

THE GOOD SOIL - Lesson 4

Matthew 13:8 (NASB) "And others fell on the good soil and *yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

Here we come to the 4th and final soil. Let's begin this passage by reviewing what Jesus says this soil represents:

- I. **Matthew 13:23 (NASB)** "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."
 - a. Why would Jesus call this soil "good" before they'd accepted His message of salvation?
 - b. Recall what Jesus said to the man that called Him "good teacher":
 1. **Luke 18:18-19 (NASB95)** 18 A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.
 - c. Jesus had a larger purpose for telling this ruler this about being good. For our purposes today, we will settle on the general principle of understanding that the only thing "good" in us spiritually is Him.
 1. **Romans 3:11-12 (NASB)** 11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; 12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."
 - d. Why would Jesus call this soil "good" before they'd accepted His message of salvation?
 - e. Is Jesus talking about Spiritually Good or Practically (Morally) Good?
 - f. To Understand Let's Look at the Below Passage
 1. **Luke 18:15-17 (NASB)** 15 And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. 16 But Jesus called for them, saying, "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17 "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."
 - g. Something that He knows that we as believers have come to know is that in order to be saved there must come a time in my life where I've said "What you are saying about yourself, what you're saying about eternal life through Yourself, I believe, I trust".
 - h. Who trusts better than little children? It's why we call it having a childlike faith. Their ability to have faith and trust tends to be greater than adults.
 1. Listen to this statistic: "*The International Bible Society -- indicated that 83% of all Christians make their commitment to Jesus between the ages*

of 4 and 14, that is, when they are children or early youth...but youth or teens aged 14 to 18 have only a 4% probability of doing so. Adults age 19 and over have just a 6% probability of becoming Christians."

<http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ages.htm>

- i. **Deuteronomy 11:18-19 (NLT)** 18 "So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. 19 Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.
- ii. **Proverbs 19:18 (NLT)** Discipline your children while there is hope. Otherwise you will ruin their lives.

2. As parents raising three boys, Laura and I's goal was to provide an environment for them that their hearts would be fertile and receptive when it came time for God to enlighten them to belief in Jesus. Laura and I's goals were to do our best to keep the "Thorns" and "Rocks" (optimal growing conditions or "good" soil) out of their lives so that when drawn there wouldn't be a lot of distractions keeping them from hearing Him.

- i. When I read good soil here that's a place my mind goes, it's more of a practical aspect of the quality of the soil and the environment that a heart or soil was brought up in. THIS DOES NOT MEAN that God doesn't save those soils that have rocks or thorns in them. This passage we are studying is proof of that. This also doesn't mean that good soil doesn't become rocky or thorny as well.

II. **Matthew 13:23 (NASB)** "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it;

a. **Understands-** syniēmi (sün-ē'-ā-mē) - to set or join together in the mind.

1. Understands means to have become a believer.
2. I want you to notice something in our passage though. Jesus takes the time to reiterate that this person understands and He doesn't say that about the Rocky soil or the Thorny soil (both believers as well).
3. Then He says:
 - i. **Who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty** - There are some incredibly important truths for us to see here:

b. **Knowing how you were saved matters**

1. This doesn't mean you have to know the time place you were saved and all of those details, **what this means is understanding what He says biblically about what saved me**, is going to have a significant impact on my walk. Jesus is giving a bridge here to understanding what saved us having a direct impact on my ability to bear fruit.

- i. **Colossians 2:6,8 (NASB)** 6 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.

“A survey of 3,000 people conducted by LifeWay Research and commissioned by Ligonier Ministries found that although Americans still overwhelmingly identify as “Christian,” startling percentages of the nation embrace ancient errors condemned by all major Christian traditions. We are not talking about minor points of doctrine, but core ideas that define Christianity itself.

...Seventy percent of participants—who ranged across socioeconomic and racial backgrounds—agreed there’s only one true God. Yet sixty-four percent also thought this God accepts the worship of all religions, including those that believe in many gods.

Two-thirds admitted that everyone sins a little bit, but still insisted that most people are good by nature, which directly contradicts scripture. Over half said it’s fair for God to exercise his wrath against sin, but seemed to waffle about which sins deserved wrath (not theirs!). Seventy-four percent said the “smallest sins” don’t warrant eternal damnation, in contrast to Jesus’ brother, who when writing at the Holy Spirit’s inspiration taught that even one infraction of God’s law is enough to sink someone. But really, what did he know?

As before, it’s really the contradictory answers, not the outright heresies, that should most concern us. By definition, the evangelicals in this survey believed that “only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God’s free gift of eternal salvation.” Yet nearly half agreed that “God accepts the worship of all religions including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.”

