

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 13:8 & 23 | Three Ways to Spiritual Abundance
Sunday March 10, 2024

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 13.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- Notes are in the foyer. Take them home with you.

REVIEW:

We are in the beginning stages of studying the Parables of Jesus.

Over the past few Sundays, we have seen Jesus make a change in the means, mode, and style of His teaching.

Jesus has gone from teaching with clarity, purity, and power to speaking now in riddles—called Parables.

We have learned that a parable is

LW KEYPOINT:

Parable: a simple story that illustrates a profound spiritual truth.

A parable is a sign that points to something beyond itself.

forex:

As we drive through Jerome to get over the hill, there are many signs that guide the way.

Most of them point to the 90-degree turn that is ahead—stating, ‘slow down.’

If you go too fast, you will hurt yourself or someone else.

And so it is with parables. —they are signs that point to something beyond itself.

LW KEYPOINT:

Parables both reveal and conceal Gospel-centered truths.

They do so at the same time to different people.

Illustration:

Think of the last time you shared Jesus with two people....

So we studied the *Parable of Soils* last Sunday.

As we did so, we learned *Three Ways to Spiritual Disaster*.

We learned that each soil reveals the state of someone's heart.

The *hard soil* represents the person with a hard heart.

A hard-hearted person doesn't care about the things of God—so the Gospel seeds simply bounce off him.

Therefore, it's impossible for him to grow or bear fruit spiritually at this moment.

When we come across a hard-hearted person and get a red light on the Gospel—

Our job is not to take a jack-hammer to the soil but instead love him where he's at.

Remember, the Gospel is all about God's grace.

Our job is to toss the seed—not to make anyone grow. *believe*

Next, we learned that the *rocky soil* represents someone who receives/takes the Gospel temporarily—that is until his friends, family, and coworkers start to make fun of him for his faith.

LW KEYPOINT 4:

The Rocky-Hearted person received the Gospel message rather than believed in the Gospel message.

LW KEYPOINT 6:

The 'Rocky Receivers' feelings changed—but his heart did not.

Lastly, we examined how the thorny soil represented someone with a strangled heart.

This person's heart is in love with the world.

Jesus said you can't have two masters. (Matt. 6:24) = You can't have two loves,

And since the Thorny-Hearted man loved the world, he too, is unable to produce fruit.

INTRODUCTION:

Each of those three soils represent three hearts—The hard heart. The shallow heart. The strangled heart.

None of these soils (aka human hearts) produced spiritual fruit, and that's a problem.

And they didn't produce fruit because they didn't believe.

But the problem is also the key that reveals the profound spiritual truth within the parable—the key is bearing spiritual fruit!

What good is a fruit tree if it doesn't produce any fruit?

What good is a Christian, if they don't share the Gospel to bear spiritual fruit?

It's not good—Jesus actually curses a fruit tree and kills it for not doing what its designed to do. (Mark 11:12)

All that to say this— we learned that the first three soils are spiritually dirty and polluted.

There was no purity to the soil—those soils are all contaminated.

Those soils (aka people's hearts) have a mixture of other loves and priorities in this life that prevent them from bearing fruit.

So, we are zero for three.

The question before us today is, how do we hear, listen, believe, and actually produce spiritual fruit? ~

In other words: *As Christians* How do we finish life well?

The answer lies in the fourth soil.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 13:3—Then he told them many things in parables, saying, "Consider the sower who went out to sow.

Matthew 13:4— As he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them.

Matthew 13:5— Other seed fell on rocky ground where it didn't have much soil, and it grew up quickly since the soil wasn't deep.

Matthew 13:6— But when the sun came up, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away.

Matthew 13:7— Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it.

Matthew 13:8—Still other seed fell on good ground and produced fruit: some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times what was sown.

Matthew 13:9— Let anyone who has ears listen."

