

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 14TH–15TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

THE SOWER (MARK 4:1–9) “AGAIN HE BEGAN TO TEACH BY THE SEA”

Because the crowds were so large, Jesus would sit in a boat while the crowds were on the shore.

- Jesus would teach in *parables*, which literally means *to throw alongside*. Parables use metaphor to show spiritual truths in simple everyday examples.

PAYING ATTENTION

Jesus implores the crowd to “Listen!” because this first parable will set up and be the key to understanding the other parables.

- The Parable of the Sower does not describe the Kingdom of God like most parables. Instead, it describes different conditions of the ones who hear the gospel.

SOWING SEED

In Jesus’ time one would spread seed by hand. Some would fall on the path and birds would eat it. Also, seed cannot grow on rock, so farmers would have to clear the field.

- Seeds scattered on rock would spring up quickly but would be “scorched” by the sun because they were in **shallow soil**.

“OTHER SEED FELL AMONG THORNS”

Seeds that fell amongst weeds and thorns would also grow to an extent but would later be choked out and **produce no fruit**.

SOME FELL ON GOOD GROUND

The seed that fell on soil with depth grew and “**produc[ed] fruit that increased thirty, sixty, and a hundred times.**”

“LET ANYONE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR LISTEN”

V. 9 is Jesus calling anyone who is willing to hear the truth to listen and honestly evaluate themselves.

Essentially, **what kind of soil are we when the Word is presented to us?**

- **The key to salvation and thriving in life is to be humble and have a strong desire to listen and learn.**

PARABLES (MARK 4:10–12)

WHY PARABLES?

When the disciples got alone with Jesus, they asked Him why He taught in parables and what the Parable of the Sower meant.

- Jesus revealed the mysteries of the Kingdom to them because He had chosen them. This is true for all people today who are willing to hear truth (chosen).

A SACRED RESPONSIBILITY

God desires all people to be saved (2 Peter 3:9), but in order to be chosen, we have to choose Jesus. In that **mutual choosing**, we become responsible for the knowledge we’ve been given.

- **Christians have a responsibility to share and display the principles of God’s Kingdom.**

PARABLES AS A SOURCE OF JUDGMENT?

The parables were so simple that anyone, if willing, could understand. The “outsiders” are those **unwilling to humble themselves and hear truth because their hearts are hard**.

- The parables **reveal truth to those who thirst for it and hide it from those who have no desire to find it**.

EXPLANATION (MARK 4:13–20)

“DON’T YOU UNDERSTAND THIS PARABLE?”

Jesus’ question was a gentle rebuke to the 12. If they did not understand the simple Parable of the Sower, how could they understand the rest of Jesus’ teachings?

- **If we are unwilling to address the state of our hearts and humble ourselves, we are incapable of knowing Jesus.**

THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD

The Sower may refer to Jesus or to anyone who spreads the message of Jesus to others.

- Before Jesus explains the types of soil, it is important to understand **there are really only two: productive or unproductive**. Jesus gives three examples of unproductive “soil.”

SOME PEOPLE ARE JUST TOO HARDENED (V. 15)

There are some who are so self-centered and callous that though the Word and principles of Jesus fall on them, they are quickly snatched up by Satan before they can take root.

- This goes back to blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (3:28–30) and a “corrupt mind” (Romans 1:28) that is too far gone to receive truth.

ROCKY SOIL

Others are like rocky ground. They quickly accept the Word of God, but because they are not rooted in it, when hard or confusing times come, they quickly lose their faith.

- **For many, true Christianity is too demanding**. These are people not willing to suffer for the Word of God.

DOES THIS MEAN THEY LOSE SALVATION?

Some argue this means one can lose salvation. Others say this just means they are losing rewards or productivity but are still saved.

- It is probably most accurate to say **they never had true salvation (infatuation vs. love?) because they were not willing to “endure until the end” (Matthew 24:13).**

SOWN AMONG THE THORNS

There are many who hear the Word of God but “the worries of this age” or **the thought of changing the way they live impedes them from being saved**.

- People who are not willing to sacrifice wealth, comfort, or personal desires for God or who live in fear become “unfruitful.”

THEN THERE IS SOIL THAT ACCEPTS THE SEED

Those who humble themselves and are willing to absorb truth are not only saved but are also extremely productive.

- The average crop is 7.5 times more than the seed sown. Jesus says His is 30, 60, and 100 times. **Jesus will do great things with very little if we will just allow Him.**

NOT PERFECT, JUST HUMBLE AND WILLING

The key to the Parable of the Sower is the position of our hearts. Are we prideful? Are we afraid of the cost?

Are we in love with the things of this world more than truth?

- Despite the mistakes we will make, **if we are willing to listen and walk with Jesus, He will do amazing things in and through us!**

TAKING AN HONEST INVENTORY

- Are we like seed on a path? Have we become so self-centered or callous to anything other than our own desires that there is not any soil left for Jesus and His Word to take root? The culture of the world (especially ours) fosters this kind of unproductive soil.
- Are we like seed on rocky soil? Do we quickly accept Christ and the Word, but sacrifice, hardship, or persecution cause us to back away from God?
- Are we rooted? We become rooted through **prayer, the Word, obedience (Bible and conviction), and church**.
- Are we like seed amongst thorns? Do we let the worries of life distract us from truth and Jesus? **Fear is not a spirit given to us from God** (2 Timothy 1:7).
- Do we care more about success, money, accolades, affirmation, or our desires than the things of God?

OR WILL WE HEAR AND RESPOND?

- In order to listen, we must **be humble and stop talking long enough to hear what Jesus and the Word are saying to us**.
- Faith is more than belief; it is action. **It is not enough to hear the Word; we must also “be doers of the word” (James 1)**. This means we must live out the Bible’s teachings.
- We need to understand that **humility, a willingness to listen**, and a **desire to learn** yield tremendous “crops” in this life and in eternity.
- It is not easy, and we will fail at times, but **receiving Jesus and the Word transforms us and produces beautiful results!**
- Salvation is only the beginning. After being justified, Jesus sanctifies and restores us. In this process **we learn to live in our true identity**. This means we feel **valued** and **loved**, and **we have a purpose**. We are also **used to do amazing things in the lives of those around us**.