

## 12. Jesus Explained the Parable of the Soils

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why Jesus taught the crowds with parables. We also saw that Jesus gave a parable about a sower that sowed seed and the seed landed in four different kinds of soils. In this topic, we will see that Jesus explained to His disciples what was meant by this parable of the sower and the four soils.

The crowds of people heard the parables Jesus spoke and enjoyed the stories but had no understanding of what those parables meant. However, Jesus gave the parables to teach His disciples, and us, some very important lessons. Mark 4:13-15 says, “And He said to them, ‘Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.’” In the previous topic, we read, in Mark 4:10, “But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.” Here, we see that the disciples of Jesus also failed to understand the meaning of the parable.

Jesus then explained to the disciples that they were being given the opportunity to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God. In Matthew 13:36-43, Jesus explained one of the other parables about the seed and the soils. Matthew 13:37-39 says, “He answered and said to them: ‘He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.’” Here, we see that Jesus is the sower. He gives us the privilege, as His servants, to help in the sowing of the seed. The other thing we see, that relates to this parable, is the fact that Satan is the enemy.

Jesus began this explanation by asking the question, “Do you not understand this parable?” Jesus went on to explain this parable clearly, because He said that this parable was the foundation for understanding all of the parables about the kingdom of God. Then, Jesus said that the key to understanding all of the parables is to understand that the sower sows the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 explains why the Word is so important. That verse says, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The opinions of men can only affect the thinking of mankind. In contrast, the Word of God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Opinions will give head knowledge, but the Word of God will transform the hearts and lives of those who hear it and respond to it. This is of critical importance in our day and age, just as it was in the time of Jesus.

Once we understand that the seed is the Word of God, then, it becomes important to understand the various kinds of soil in which that Word is planted. The first kind of soil Jesus mentioned was the wayside. The wayside is the road or the path, so the seed will remain on the road instead of going into the soil. When Jesus spoke this parable to the crowd, He said that the birds of the air came and devoured the seed. Here, we see that Jesus explained what that meant. Some people have hard hearts. With those people, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was

sown in their hearts. Notice that the Word does go to the heart. However, Satan takes the Word out of the hearts of the hard-hearted. As a result, such individuals hear the Word and immediately forget it.

Jesus went on to explain each of the other kinds of soil. Mark 4:16-19 says, “These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word’s sake, immediately they stumble. Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.” The second kind of soil is the people who have stony hearts.

Jesus pointed out one thing about the people who have hearts that are like stony soil that is different from those who have hard hearts. We see that people with stony hearts immediately receive the Word with gladness. Here, we see that these people make an emotional response to the Word of God and to the Gospel. Such individuals want a religious experience that will make them feel good. The thing that happens in the hearts of such individuals is that the Word does not take root in their hearts so that they become rooted in Christ. Colossians 2:6-7 says, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” We read that such individuals only enjoy their experience for a period of time. When any kind of trouble or persecution comes to the life of such a person, that person will say that he tried Christianity and it didn’t work for him. Many people today have religious experiences, but do not take root in Christ and His love by repenting of their sin of unbelief. We read that such people immediately stumble because there is a lack of true repentance and faith.

Jesus talked about a third group of people whose hearts are like the thorny soil. We see that this soil talks about the people that have their total focus on this world. First, some of these people have their focus on the cares of this world. The word translated “cares” means “*anxiety or care.*” Here, we see that people can become so focused on the problems they have in this world that those problems choke out the Word of God that they have heard. Paul wrote to the people of Colosse in Colossians 3:2, and said, “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” People can hear the Word of God, but if they do not set their mind on the things above, the things of this world will soon choke out the Word that they have heard.

Second, we see that some of the people in this group have the Word choked out by the deceitfulness of riches. 1 Timothy 6:10 warns, “For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Jesus gave an even stronger warning when He said, in Matthew 6:19-21, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Here, we see that Jesus pointed out the fact that our heart will be where our treasure is. If the treasures of this earth are in the heart of a person, those treasures will choke out the Word a person hears

and the Word will never take root.

Third, we see that the desires for other things can also enter in and choke the Word. 1 John 2:15-16 says, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” Satan continually uses these three ways to tempt people. Satan used all three to get Eve to believe him, instead of believing God. Genesis 3:6 says, “So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” When people have their hearts focused on the world, these are the three ways Satan will tempt them to try and choke the Word when they hear the Word.

However, Mark 4:20 goes on to say, “But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.” We want to learn to work with the Trinity as we share the Word of God with others so that many people will have the Word take root in their hearts and bear the fruit of salvation. The Holy Spirit convicts and convinces the unbeliever of three things. John 16:8-11 says, “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” We work with the Holy Spirit by sharing verses that focus on the sin of unbelief. We work with the Holy Spirit as we share verses that show Jesus, the Righteous One, could pay the penalty for sin. We work with the Holy Spirit as we share verses that show that Satan was defeated when Christ said on the cross, “It is finished”, and that Satan is now on death row facing eternal judgment.

In John 6:44, Jesus said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” We work with the Father by praying that the Father will draw individuals to Christ. In Luke 19:10, Jesus said, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” We work with the Son by sharing the need for repentance and faith. Then, we work with the entire Trinity as we share the Word and pray that the Lord will open the eyes of those who are hearing the Word. Acts 26:18 says, “To open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” We see that all those who are like the good soil will both believe and become fruitful. Jesus said here that every true believer will become fruitful and bear fruit at various levels. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to work with the Trinity by sharing the Word and praying that the Lord will open the hearts of those who hear the Word, so that the Word brings forth fruit in their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to work with the Trinity as they share the Word with others.