

ECCLESIA CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST
BIBLE ENRICHMENT SERIES

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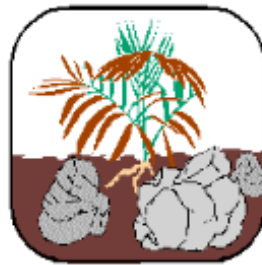
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The Parable of the Sower

The Seed is the Word of God



The Path



The Rocky Soil



The Weedy Soil



The Good Soil

What type of Soil are You?

Is God Growing in Your Heart?

KEY VERSES: Matthew 13: 1-9 King James Version (KJV)

13 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.² And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.³ And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;⁴ And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:⁵ Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:⁶ And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.⁷ And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:⁸ But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.⁹ Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Matthew 13: 1-9 Amplified Bible (AMP)

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting beside the sea [of Galilee]. ² But such large crowds gathered around Him that He got into a boat and sat there [positioning Himself as a teacher], while the whole crowd stood on the shore.³ He told them many things in ^[a]parables, saying, "Listen carefully: a sower went out to sow [seed in his field]; ⁴ and as he sowed, some *seed* fell beside the road [between the fields], and the birds came and ate it. ⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil; and at once they sprang up because they had no depth of soil. ⁶ But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, and thorns came up and choked them out. ⁸ Other seed fell on good soil and yielded grain, some a hundred times as much [as was sown], some sixty [times as much], and some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears [to hear], let him hear *and* heed My words."

INTRODUCTION.

Matthew 13 focuses mainly on a series of parables. Jesus first describes these to a large crowd along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus begins His first parable (Matthew 13:1-9) by describing the act of planting a field. The whole parable has to do with the Sower (farmer), the seed, and the four kinds of soil into which the seed fell.

Later, in a house, He explains to the disciples the meanings of the parables of the sower, the weeds, and the fish caught in the net.

What is a parable? It is an illustration- *an earthly story with a heavenly meaning*. A story that is true to life and that is told in the form of a parable, to make the truth clearer and easier to understand.

Jesus pictures a sower, something His audience could easily picture in their minds. The sower would carry a pouch with seeds of grain or would have held them in the folds of their clothes. The sower grabbed handfuls and scattered them thoroughly across as much of the field as possible.

Obviously, this is very different from modern farming practices, where machines deliberately place seeds in massive, straight rows. In the ancient world, sowing a field like this meant hoping for as much seed as possible to take root and grow. The more seed was scattered, the more potential crops there were to gain.

Let's examine this parable. **THE SOWER, THE SEED AND THE SOIL (GROUND/HEARER).**

1. There are three important parts that need to be clearly understood.

(1) *The Sower (Farmer) is our Lord Himself.* Look up Matthew 13:37. When He was here on earth, He sowed the seed. Today He still sows the seed through all who faithfully preach His Word (1 Corinthians 3:6).

(2) *The Seed is the Word of God, consisting of the Gospel and of all the revealed truth of God.* What a wonderful seed it is - look up 1 Peter 1:23! *It is living and life-giving.*

(3) *The Soil is the Human Heart.* Four kinds of soil are mentioned, and it is important to see that there was nothing wrong with the seed. It was the reception of the seed, which was wrong, in three cases and right in one case.

2. The different kinds of ground represent four distinct ways in which the Word is treated by those who hear it.

Whenever the Gospel (the Word of God) is preached by the Lord through His faithful servants, there are four kinds of hearers:

(1) **The HARD-GROUND/PATH hearer.** This parable focuses first on the scattered seeds that *don't* make it to maturity. The interpretation is in verse 4. Here is the person who hears the Word but whose heart is *hard*, without depth; the Word is not received; while it stays on the surface the birds come and take it away. Many people are like that: they come to church, hear the Word, seem to like it - **but the Word is on their hearts, not in their hearts.**

(2) **The STONY/ROCKY GROUND hearer.** Many profess conversion; they even go on well until trouble or persecution comes, and then they give up.

(3) **The THORNY/WEEDY GROUND hearer.** This is the double-minded hearer, one whose heart is worldly and preoccupied with money. Many today appear to receive the word, but when they allow money and possessions to rule their lives the Word becomes choked.

(4) **The GOOD-GROUND/SOIL hearer.** This is the hearer who is honest, receptive, and fruitful.

3. WHAT USEFUL LESSONS CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS PARABLE?

(1) **We must pay close attention to what we hear.** Let's look at Matthew 13:9; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8; and compare Luke 8:18. When the Lord taught this parable, He knew the hearts of His hearers; He also knows our hearts (John 2:25). **What kind of hearers are we?**

(2) **Hearts need to be prepared before they can receive the Word and be saved and blessed.** Just as the soil needs preparing by the farmer, so those of us who minister to souls must prepare the way by much prayer. Prayer breaks up the unploughed ground (Hosea 10:12) and prepares the way for God's Word to be received (Acts 4:29-30).

(3) **Preachers and teachers should not be discouraged when results seem small.** There will always be four kinds of hearers, and we have no promise that all will be saved, or that all who are saved will bear much fruit (John 15:7-8). But we do know 1 Corinthians 15:58!

(4) **Preachers and teachers must aim at a deep work.** There is much superficial top-soil work being done today. Let us beware of this!

(5) **The two-fold objective of all true preaching and teaching is indicated here:** (1) that souls may be saved, converted by believing (Matthew 13:15; Luke 8:12); (2) that those who are saved should bear fruit (Luke 8:15).

(6) **We are warned to beware of special dangers:** (1) Satan is always ready to snatch away the Word (Matthew 13:19; Mark 4:15); (2) troubles are the experiences of every believer (Matthew 13:21; John 16:33); (3) all of us will have to suffer persecution (Matthew 13:21; Acts 5:4); (4) we all experience the worries of this life (Matthew 13:22; Galatians 6:5); (5) some are faced with the danger of riches (Matthew 13:22; Mark 10:23); (6) there is the danger of desires for other things (Mark 4:19); (7) there is the danger of being content with the greatest possible yield of fruitfulness (Matthew 13:23).

(7) **If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples"** (John 8:31).