

Title: THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18-23
(Chatham, NJ; 07/10/11, AM) [E – Expository]

Theme: The Parable of the Sower illustrates the nature and progress of the Gospel as it comes to rest in the human heart.

Purpose: To explain each type of soil and to challenge the audience to consider which soil they want to be.

Introduction:

1. A narrative of the Gospel's effect on humanity
2. A story of the Kingdom of God
3. An unscientific look at the story of seeds: the seed is the "word of the kingdom" (19), in Luke, "the word of God" (Luke 8:11).
4. It is an allegory; the soils represent people, their hearts, and their responses to the Gospel.
5. Jesus explains it to the disciples and for all of us.
6. The conflict hinges on the issue of hearing; what do people do when they hear the Gospel?

I. Soil along the Path

- A. Seeds are scattered and fall on the road
 1. The seed never penetrates.
 2. Birds come and eat them.
- B. One who hears but does not understand.
 1. Satan (the evil one, the birds) takes away the seeds before the heart can consider the message.
 2. They are capable of understanding but they do not.
 3. They refuse to consider it.
 4. Satan has blinded them:
 - John 12:40-43 illustrates one reason for such unbelief
 - 2 Corinthians 4:4 illustrates another
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 still another
 5. Ephesians 4:18-19 explains the most universal truth: unrighteousness, pleasure, and sensuality harden people's hearts.
 6. They dismiss the message quickly.

II. Soil on Rocky Ground

- A. The seeds on rocky ground
 1. What little soil is there spouts the seeds.
 2. The roots cannot grow deep.
 3. The plants wither quickly because they have no deep roots.
- B. One who hears and receives the message with joy.
 1. This sounds like a strong emotional reaction.
 2. Yet they only endure for a while.
 3. They fall away at the first sign of tribulation and persecution.
 4. No understanding of the message has taken hold deep within their hearts, at the core of their being.
 5. Is this a matter of expectations?
 6. Are they looking only for an emotional high?
 7. That the Christian walk can be a struggle is affirmed:
 - John 15:18, 20, a servant like his master

- 2 Tim. 3:12, we will be persecuted
 - Acts 14:22, with many tribulations
8. Anything worth having comes with obstacles.

III. Soil among the Weeds

A. Thorns and seeds together

1. Weeds grow up to crowd out the good seed.
2. They rob the good plants of nourishment and water.
3. Weeds take over quickly; any gardener knows this.
4. The farmer must be diligent in cleaning out the weeds.

B. Hears the word but keeps listening to other voices

1. This person hears too many other things.
2. The word is choked out by competing voices.
3. Cares of the world: legitimate concerns for practical necessities.
4. Jesus counsels us to dispense with anxiety, Mt. 6:25ff.
5. There are also times that we think about all manner of things we have no control over; these too consume our time and energy worthlessly.
6. Deceitfulness of riches: deceit is the key word.
7. Riches are an opportunity (1 Tim. 6:17-19) to do good.
8. The soil becomes unfruitful because of all the distractions.

IV. Good Soil

A. Seeds in Good Soil

1. They grow.
2. They produce.
3. Not all produce equally, but all are acceptable.

B. Hearing is heeding.

1. Matthew says they hear and understand.
2. Mark says they accept.
3. Luke says they "hold fast...with an honest and good heart...bear fruit with patience."
4. They comprehend, have depth of character, avoid unnecessary entanglements, and work responsibly to produce.
5. Fruit consists of godly character, good works, and obedience.
6. By such things will we gain entrance into eternal life, 2 Peter 1:8.

Conclusions:

1. This is all about hearing because of what Jesus says in verse 9: "He who has ears, let him hear."
2. In fact, hearing is more than audible perception; hearing is heeding.
3. The burden of response falls on the listener.
4. Which soil do we want to be?
5. At any given point we might appear to be one or the other, but we always have the option to develop the soil that is our heart.
6. From another angle, we must be encouraged to know that Jesus' message will produce fruit; Isaiah 55:11 reminds us that God's word works.
7. Will you allow it to work in your life?
8. Belief and obedience accompany hearing.