

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 13TH-14TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

SOWING SEEDS (MATTHEW 13:1-9)

SITTING BY THE SEA

Matthew introduces a new teaching style that Jesus used while sharing new truths with a large crowd by the Sea of Galilee: parables.

- Jesus sat in a boat on the sea as His listeners stood on the shore. This was a common way to show respect for a teacher. **Respect seems to be a huge issue in our culture.**

A NEW METHOD OF TEACHING

Parable literally means to cast alongside. Jesus used simple stories that compared something familiar to something unfamiliar in order to teach a lesson.

- To the **willing learner**, these stories could be understood by anyone. But, to the **arrogant scoffer**, these simple lessons couldn't be understood.

THE POINT OF THE PARABLES

The parables were taught to reveal things ("secrets") not revealed in the OT. They also clearly identified God's kingdom to those who had a desire to see it. Mt. 13 deals with how Christians live without Jesus present.

- Mt. 13 foreshadows the Spirit-filled church, their role, and how they prepare for His return.

THIS IS PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

The parables give us knowledge that is nowhere mentioned previously in the Bible. This is called progressive revelation.

- This means that when we read the Word, we learn more about God and our role in the relationship with God and others. **There is no Christian revelation beyond the Bible.**

A PARABLE SETTING UP MORE PARABLES

Jesus' 1st parable could be viewed as a parable that explains the use of parables. The main question of the 1st parable is, "Why do some people respond to Christ and others don't?"

- **Is it a problem with the farmer (God), the seed (His message), or is it the soil (humanity)?**

JESUS IS GOING TO EXPLAIN HIMSELF

This 1st section doesn't need much commentary because Jesus is going to explain it later in the chapter, but the main points are laid out: **there are different kinds of soil and the seed thrown out by the sower take root or die depending on that soil.**

"LET ANYONE WHO HAS EARS LISTEN."

This phrase is used a lot by Jesus. This simply means that anyone who chooses to know the meaning of the parable will learn it, but those who don't want to learn will not.

- **It is never a question of our intellect, abilities, social status, color, or nationality. Our salvation and relationship with God are our choice.**

SHORT STORIES (MATTHEW 13:10-17)

THE DISCIPLES NOTICED A SHIFT

V10-17 are not an interruption to the parable, but a part of the message of it. The 12 noticed Jesus' teaching style was different, so they asked for more clarity.

- Jesus taught parables publicly, but clarified them more privately. **We learn that Jesus withholds the full lesson for those that long to hear it.**

DRAWING NEAR TO THE HUMBLE

James 4:6 tells us that Jesus draws closer to humble people and resists proud ones. It was the humility of the 12 that enabled them to get deep with God.

- On the flip side, **it is arrogance and self-righteousness that prohibit many from seeing truth and understanding the simple things of God.**

SO, THE PARABLES WERE POLARIZING

Jesus said He speaks in parables "because looking they do not see." This not only fulfills Isaiah's prophecy, it further shows that those choosing to not see will grow closer to destruction and not even know it.

- **Our deceptive hearts have an amazing way of convincing us that truth is relative to us.**

"...TURN BACK AND I WOULD HEAL THEM."

Jesus' reference to Isaiah shows that if even the most hardened person would simply approach God with humility, He would accept them into His family.

- At anytime we can be forgiven and restored, but if we are not careful we can slide so far into evil that our minds become "useless."

"BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES BECAUSE THEY DO SEE"

Jesus tells His disciples that they are blessed because they choose to be. They want to know truth and build a relationship with Him more than they want selfish things.

- **We'll all struggle with selfish wants and temptations, but we must want the things of God more than those things. If we do, we will be blessed.**

MANY PEOPLE LONGED TO SEE WHAT YOU SEE

The disciples were blessed to be around God in the flesh. Jesus said, "many prophets and righteous people longed to see the things you see."

- **How many wonderful things do we take for granted? We have the Spirit of God available to us, yet we forget how close He is.**

AN EXPLANATION (MATTHEW 13:18-23)

CONNECTING BACK TO THE BEGINNING

Because the disciples were faithful and had a desire to learn, Jesus rewards that faithfulness with more clarity about the kingdom.

- We are so often impatient and entitled, but **God rewards us with bigger things when we are faithful with small things (Zech. 4:10).**

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Jesus explains that anyone who chooses to not listen to His teachings (the seed) that they will eventually be snatched up by the devil. So, the soil (people) is the real problem in the parable.

- Jesus illustrates 4 different reactions people have to the Gospel message.

THE SOIL ON THE "PATH"

The 1st soil mentioned is like that on a road or trail. It has been trampled down, which makes it very hard for the seed to catch root. **These are people that refuse to hear truth outside of their own "truths."** These people will fall victim to evil because their hearts are set on selfish things or they're bitter.

THE SOIL ON THE "ROCKY GROUND"

This group receives extra attention because so many fall into this category. These people respond to Jesus when the circumstances are favorable, but **when times get hard and sacrifice is demanded, they abort their faith.**

- **The goal of life is not comfort or finding ourselves, but finding Him and trusting that He will fulfill us.**

THE SOIL "AMONG THE THORNS"

Many fall into this group as well. This group also has some initial growth but because of competing passions, not persecutions, they turn from a real relationship with God.

- **Many people "love Jesus," but dedicate more to their money, jobs, hobbies, or other things while their faith withers away.**

THE GOOD SOIL

The other 3 types of "soil" had heard the truth, but this soil chose to dig deeper and understand it. This soil yields much fruit, both in its own life and in the lives of others.

- Jesus says this kind of soil produces fruit "a hundred, some sixty, some thirty" times what it started with. **God can do great things with us!**

THE SOWER, THE SEED AND THE SOIL

- There is a God and He sent His Son to convey a clear message that anyone willing could understand and follow. The problems in our lives are not from a flawed Creator or convoluted message, but from a disconnected and selfish people. **Our hearts are the problem.**

WE ALL FALL INTO 1 OF 4 GROUPS

- Are we "path soil" that has become selfish or hardened? **Do we only accept truths that line up with how we feel?**
- Are we "rocky ground" that receives Christ at first but **when times get tough or sacrifice is required from us, we give up on our faith?**
- Are we "soil among thorns" that **say they love Jesus but other things in life seem to always take precedence over faith?**
- Or, are we "good soil?" Not perfect, **but willing people that want to know the truth, go deeper with God, and follow Him until He returns?**

LIVING OUR LIVES IN BALANCE

There is nothing wrong with fun, hobbies, making money, or having a career, but Jesus tells us to "seek Him first." We will not be perfect until He returns, but in the meantime we should want and strive to know our Father and please Him by how we live.