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# The Prodigal Sower and the Four Soils

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**MATTHEW 13:3-9**





## Mark 4:3-9

**Mar 4:3** "Listen *to this!* Behold, the sower went out to sow;

**Mar 4:4** as he was sowing, some *seed* fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up.

**Mar 4:5** "Other *seed* fell on the rocky *ground* where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil.

**Mar 4:6** "And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

**Mar 4:7** "Other *seed* fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

**Mar 4:8** "Other *seeds* fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."

**Mar 4:9** And He was saying, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

# The Sower is unlike other Sowers

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- This sower is out of his mind!
  - Farmers spend months preparing the fields they intend to grow crops in
  - Smart ones are careful to rotate their crops so that as one crop depletes minerals the next crop restores it
  - A good Hebrew farmer would give his land a sabbath rest every 7 years to bless God and trust Him as He works
- There is no farmer who would sow his seed the way seed is sown in this story
- People in Jesus day would have all laughed at the wastefulness of Sower!
- Any farmer good at their job would take extreme care during sowing to maximize their returns!

# The Sower's Concern is the Soil

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- The Sower from Jesus' Parable is unlike any sower his audience would know
- The seed is not his concern nor is it even the harvest but the soils
  - Yes he desires that the soils be fruitful and multiply
  - But he is careless with the seed so that all soils may have the opportunity to multiply under his care
- Likewise, God who loves us and created all of us was seemingly careless with his own son so that we might have the opportunity to multiply under His care
- He is impossibly generous, wasteful even, when it comes to supplying us with His Word, His Son, His Love, Another Chance
  - To change us, transform us, turn us from our selfish, fruitless, barren pursuits
  - Into fruitful, co-laborers of His plan

# The Sower Sees what Might Be

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- The Sower does not care about the outward appearance of the soil!
  - The soil is hard, has been beaten and trampled down.
  - Can my Word take root and grow there? Lets see...
  - The soil is deceptive, it looks good, but is filled with stones, and secret sins!
  - Can my Word take root and grow there? Lets see...
  - The soil is distracted and double-minded and growing fruitless weeds
  - Can my Word take root and grow there? Lets see...
- What about the good soil?
  - There is no good soil!
  - Only soil that has been transformed from a combination of these three kinds.

# The Hard Soil By the Road

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- Mar 4:4 as he was sowing, some *seed* fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up.
  - Beside the road, near to well traveled, heavily trampled areas
  - Perhaps even paved over, cosmopolitan, and world-wise
  - Hard heartedness—not caring to understand makes it easy to dismiss the Word
  - Without desire or need to receive the word it means nothing and is taken away and forgotten almost immediately
- God sows anyway in the hope that it is received

*Mar 4:15 "These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them."*

# The Fix for Hard Soil By the Road

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- Hard soil can be made fruitful but first it must be broken
- The hard exterior needs to be cracked as can only be done by the sower
  - Difficulty, tragedy, sorrow and loss are often tools used to break up hard soil
  - Only as the shell of dirt is pulverized and broken up can it be made fruitful
- Birds that steal the seed away can be hunted and defeated—Christ has done so
- For our hearts we must be in the Word, allow the Word to penetrate our hearts, accept no substitutions, study it with both our minds and our hearts,
- We must not allow our hearts to grow hard by maintaining relationship
- We must pray that other's hearts are made soft to receive His Word instead of allow it to be taken

# The Rocky Soil

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*Mar 4:5 "Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil.*

*Mar 4:6 "And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. .*

- Initial acceptance! Growth, change, alteration! [Pre existing]
- No depth of heart, no depth of character, no stick-to-it devotion
- Convenient for a time to have a “change” of heart
- But when faced with a challenge to character falls away
  - The rich young ruler Matthew 19:16-24

# The Fix for Rocky Soil

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Mar 4:17 and they have no *firm* root in themselves, but are *only* temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.

- The fix is simple: move the rock!
  - Need to know it's there—the word will find it
  - Need to realize it has to be removed
  - Need to ask for help from God and from friends to make sure the rock doesn't sneak back
  - Teach me to trust, teach me to properly value, help me throw these out

# Weeds and Thorn Filled Soil

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*Mar 4:7 "Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.*

- Again, initial acceptance! Growth, change, alteration!
- Depth of heart—but distracted...
  - Weeds and thorns are both problems that grow the longer they are left alone
  - If you are on top of them they can be removed with two bare fingers
  - If you've let them take root a chainsaw might not be enough to finish the job
  - May not even be 'bad' things [good thing→god thing→weed thing]
  - Things that choke out your time, treasure, talents→could be used for growth

# The Fix for Weeds Filled Soil

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*Mar 4:18 "And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word,*

*Mar 4:19 but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

- Worry is no match for THE Sower and all we have God has given us
- The idolatrous distractions must be identified and dealt with
  - Cut out if of no value
  - Cut back if of some value but distracting from our service to Him, one another, and community
- Prayer, Accountability, keeping track of days successfully overcome our idols

# Good Soil

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*Mar 4:8 "Other seeds fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."*

*Mar 4:20 "And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."*

- Natural state of soil free from hard soil, rocks below and weeds through out
- Yielded—did-o-mee **adventure**, bestow, bring forth, **commit**, deliver (up), **give**, **grant**, hinder, make, **minister**, number, offer, have power, put, receive, set, shew, smite, strike, **suffer**, take, utter, **yield**.

# How Good is Your Soil?

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- Is your heart fruitful or hardened by the road? [open to, growing in the Word?]
- Is your heart fruitful or is it halted by rocks? [growing in character?]
- Is your heart fruitful or is it distracted? [Growing unhindered by idols?]
- How goes your: Adventure? Commitment? Ministry? Suffering? Growth?
- How goes your job of increasing the sower's harvest?