



## First Baptist Church Selmer

THE "HEART" OF THE MATTER • THE "GOOD" HEART •  
MATTHEW 13:8, 23; LUKE 8:8, 15; MATTHEW 7:15-20 • 11/27/2022

### MAIN POINT

Followers of Jesus with hearts receptive to the Word of God will display growth and bear fruit to prove it.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**How many of you raise a garden? For those that do, what do you enjoy most about it?**

**How important is it to have the right type of soil?**

If you have attempted to grow things in McNairy County for very long, you will notice that our soil is not naturally favorable to produce a bountiful crop. It is sufficient but soil testing is often needed to understand the amount of lime as well as fertilizer to add to the soil in order to maximize its potential.

A few years ago I traveled to Greenville, Mississippi which lies in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. If anyone has traveled there you may have noticed that their soil looks very different than the soil here. Labeled as some of the most fertile soil in the United States, the soil is almost black. Very similar actually to the color of potting soil that you may buy at a retail store.

It is really quite remarkable to see it and its natural color. However, what seems natural hasn't always been that way. The Mississippi Delta has been enriched by centuries of river flooding that has brought nutrients to the soil that we see today. It didn't happen overnight or even in a year. It was slow, but it was effective.

It can easily relate to our passage today about the "good soil." We are to "bear fruit with patience." It doesn't happen overnight but the soil of our hearts should become more fertile by

the day leading us to share its fruit with those around us.

## UNDERSTANDING

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 13:8 & LUKE 8:8

*Matthew 13:8 "Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." (ESV)*

*Luke 8:8 "And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." (ESV)*

**How important is the soil in regard to how well a plant grows?**

**What happened to the seeds that fell in good soil?**

**Not only do we see that growth is evident but what else is produced?**

Spiritual fruit is the ultimate sign of salvation. The seeds that fell in the good soil were the seeds that produced fruit. We have looked over the last few weeks at seeds that fell by the wayside, the stony ground, and the thorny soil. Each soil had the potential to produce fruit but was hindered in one way or another. But today we see that the seeds that find the good soil not only experience growth but bear fruit ultimately leading to a bountiful harvest.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 13:23 & LUKE 8:15

*Matthew 13:23 "As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty." (ESV)*

*Luke 8:15 "As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience." (ESV)*

**Jesus explains the good heart is one that hears the Word and understands the word, but what else?**

**What are some examples of the fruit that is produced by someone that is truly saved?**

The Word that is sown in the good heart is the individual who hears the Word, understands the Word, receives the Word, is saved by the Word, and produces fruit according to the Word. The

bearing of fruit does not lie with the sower or even the seed but with the condition of the soil in which it falls.

Not everybody produces the same amount of fruit (Matt. 13:8), but all true believers will produce some fruit as evidence of spiritual life. That fruit may include winning others to Christ (Rom. 1:13), money given to God's work (Rom. 13:25-28), good works (Col. 1:10), Christian character (Gal. 5:22-23), and praise to the Lord (Heb. 13:15). (*Warren Wiersbe*)

**Have you ever tried to share your faith with someone but it never seemed to take root?**

**Luke specifies "bear fruit with patience." What is significant about patience as it relates to bearing fruit?**

Sharing our faith with little to no response can be a very discouraging thing even for the most mature believers. Whether we question our technique or even the power of our own testimony, it is easy to become discouraged when there seems to be little response.

It is important to understand two truths when it comes to "bearing fruit with patience." First, all fruit must go through a growing season before it can be harvested. And secondly, there are degrees of fruit-bearing. The Bible says in Romans 12:6, "*Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...*" We are not called to be something different than the gifts God has graciously given us however, we, ALL, still have something we are supposed to be doing.

The wonder of fruit-bearing is not that some produce fruit and others do not, but the fact that anyone does!!!! The thought that God would use sinners saved by His grace to reach other sinners doesn't seem like the best evangelism strategy but it is exactly what God has and will continue to use until His return.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 7:15-20

*15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits." (ESV)*

**What does Scripture say about a tree that is healthy?**

**If a tree is diseased, what type of fruit will it bear?**

**What is the end result of a tree that does not bear good fruit?**

As Jesus speaks in Matthew 7, many sitting in the crowd including the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes were listening. Although seen as the most religious among the people, Jesus was warning everyone about them. The scribes and Pharisees had fooled themselves into believing that they were righteous and others were sinful. Even though they could speak the right language and believe the right doctrines, their hearts were far from God.

