

“The Greatest Stories Ever Told”

“and He spake many things unto them in parables...” Matthew 13:3

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Aug 24th AM

Communication is the key to healthy relationships. Jesus was the “Master Story Teller.”

Even the soldiers who were sent to capture him were enthralled by his stories. Their own testimony was that *“Never man spake like this man.”* (John 7:46) Jesus used Parables to reach the people where they were. The word Parable is from the Greek *parabole* which literally means: *“to cast near”* (where someone can “grasp” it.) In Mt. 13 Jesus shares 8 parables to help us grasp (understand) God’s Kingdom. Jesus mentions the importance of “hearing” 19 x in the parables of Mt. 13. In this chapter Jesus relates eight parables that reveal His perspective of the Kingdom of God. This morning we will focus on the first of these parables, which contain the elements necessary to properly understand every other parable of our Lord. In the parallel passage in Mark 4:13 Jesus said: *“Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?”* He then went on to interpret his own parable for our benefit.

1. THE SOWER: (Messenger) Mt. 13:3 *“Behold, a sower went forth to sow...”*

Someone has to share the message of God’s love. Ro 10:13-14

2. THE SEED: *“The seed is the word of God.”* Luke 8:11

A. THE SEED IS LIFE. John 1:1-4 *“in Him was life and the life was the light of men!”*

Eph. 6:17 “the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God”

Heb. 4:12 “The Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword...”

John 6:63 “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

B. THE SEED GIVES LIFE. Peter 1:23 *“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”*

Jn 6:67-68 “Will ye also go away? ... Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.”

3. THE SOIL: The condition of the hearts of the hearers. Ro. 10:10

A. It’s the quality of the soil that determines the effectiveness of the seed!

(Pro 4:23 *“keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”*)

B. The four types of soil in this story represent four attitudes or conditions of our hearts that effect how we receive or respond to God’s word.

These are not necessarily four kinds of people, but rather 4 “heart conditions” that most of us have had at some point in our lives.

1) THE DECEIVED (Hardened) HEARER. *“some fell by the wayside.”* Vs 4,19

a) Wherever God Is At Work, you’ll find Satan. *“the fowls came and devoured them up.”* Vs 19

“When any one hears the word ..., and understands it not, then comes the wicked one, and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.” 1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:4

b) The “wayside” was the well-worn path. Mt 7:13-14; Pr 14:12; Pr. 3:5,6

(1) Satan Is Most Effective On The “Beaten Path.” (Mt. 7:13; