



Independence Church Of Christ

Sharing The Freedom That Is In Christ

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Afternoon Lesson For Sunday, May 24th, 2020

The Parable of the Sower

The Parable of the Sower was told to the crowd that had gathered around Jesus. Jesus tells a story of a sower who scattered seeds on four different types of soil. The first type of ground was hard, and the seed could not sprout or grow at all and became snatched up instantly. The second type of ground was stony. The seed was able to plant and begin to grow, however it could not grow deep roots and withered in the sun. The third type of ground was thorny, and although the seed could plant and grow, it could not compete with the amount of thorns that overtook it. The fourth ground was good soil that allowed the seed to plant deep, grow strong, and produce fruit.

Jesus used this parable to explain to His followers and the disciples how there are different responses to the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. The sower in the parable is Jesus and the seed is the word of God (both Jesus's spoken word and today the Bible). The hard ground represents someone with a hardened heart full of sin that hears the word of God but does not accept it. Satan is able to keep this person from growing at all. The stony ground is someone who shows interest and awareness in the Gospel, yet his heart isn't fully convicted so that when trouble comes his faith is not strong enough to stand. The thorny ground is a person who receives the Gospel but who has many other idols and distractions in life - worries, riches, and lusts, which take over his mind and heart and he cannot grow in the truth of God's Word. The good soil is someone who has heard and received the Word of God and allows it to take root and grow within his life. This person represents true salvation that bears good fruit.

Jesus spoke the Parable of the Sower to teach how important the state of our heart is to receive the Gospel and how our salvation is proved by our choices and actions after hearing the Gospel.

FOUR RESPONSES TO THE GOSPEL



SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 13:1-23

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2 Such large crowds gathered around Him that He got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. 3 Then He told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 9 Whoever has ears, let them hear." 10 The disciples came to Him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" 11 He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. 12 Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 13 This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. 14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. 15 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' 16 But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. 17 For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. 18 Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20 The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 22 The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. 23 But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

Mark 4:1-20

1 Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around Him was so large that He got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. 2 He

taught them many things by parables, and in His teaching said: ³ Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times. ⁹ Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear." ¹⁰ When He was alone, the Twelve and the others around Him asked Him about the parables. ¹¹ He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables ¹² so that they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!" ¹³ Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? ¹⁴ The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵ Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. ¹⁶ Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ¹⁸ Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹ but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²⁰ Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown."

Luke 8:4-15

⁴ While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, He told this parable: ⁵ "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. ⁶ Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown." When He said this, He called out, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear." ⁹ His disciples asked Him what this parable meant. ¹⁰ He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, " 'though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.' ¹¹ "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. ¹² Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. ¹³ Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. ¹⁴ The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. ¹⁵ But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

CONCLUSION:

The Parable of the Sower concerns a sower who scatters seed, which falls on four different types of ground. The hard ground “by the wayside” prevents the seed from sprouting at all, and the seed becomes nothing more than bird food. The stony ground provides enough soil for the seeds to germinate and begin to grow, but because there is “no deepness of earth,” the plants do not take root and are soon withered in the sun. The thorny ground allows the seed to grow, but the competing thorns choke the life out of the beneficial plants. The good ground receives the seed and produces much fruit.

Jesus’ explanation of the Parable of the Sower highlights four different responses to the gospel. The seed is “the word of the kingdom.” The hard ground represents someone who is hardened by sin; he hears but does not understand the Word, and Satan plucks the message away, keeping the heart dull and preventing the Word from making an impression. The stony ground pictures a man who professes delight with the Word; however, his heart is not changed, and when trouble arises, his so-called faith quickly disappears. The thorny ground depicts one who seems to receive the Word, but whose heart is full of riches, pleasures, and lusts; the things of this world take his time and attention away from the Word, and he ends up having no time for it. The good ground portrays the one who hears, understands, and receives the Word—and then allows the Word to accomplish its result in his life. The man represented by the “good ground” is the only one of the four who is truly saved, because salvation’s proof is fruit (Matthew 3:7-8; 7:15-20).

To summarize the point of the Parable of the Sower: *“A man’s reception of God’s Word is determined by the condition of his heart.”* A secondary lesson would be *“Salvation is more than a superficial, albeit joyful, hearing of the gospel. Someone who is truly saved will go on to prove it.”* May our faith and our lives exemplify the *“good soil”* in the Parable of the Sower.