Two-thirds of evangelicals said heaven is a place where all people will ultimately be reunited with their loved ones. It’s striking how many of these folks evidently see no contradiction between universalism and the evangelical creed that salvation comes through faith in Christ alone.

“There is a lot in this survey which shows that the respondents are not even being internally consistent,” Timothy Larson, a professor of Christian thought at Wheaton College, told Christianity Today...

Two out of five evangelicals say “worshipping alone or with family is a valid replacement for regularly attending church”. Should we marvel that so many Christians shrug off church when so few congregations teach the foundational doctrines of the faith, or even delve very deeply into the book from which those doctrines come?

Former Newsday religion reporter Kenneth Briggs recently told Religion News Service that the faith he finds in “mega-type churches” is a “Bible-less,” “alternative version of Christianity.” Scripture, he says, has become “a museum exhibit, hallowed as a treasure but enigmatic and untouched.”

In his book, "The Invisible Bestseller: Searching for the Bible in America," he describes a two-year pilgrimage across the country, visiting hundreds of churches to find Christians who were still literate in their own sacred text.

The Bible remains phenomenally popular, of course. Practically everyone has one in his or her home, and many families own four or five. But Briggs characterizes our love for the Bible as love for an "artifact," a "keepsake," or a lucky "rabbit's foot." This talisman of faith mainly stays on the shelf or mantle next to the urn filled with grandpa's ashes.

Briggs says it was in a prison, not a church, where he encountered the most vibrant and intimate familiarity with God's Word. Most everywhere else, his observations confirmed a recent Barna survey conducted for the American Bible Society, which found that less than half the country can name the first five books of the Old Testament, and that a similar number think John the Baptist was one of Jesus's twelve disciples.

Why does it matter that we've become a nation of doctrinal dunces? What harm is there in flunking Christianity 101? Well, for Christians, the answer is obvious. If we really believe what we profess—that the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single most important fact of history and eternity—then we ought to desire to improve our grade. Knowing who the God we claim to worship is can no longer be a third priority if we want the world to take us seriously as his followers.

*Recall also that Jesus told us knowing the truth sets us free. **Believing lies enslaves people.** It should be a priority for us to continually seek truth, rather than comfort. Christ also told us the greatest commandment includes loving God with our minds. That means dusting off grandpa's Bible, and revisiting [what it is that we believe].'*

<https://thefederalist.com/2016/10/10/survey-finds-american-christians-actually-heretics/>

- ii. Colossians 2:6-8 (NASB95)** 6 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

 - a. How did we receive Christ? Grace!
 - b. Grace is how we walk then. It's hard to walk in the free gift of grace if we believe we did something to earn that gift.
 - c. If I were the enemy the first thing I'd do is get people away from The Word through distractions or having it taught inaccurately.
 - d. Philosophy and empty deception coming from man's traditions and worldly principles.
2. What's God's principle for Salvation? = There is no work required because my son has done it all. Yet I'll offer the gift of eternal life to you even though you didn't earn it or deserve it.

3. God's principle is GRACE.
4. There is a VERY important spiritual truth in this passage as it relates to your sanctification walk. Understanding what saved you, understanding how you came to the faith will have a tremendous impact on how you walk out your spiritual life.

III. Let's Make Sure We Establish How We Were Saved Then:

- a. **Ephesians 2:8-10 (NLT)** 8 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. 10 For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.
- b. **Acts 16:30-31 (NASB)** 30 and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."
- c. I want to make sure that I reiterate a point from Ephesians.
 1. Ephesians 2:8 says He saved us by His grace so that there wouldn't be ANY way that we could take credit for it.
 2. It was deliberate on God's part that if there was anything that you could take credit for it would be a problem.
 3. "There is a lot in this survey which shows that the respondents are not even being internally consistent," Timothy Larson
- d. **CHALLENGE** - Verbalize sometime how someone is saved. Don't quote scripture, just verbalize it and see what comes out. Pretend you are witnessing to someone and see what you say. It's harder than you might think.
- e. What saves you is belief in Jesus Christ, none of the other so called things that many say you need to do to be saved. Some of those things are:
 1. Repenting of your sins
 2. Being Baptized
 3. Believing Wholeheartedly or having some type of Saving Faith other than simply Belief.
 4. Attending Religious Classes
- f. What is the problem with those things? If I feel that they had anything to do with my salvation what will my walk after salvation look like?
- g. If I helped Him with my SALVATION, why wouldn't I also believe that need to help Him with my SANCTIFICATION?
- h. This is a problem, enough of one that Paul points it out in his letter to the Galatians:
 1. **Galatians 3:2-3 (NASB)** 2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?
- i. He saved you, He sanctifies you

1. **Philippians 1:6 (NASB)** For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

