

PARABLE OF THE FOUR KINDS OF SOIL

Matthew 13:3-8; 18-23

Introduction: Jesus taught in parables many times, so what does a "parable" mean? It is a comparison. It is the placing of an illustration alongside of another subject. Sometimes Jesus used things, sometimes people, and sometimes stories, but always recognizable by those who were listening to Him.

In this parable there is the man sowing seed and four different types of soil the seed fell upon. Whether you are a farmer or not, the parable is very understandable.

I. SOME OF THE SEED BEING SOWN FELL BY THE WAYSIDE

1. The "wayside" was meant to mean the field roads that ran along the edge of the fields.
2. There can be two other viewpoints of this thought:
 - The gospel is preached as seed is sown. A person hears the gospel, as the ground receives the seed, but the person hearing does not understand the gospel message for some reason, not so much because his hearing is impaired or he is limited mentally, but more because he is pre-occupied.
 - Another way of viewing this though is that the seed is good, it is not the fault of the one sowing the seed that the wayside does not produce growth. It is because the wayside has not been prepared for planting as has the field. People who are not prepared to receive the gospel for one reason or another are like the unprepared wayside.

II. SOME OF THE SEED FELL ON STONY PLACES

1. "Stony" places meant not gravel or rocks but more like a bed of rock with only a slight covering of soil/dirt.
2. It can mean that a person hears the word and receives it with joy, he/she is emotionally excited and becomes impulsive, like the rich young ruler who came to Jesus or the crowd of people that Jesus left at a lake. They seem to "blossom" for a bit, but never produce any fruit.
 - Then there is where the human heart is like the soil. The heart is hard at first, but with a culturing it is softened a little on the outside (surface). The gospel is accepted but only superficially. Quick to respond in a positive manner but feelings soon die for the feelings lie only on the surface. The conscience and understanding was never deeply reached.
 - This is not a TRUE conversion, a real experience, but not a True heart changing experience.

III. SOME OF THE SEED FELL ON THORNY GROUND

1. "Thorny" ground was any species of useless weed that grew taking up the ground and hindering crop growth.
2. This type of growth takes from the soil that which is needed for the crop to grow and mature on.
 - It outgrows the crop and blocks out the life-giving needs.
 - Spiritual thorns would be worldly cares, anything which takes the place of Christ in the heart.
 - Sin causes a veil to come between a person and Jesus, thus blocking out any love which a person needs, not all at once, but little by little, like weed growth.
 - A double minded person is not ignorant for he/she hears the gospel, understands with the mind and with feeling, realizes the importance, but there are other "needs" there also. The result is that TWO "crops" are struggling for growth and the inevitable result is that the good crop (gospel) is outgrown and fails.
 - A person tries to do two things at once. He/she wants to follow Jesus but also wants to satisfy his/her worldly desires at the same time. Thus little spiritual growth if any.

IV. SOME OF THE SEED FELL ON GOOD GROUND

1. "Good" ground was that which was broken (plowed) deep and clean and would bring a good crop and harvest although some areas would produce more than other areas.
2. A person receives the gospel, retains it and has but one desire, he/she is single minded, the kingdom of God comes first, everything else is secondary.
3. A "hundred-fold" is the return of 100 grains for one single seed.
 - Some single seeds have produced as many as 1000 grains.
 - There are different God-given gifts.
 - There are different amounts of time,effort, energy spent by Christians therefore different results are produced.

CONCLUSION:

1. Out of the four types of soil (hearts), only ONE was/is productive.
2. The Gospel truth can be easily missed as this parable points out.
3. Take this parable with you as you witness for you will experience these four kinds of hearts.
4. Jesus never gave up in witnessing, neither should we.