

Parable of the Sower

The account of Matthew	The account of Mark	The account of Luke
<p>That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop-- a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear."</p> <p>The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them... This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."</p>	<p>Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times." Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."</p> <p>When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!" Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?"</p>	<p>While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown." When he said this, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."</p> <p>His disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, "though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.'</p>

"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." Matt 13:1-11,13-23 (NIV)

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. Matt 5:14-15 (NIV)

Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. Matt. 13:12 (NIV)

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." Matt 12:46-50 (NIV)

The farmer sows the word. Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop-- thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you-- and even more. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him." Mark 4:1-23 (NIV)

Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." Mark 3:31-35 (NIV)

"This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

"No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him."

Now Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice." Luke 8:4-21 (NIV)

The seed is the Word of God. It is sown into the world and into our lives:

Sown on the path: trampled on, eaten by the “birds of the air”

Meaning: it is heard, but Satan steals it from their heart so they will not believe and be saved

Sown on rocky soil: shallow earth without moisture, sprang up quickly but just as quickly withered in the sun

Meaning: it is heard with joy, but there is no root and belief lasts only until trouble or persecution comes

Sown among thorns which grew with the seed: choked the plants so they could not bear fruit (Heb. 6:7-8)

Meaning: it is heard, but life’s worries, riches, and pleasures choke it, so it never matures and bears fruit

Sown on good soil: produced a crop 30/60/100x what was sown

Meaning: it is heard, understood, accepted, and retained by those “with a noble (honest) and good heart,” and it produces a crop through perseverance

Questions:

1. Can Satan make God's Word ineffective? (Isa. 55:11; Jn. 10:28-29) How does Satan steal God's word from someone's heart? (Gen. 3:1; Lk. 12:33-37; Jn. 10:1)

2. How is God's Word trampled on? By whom? (Ps. 7:3-5; Jer.12:10-11; Ez.34:17-23; Am.2:6-8,12;5:1-15;8:4-6, Eph. 2:2)

3. Who are the birds of the air? How do they eat your seed? Who are they in your life? Dan. 4:12; Mt. 13:32; Mk. 4:32; Satan is “Lord of the Air” Eph. 2:2; pearls trampled by swine Matt. 7:6)

4. What is the soil that nourishes the seed of God's Word and allows roots to grow? (Ex. 15:17; Lev. 26:19-20; Deut. 26:9-10; Ezek. 17:22-23; James 1:21-22)

*5. What are the roots made of in your life? (Dt. 29:18; Prov. 12:12; Jer. 12:1-2; Rom. 11:16; 1Tim. 6:10; Heb. 12:14-16)

6. What is the moisture that enables us to withstand the heat of the day? How do we drink it up? (Jer. 2:13,17:13; Matt. 26:27-28; Jn. 4:11-14,7:38; 1Cor. 10:1-4; Rev. 21:6)

7. How does the effect of God's Word get scorched in someone's life? (Jer. 12:4, 23:10; Ezek. 19:10-14, 20:47-49)

*8. Weeds compete with the crop for nutrients and moisture. That's how they choke them. How do fear, greed, and lust bleed off the nutrients and moisture of God's Word and Spirit? Are they bleeding off your nutrients? In what way?

9. Has God's Word matured in you? What fruit *should* you be displaying? Which of the fruits of Gal. 5:22 are evident in your daily life? What happens if you fail to bear any fruit? (Matt. 3:10, 7:19, 21:43; Lk. 3:9, 13:9; Jn. 15:2). What happens if you bear any fruit at all? (Jn. 15:2).

10. How can we be persistent (persevere) in bearing fruit out of God's Word planted in us? Is that our job? How does the Holy Spirit help us without supplanting us in this effort? How do we enlist his help? (Jn. 15:4-16)

11. Do you have any control over the size of the crop that is produced or the timing of the harvest in your life? (Lev. 26:4; Dt. 28:12; Prov. 20:4; Ecc. 3:1-2) List some of the things you do have control over. (Jn. 13:34, 15:12; 2Thess. 3:6,12; 1Tim.1:3-8, 6:17-18; 2Tim. 4:2; Rev. 3:10) Are you in fact exercising control over those things?

*12. Have you successfully reproduced Christ in the life of someone else? That is, how large is your crop? Why have you been successful or unsuccessful doing that? The purpose of fruit is to make seed desirable for eating, planting, and fertilizing so that it reproduces itself. Many of us are just fruit eaters who consume the tasty outer shell and discard the seed with the core. Or we become polishers of our own fruit and inspectors of others'. How is your fruit being used?

13. We are the light of the world. What is that light? How do we put the light on the lamp stand to be seen and to reveal? (Job 24:13-16, Ps. 4:6, 44:3, 89:15; Prov. 13:9; Jn. 1:4-5, 8:12; 2Cor.4:6; Eph. 5:9; 1Jn. 2:9-10)

14. Will you be given more, or will what you have (or think you have) be taken from you? How do you know? What can you do about it either way? (Matt. 25:1-30)

15. Is Christ your brother? How do you know? (1Jn.3:10) What do you currently hear and practice from God's Word?