If a good heart is to produce good fruit then it must have undergone some type of transformation. We are incapable of producing godly fruit without first coming into a saving relationship with Jesus himself. It is impossible to walk two roads in two directions at the same time. We are either living in right relationship with Jesus, therefore, producing good fruit, or we are not.

Obedience to His will is the test of true faith in Christ.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**In what active ways can we till the soil of our hearts to make us ready to receive the word of God? Before worship? Before our group? Before our personal time with God?**

**Why is it not enough to just hear the word of God? What does putting it into practice reveal about our commitment to Him?**

**How can we be sure that we are in right relationship with Jesus? What do we need to do if we are not?**

## PRAYER

Thank God for graciously giving us His Word. Pray that God would give us eyes to see and ears to hear the glorious truth of the gospel. Pray that God's Word would take deep root in our hearts such that it produces faithful obedience and visible fruit.

## COMMENTARY

| LUKE 8:4-8

Initially, the sower is Jesus Christ, but the sower represents any of God's people who share the Word of God (John 4:35-38). The seed is the Word of God, for, like the seed, the Word has life and power (Heb. 4:12) and can produce spiritual fruit (Gal. 5:22-23). But the seed can do nothing until it is planted (John 12:24). When a person hears and understands the Word, then the seed is planted in the heart. What happens after that depends on the nature of the soil.

The seed without the soil is fruitless, and the soil without the seed is almost useless. The human heart is like soil: if it is prepared properly, it can receive the seed of the Word of God and produce a fruitful harvest.

Jesus described four different kinds of hearts, three of which did not produce any fruit. The proof of salvation is fruit and not merely hearing the Word or making a profession of faith in Christ. Jesus had already made that clear in His "Sermon on the Mount."

*The good soil* (v. 8, 15) This soil alone is fruitful. It illustrates the individual who hears the Word, understands it, receives it within, is truly saved, and proves it by patiently producing fruit (1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:22-25). Not everybody produces the same amount of fruit (Matt. 13:8), but all true believers will produce some fruit as evidence of spiritual life. That fruit may include winning others to Christ (Rom. 1:13), money given to God's work (Rom. 13:25-28), good works (Col. 1:10), Christian character (Gal. 5:22-23), and praise to the Lord (Heb. 13:15).

This parable shows that Jesus was not impressed by the great crowds that followed Him. He knew that most people did not really "hear" the Word and receive it in their hearts. He gave this story to encourage the disciples in their future ministry, and to encourage us today. When you consider how much teaching, preaching, and witnessing goes on in the course of a month or a year, you wonder why there is such a small harvest. The fault does not lie with the sower or the seed. The problem is with the soil. The human heart will not submit to God, repent and receive the Word, and be saved.

"Faith comes to the hearing ear, not to the cogitating mind," said A.W. Tozer, the much-quoted pastor and author. Faith is not a matter of IQ or education; it is a matter of humbly preparing the heart to receive God's truth (James 1:19-21). The wise and prudent are blind to truths that are easy for the babes to understand (Matt. 11:20-26).

## | MATTHEW 7:15-20

These show that true faith in Christ changes lives and produces fruit for God's glory. Everything in nature produces after its kind, and this is also true in the spiritual realm. Good fruit comes

from a good tree, but bad fruit comes from a bad tree. The tree that produces rotten fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. *"Wherefore, by their fruits you shall know them"* (Matt. 7:20).

The second test is this: *Did my decision for Christ change my life?* False prophets who teach false doctrine can produce only a false righteousness. Their fruit (the results of their ministry) is false and cannot last. The prophets themselves are false; the closer we get to them, the more we see the falsity of their lives and doctrines. They magnify themselves, not Jesus Christ; and their purpose is to exploit people, not to edify them. The person who believes false doctrine, or who follows a false prophet, will never experience a changed life. Unfortunately, some people do not realize this until it is too late.

*(The Wiersbe Bible Commentary by Warren Wiersbe)*