

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER AND THE SEED UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM SERIES

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INTRO: There are 40 parables in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. There are no parables in the Gospel of John. A parable is a story that reveals a spiritual truth about God's Kingdom. You don't want to build a whole theological truth based on a parable, but parables are stories that bring insight and help to illustrate biblical truths.

I want to begin in the Gospel of Matthew, since we just finished a series on the Sermon on the Mount. In fact, there are five major discourses in the Gospel of Matthew: Matthew 5-7, Matthew 10, Matthew 13, Matthew 18 and Matthew 23-25. I think it is significant that Matthew places the parables at the heart, in the middle of his gospel.

The Parable of the Sower is a parable where Jesus immediately gives the explanation of the parable, and He does this point by point.

There is one Sower, God. Jesus said, "The seed is the Word of the Kingdom." Specifically, the seed is the Gospel of the Kingdom.

The title of the series, "Unlocking the Mysteries of the Kingdom," comes from the following verses:

Matthew 13:10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" ¹¹ Jesus answered them, "*To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.* ¹² For whoever has, to him *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him."

I. THE FOUR TYPES OF SOIL

A. THE HARD SOIL

1. Matthew 13:18 "Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ When anyone hears

the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.”

2. The path by the road is also hard because people walk on the ground next to the road.

3. Satan and the demonic powers can steal the Word if you don't understand the Word. "To understand" does not mean to intellectually understand but to experience the Word. The word "understand" means to walk out in an experience. We have so many with head knowledge without experience or encounters. For example, you can go to business school and get head knowledge, but it is a whole different game if you have started a business and grow a business.

4. Matthew 13:13 “Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; ¹⁵ For the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them.”

5. Jesus is now giving an illustration to affirm His quote in Isaiah that people are so blind that they cannot see. Their hearts are so dull that they can't receive the truth. That doesn't mean that God doesn't love them or want them saved. In fact, the parable teaches that some seeds fell on good soil and they bore fruit. He desires all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. That is why we have to pray, because Satan has blinded the eyes of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:4). And we have to keep preaching the Word because some will receive it.

6. If you told a group of people today that Jesus is the only way to eternal life, most in the group won't believe that is true; some will say you are intolerant at best, a racist at worst. I have to respond by saying: Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

7. But with the first type of soil, Jesus explains that Satan will steal the Word from your heart. Satan comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

B. THE ROCKY SOIL

1. Matthew 13:20 “The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or

persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.”

2. Because of the Word, the persecution came. The Word will test you (Psalm 105:19).

3. The Greek word *thlipsis* means “trouble, tribulation, anguish, pressure.”

4. This is not only trials and tribulations, but the context is persecution (*diogmos*).

5. I have heard many stories of people giving their hearts to the Lord and being persecuted by their family members. Not just a Muslim family, Jewish family, or Buddhist family, but a Christian family.

C. THE THORNY SOIL

1. Matthew 13:22 “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

2. There are thorns but also weeds that soak up the nutrients in the soil and kill the young plant. Jesus explained that this type of soil is the deceitfulness of riches. Materialism and Mammon. *The Last of the Giants* by George Otis Jr. [picture of the cover please]

3. Matthew 6:24 “You can’t worship the true God while enslaved to the god of money!” (TPT)

4. 1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

5. The Church in Korea has started to decline because of materialism. Now it is happening to China.

6. We all know people who heard the gospel and they get enthusiastic about Jesus, they get on fire for God, but the Word did not penetrate their heart and they fall away. They are no longer at church, and they are not following God.

7. In this context, I want to address the issue of the doctrine of eternal security. Jesus’ words taught in this parable that two soils did receive the Word: The seed germinated and started to grow, but because of persecution, worries of this world, and deceitfulness of riches choke the Word. The big question would be “Are these people saved?” The Calvinist would say that these two types of people were never really born again. Those in the Wesleyan camp would say, “Yes, they were saved, but they have fallen away.”

8. We just read in 1 Timothy 6:10 that the love of money has called people to wander away from the faith.

9. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.²² Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, You who practice lawlessness.’”

Recently there have been public figures who have stepped down because of serious sin in their lives or have just walked away from their faith, and they are saying that they are no longer Christian. Ultimately, only God knows their heart, but according to the Word, people who do choose to walk away from God end up lost as an unbeliever.

10. Hebrews 6:4 Once people have seen the light, gotten a taste of heaven and been part of the work of the Holy Spirit,⁵ once they’ve personally experienced the sheer goodness of God’s Word and the powers breaking in on us—⁶ if then they turn their backs on it, washing their hands of the whole thing, well, they can’t start over as if nothing happened. That’s impossible. Why, they’ve re-crucified Jesus! They’ve repudiated him in public!⁷ Parched ground that soaks up the rain and then produces an abundance of carrots and corn for its gardener gets God’s “Well done!”⁸ But if it produces weeds and thistles, it’s more likely to get cussed out. Fields like that are burned, not harvested.
(MESSAGE)

D. THE GOOD SOIL

1. Matthew 13:23 “And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”

2. With a hundredfold, you would have such a bumper crop that the media would come and take pictures of your produce.

3. The Bible talks about reaping “a hundredfold” three times in Scripture. I want to go to the next segment of the message and look at how we can all be “a hundredfold Christian.”

II. HOW TO BE A HUNDREDFOLD CHRISTIAN

A. PURE HEART

1. The second and third type of soil had clutter, either rocks or thorns or weeds. Today, a good gardener or farmer would not start planting until they clear the land. So, too, we must purify our hearts in order to receive the Word of God that will bear much fruit.

2. Psalm 24:1 The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. ² For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. ³ Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? ⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully. ⁵ He shall receive a blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation. ⁶ This is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face — *even Jacob. Selah.*

3. God's blessing is upon those who have a pure heart.

4. It begins with confessing and repenting of any sins. Especially the sin of unforgiveness and division. All of Paul's letters address the issue of division, including his smallest letter to Philemon.

B. HUNGRY HEART

1. Today we have learned that if the soil has the right nutrients, then the harvest will yield a better increase. Thus, the farmer or the gardener will mix the soil with proper fertilizers or manure.

2. To me this speaks of a hungry heart. I have seen those who bear fruit remain hungry. They continue to come to church to learn from the sermon.

3. They are personally devouring the Word.

4. They start hanging out with godly friends.

5. They can't get enough of community, so they are involved in Life Groups.

6. They are going to conferences and seminars.

7. Bobby Clinton: Those who finish well are constantly learning.

8. Peter Wagner and the students of Wagner University.

C. OBEDIENT HEART

1. Last, we come to an obedient heart. The two other places where God gave a hundredfold increase was due to obedience.

2. Mark 10:28 Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You." ²⁹ Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, ³⁰ but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life."

***Unlocking the Mysteries of the Kingdom Series:
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3. **Isaac** sowed in a time of famine.
4. **Genesis 26:12** Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. And the Lord blessed him.
5. **Sowing generously with your life and finances.**
6. **A generous person will prosper!**