Matthew 13:18— "So listen to the parable of the sower:

Matthew 13:23— *But the one sown on the good ground—this is one who hears and understands the word, who does produce fruit and yields: some a hundred, some sixty, some thirty times what was sown."*

These are the very words from the authoritative, inerrant, inspired, and infallible Word of Almighty God.

PRAY:

How I love your instruction! It is my meditation all day long. (Psalm 119:97)

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 13:8—*Still other seed fell on good ground and produced fruit: some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times what was sown.*

Jesus' explanation...

Matthew 13:23— *But the one sown on the good ground—this is one who hears and understands the word, who does produce fruit and yields: some a hundred, some sixty, some thirty times what was sown."*

The last type of soil is the crescendo to the parable.

It would be easy to assume that good ground refers to good people.

But like many things revealed in Scripture, we want to be very careful before we make that conclusion.

That assumption would lead us to a heretical and terrifying conclusion.

Which is this— Believers are saved not because of the person and work of Jesus Christ—

But rather because we think we're smart enough or moral enough to listen to the Word of God and produce good works on our own.

We want to be extremely careful not to take a theological position on one verse.

Our job as disciples of Jesus is to study the whole counsel of God to see what He has to say about a particular subject.

It doesn't take long for God to reveal that humans are not good people and we have lousy morals—apart from God's grace.

We know this - we see it & feel every day.

Before we move forward with the parable we need to address this truth— man's depravity. = *MAN'S CONDITION - AS THE RESULTS OF THE FALL = GEN 3.*

↳ Radically corrupt

+ **Romans 3:10**—There is no one righteous (good), not even one. *STP*

+ **Romans 3:11**— There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.

+ **Romans 3:12**— All have turned away; all alike have become worthless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one.

Both the OT and NT state that there is no such thing as a “good” person.

+ **Romans 3:13**— Their throat is an open grave; they deceive with their tongues., Vipers' venom is under their lips.,

+ **Romans 3:14**— Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.,

Romans 3:15— Their feet are swift to shed blood;

Romans 3:16— ruin and wretchedness are in their paths,

Romans 3:17— and the path of peace they have not known.,

Romans 3:18— There is no fear of God before their eyes.,

— That's everyone's state apart from God's grace.

Ephesians 2:1— And you were dead in your trespasses and sins

How can a dead person do anything?

In the same way, how can a spiritually dead person do anything spiritual?

Ephesians 2:2— in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient.

Ephesians 2:3— We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also.

So that is our current hopeless state before a holy God—we are dead and a slave to Satan.

Ephesians 2:4— But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us,

Ephesians 2:5— made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!

~~Back to our parable—~~

So the good soil doesn't refer to good people, the good soil refers to God's grace that works through God's people.

With that background, let's continue.

Matthew 13:8—Still other seed fell on good ground and produced fruit:

What is the spiritual fruit that is produced?

Let's begin in the OT:

The Psalmist has much to say about fruit:

Psalm One is often called the Gateway Psalm.

It's the Psalm with a fork in the road.

One road is wide, which leads to death. —physical & spiritual

The other road is narrow and leads to life. —True life on Earth & Eternal life w/ Jesus

Psalm 1:1—How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers!

Psalm 1:2—Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night.

Psalm 1:3— He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Psalm 105:24—The Lord made his people very fruitful;

King Solomon also has much to say about spiritual fruit/Godly wisdom.

Proverbs 8:19—My fruit is better than solid gold,
and my harvest than pure silver.

Proverbs 11:30—The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,

Proverbs 18:21—Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
and those who love it will eat its fruit. = bad fruit/good fruit

The prophets also have much to say about fruit-bearing.

Isaiah 3:10—Tell the righteous that it will go well for them,
for they will eat the fruit of their labor.

The NT specifically tells us what spiritual fruits are:

Galatians 5:16—I say, then, walk by the Spirit, and you will certainly not
carry out the desire of the flesh.

Galatians 5:17—For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the
Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so
that you don't do what you want.

