower faithfully scatters the Word.

The issue is the **condition of the heart**.

- The question is **not**: "Did you hear the Word?"
- The question is: "What happened when the Word landed in your heart?"

Because in the Kingdom of God, hearing alone **is not enough**.

I. THE WARNING: RECEPTIVITY IS SPIRITUAL VULNERABILITY

Jesus' warning operates on two levels simultaneously.

When the Word of the Kingdom is heard but not received, spiritual opposition immediately begins.

"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." (Mt 13:19)

- The first soil reveals a hard heart. Truth remains external. It never penetrates.

The Word is heard but **never** embraced.

The tragedy is that many people assume exposure to truth equals transformation.

Jesus says otherwise.

A person can sit under truth for years and remain unchanged.

A person can witness miracles and still resist God.

A person can hear and yet never truly receive.

This is why Jesus quotes Isaiah:

"Seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear." (Mt. 13: 13 / Isa. 6:9,10)

The danger is **not** ignorance. The danger is resistance.

The danger is a heart that slowly becomes closed to God.

And Jesus gives a sobering warning:

"Whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away." (Mt 13:12)

A heart that continually resists truth eventually loses sensitivity to truth.

II. THE THREE THREATS TO THE HUMAN HEART

Jesus identifies three dangers that prevent resurrection life from taking root.

1. The Hardened Heart

- The seed never enters.
- The Word remains information.
- There is no surrender.
- No repentance.
- No transformation.

The evil one easily removes what never became rooted.

A Loving warning: A heart can become so hard that truth simply bounces off it. Not because God has hidden Himself. But because the heart has become closed. This connects directly to the Pharisees demanding signs. The issue was never evidence. The issue was hardness.

*** I think the overwhelming number of people fall into this category. This is not talking about believers; these are people who have been hardened by sin so much that speaking of Jesus is a battle. I am not saying there are "believers" that can't fall in this situation. There are, like the Gay pastor that says being gay is not a sin. Truth can be so unfamiliar to some people as a person being exposed to a culture they have never heard of or fathomed. My guess for those "believers" with this heart, maybe 10%.

2. The Shallow Heart

- This person receives the Word with joy.
- There is excitement.
- Emotion.
- Enthusiasm.
- But there is no depth.
- No root system.
- When affliction comes... When persecution comes... When obedience becomes costly...

The person falls away!

*** If I were to guess this is the primary condition of the western church. I would imagine this would affect about 50% of the church.

- This is not a failure of emotion.
- It is a failure of formation.

The resurrected heart is not merely excited about Jesus. **It is rooted in Jesus.**

3. The Divided Heart

This soil may be the most dangerous because growth actually begins.

- But the Word must compete.
 - The worries of life.
 - The pursuit of wealth.
 - The desire for comfort.
 - The need for control.
 - The fear of losing something.

None of these destroy the plant instantly. They slowly choke it.

The issue is not suffering.

The issue is competing loyalties. This is The church of Pergamos, being a spiritual polygamist.

A divided heart cannot produce a fruitful life.

*** My best guess is that 35% of Christians are here. This is the classic issue of loving God but not Fearing Him.

III. THE RESURRECTED HEART JESUS IS LOOKING FOR

The good soil reveals the heart Jesus is forming.

Luke describes it as:

"An honest and good heart, having heard the word, keeps it and bears fruit with patience." (Lk 8:15)

This heart possesses three qualities.

1- Depth of Understanding

- Not merely agreement.
- Not merely knowledge.

But **truth** that penetrates the soul.

The Word becomes more than information.

It becomes transformation.

2- Rooted Stability

The resurrected heart remains connected to Christ.

- Like a tree with deep roots.
- Like a branch abiding in the vine.

Storms come.

Pressure comes.

Persecution comes.

But the **roots hold**.

3- Undivided Allegiance

The resurrected heart has settled the question of ownership. It belongs to God.

The Word is not competing against a thousand rival loves.

The heart has surrendered.

The seed has room to grow.

IV. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL WARNING: THE HARVEST IS COMING

This is where Jesus moves from discipleship to eternity.

The parable is not ultimately about farming. It is about judgment.

The harvest is the end of the age.

What is hidden today will be revealed then.

What is growing underground now will become visible then. The condition of your heart today determines your standing at the harvest tomorrow. The White linen which is our righteous acts in this life **are not** standard issue like in the military. Some will be dressed like they are going to a chilly evening gala, some will come to the same party with nothing more than pasties. Nakedness in this sense is not a good thing.

The good soil does not bear fruit instantly. It bears fruit patiently. Over time.

- Through seasons.
- Through suffering.
- Through faithfulness.

The harvest simply reveals what the soil has become.

This is why eschatology is not merely future.

The future is being determined by what your heart is becoming right now.

- Every act of surrender.
- Every step of obedience.

- Every root growing deeper.
- Every competing loyalty removed.

All of it is preparation for the day when the Son of Man gathers His harvest.

²***Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears (2nd coming), we shall be like him,***(resurrection of the saints) ***for we shall see him as he is.*** ³***All who have this hope (The Blessed Hope- Titus 2:13) in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.***

*** This is where I struggle with my pessimistic muscle. I do not like it, but my heart burns with how right this may be and feel. I think this is 5% OF THE BODY of Christ. Not just in America and the "West" but the entire World.

V. THE CENTRAL MESSAGE

The Parable of the Sower is ultimately a call to resurrection life.

- The hardened heart cannot receive it.
- The shallow heart cannot endure it.
- The divided heart cannot sustain it.

But the resurrected heart **receives the Word**, allows it **to die within**, takes **root beneath the surface**, and eventually bears fruit that **survives the harvest**.

The question Jesus leaves us with is not:

"Have you heard?"

- The crowds heard.
- The Pharisees heard.
- The disciples heard.

The question is:

"What kind of soil are you becoming?"

Because the harvest at the end of the age will not reveal how much seed was scattered.

It will reveal what the seed was **allowed to produce**.

The tragedy is that most heard and remained unchanged.

And the hope of the parable is that even the hardest heart can become good soil when it is broken open, surrendered, and made ready to receive the life of God.

The Parable of the Sower teaches that the Kingdom is not ultimately determined by how much truth we hear, but by whether our hearts are transformed into fertile soil that can **receive, endure, and bear fruit** until the harvest at the end of the age.

***The Next few Parables Jesus delivers explain what the Harvest is, and why we must be ready to receive it, and endure it.