Galatians 5:19—Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality,
moral impurity, promiscuity,

Galatians 5:20—idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of
anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions,

Galatians 5:21— envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. I am warning you about these things—as I warned you before—that those who practice (lifestyle) such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:22— But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

↳ regardless of circumstances

Galatians 5:23— gentleness, and self-control.

Pause—so the question before us is:

- Am I more loving than last year?
- As I grow older, do I have more patience?
- Is there a growing peace in my life?
- Am I a kind person, both with my mouth and my behavior?

As we get older, are we turning into a fine wine that gets better and sweeter over time—or is the fruit of my wine bitter and stale and angry?

Matthew 13:23— But the one sown on the good ground—this is one who hears and understands the word, who does produce fruit...

Notice the threefold order in how this person bears fruit.

First he hears, second he understands and third he produces fruit.

Now, all this doesn't happen quickly—that's why Jesus uses so many farming analogies.

For us to bear spiritual fruit takes a lifetime.

KEYPOINT 1:

Bearing good fruit is the genuine mark of a born-again Believer.

We This person exhibits the attitudes that were just listed in Galatians.

And we see those Attitudes - The fruits of the Spirit At the church in Colossae

Colossians 1:3—We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,

Colossians 1:4— for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints

Colossians 1:5— because of the hope reserved for you in heaven. You have already heard about this hope in the word of truth, the Gospel.

Colossians 1:6— that has come to you. It is bearing fruit and growing all over the world.

KEYPOINT 2:

Spiritual fruit is the inevitable product of Christ-centered life.

Jesus now speaks about this product through yields or results

Matthew 13:23— ...this is one who hears and understands the word, who does produce fruit and yields:

Yield—to bring forth, to cause to be, to make to be, to bring upon or about.

Question: Can we make anything happen spiritually?

Can we bring forth anything spiritually?

Can we cause anything to be spiritual?

No, *→ remains* **whatever is born of the flesh is flesh**, (John 3:6)

For us to bear fruit spiritual, we must first be born again.

Have you ever noticed that God's ways are foreign to us?

God's will/ways are counterintuitive.

Many times, they don't make any sense to us.

However, just because we don't understand God—that doesn't mean we can't trust Him.

There is a mystery that were a part of—and Jesus gives us a glimpse of that mystery in another parable.

Mark 4:26—*"The kingdom of God is like this," he said. "A man scatters seed on the ground.*

Mark 4:27—*He sleeps and rises night and day; the seed sprouts and grows, although he doesn't know how.*

Don't think scientifically, but spiritually—it's not so much how the seed grows, but why?

Mark 4:28—*The soil produces a crop by itself—first the blade, then the head, and then the full grain on the head.*

Farming takes hard work and lots of time.

The apostle Paul takes Jesus' farming illustration and says this...

1 Corinthians 3:7—*neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.*

↳ *Yield: ME*

KEYPOINT 3:

Our yield is a sacred mystery.
(Results)

And look at the yields that Jesus refers to—

Matthew 13:23— *some a hundred, some sixty, some thirty times what was sown."*

The average yield in Israel was less than eight to one.

So even Jesus' least productive yield—thirty times—was almost four times the average!

That's 10,000 percent, 6,000 percent, and 3,000 percent!

Now that's something we can all invest in.

KEYPOINT 4:

True Believers produce spiritual fruit only by God's grace.

Farmers work hard.

No farmer in his right mind waits at the grain elevator while his harvest is being weighed and says, "Wow, I did an amazing job this year!"

Only a foolish farmer takes credit for his crops.

The wise farmer marvels at the miracles of land, seed, growth, and harvest and gives thanks the Lord.

The wise farmer gives all the credit back to God.

Question: What's the numeric difference within the yield? *hearts*

Matthew 13:23— *some a hundred, some sixty, some thirty times what was sown."*

(we)
Disciples are not all the same.

We have all been chosen by God and given specific spiritual gifts.

And we are to use God's gifts as He sees fit.

We all have different talents and varying degrees of talent.

A great illustration of talent— is in the *Parable of the Talents*—the name says it all!

Matthew 25:14— “For it is just like a man about to go on a journey. He called his own servants and entrusted his possessions to them.

Matthew 25:15— To one he gave five talents, to another two talents, and to another one talent, depending on each one's ability.

It's The Master who provides our talents.

Those talents come from The Master's treasury.

Unlike gold and silver, The Master's currency is measured in love, grace, mercy and forgiveness.

KEYPOINT 5:

God measures our spiritual fruit by how well we invest in His currency.

In fact, our future assignments in the Kingdom of God reflect our fruit-bearing here and now.

We differ in fruit-bearing, but we are all designed to be fruitful.

There is a danger of bearing fruit—comparison.

It's easy to look over into somebody else's field and go, WOW, I've got some work to do.

I'm starting late on this—I need to catch up.

It's easy to look at the apostles Paul, Peter, and John.

We look at Martin Luther, John Calvin, Charles Spurgeon, and Dieterich Bonhoeffer.

Or maybe we look across the street and compare ourselves to other churches and ministries.

Please know that we are not in competition with our Brothers and Sisters.

We have our own race to run.

God has gifted you exactly as He wanted.

Now, it is our responsibility to develop those gifts.

The question becomes, are you running His race or your own?

KEYPOINT 6:

The wonder of it all is that any of us actually produce spiritual fruit!

So how do we join God in bearing fruit?

Jesus ends His parable on an encouraging note.

He is not saying, *All Christians will bear fruit, some a little and some a lot.*

What Jesus is saying,

KEYPOINT 7:

All Christians will bear fruit— some a lot, some a lot more, and some a whole lot more!

So, how do we bear fruit?

What are the practical steps in fruit-bearing?

What is our responsibility?

John 15:1—"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

John 15:2— Every branch in me (that's us) that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit.

Here's the practical/pragmatic side of things.

John 15:4— Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me.

John 15:5— I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.

John 15:8— My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.

JESUS = REMAIN X 4 in Two Verses.

Remain—*ménō*—to stay and reside.

PREACH:

What does it honestly look like to *reside*, to *occupy*, and to *live in* Jesus?

What does Jesus mean by “*remaining IN Him?*”

Before I give you three ways to spiritual abundance—let me provide three things that impede our fruit bearing:

3 things - but please know all sin prevents us from bearing fruit

1. **Guilt makes us fruitless.**

↳ Confession & repentance

Guilt fills us with sorrow and self-pity.

If guilt makes us fruitless, faith removes guilt.

Faith teaches us to confess our sins to God.

It is God who declares us righteous through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

It is God who sanctifies us by his Spirit, so we can stop hiding and start living—guilt free!

We are free from guilt & shame.

2. Fear makes us fruitless.

Fear keeps us from talking to people—“what will they think of me?”

Fear keeps us from getting involved in God’s work—“what happens if it’s too hard and I fail?”

You can't fail, if you're walking w/ the Lord.

Fear makes us fruitless, *but the gospel drives out fear.*

3. Greed makes us fruitless.

Greed makes us hoard our money instead of giving it away—because the world teaches that nothing must jeopardize our financial future.

Greed makes us fruitless, *but the gospel drives out greed.*

Jesus is the pearl of great price, worth more than all the world’s treasures (Matt. 13:45).

Now let me give you three Biblical ways to finish life well and bear spiritual fruit in abundance

1. Tithe your time.
2. Make a commitment to your church. (Bride of Christ/Marriage is a commitment).
3. Sow the Gospel seed.

Psalm 92:14 NLT— Even in old age, they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green.

PRAYER

BENEDICTION

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal encouragement and good hope by grace, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good work and word. (2 Thess. 2:16-17)

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/personal-responsibility.html>

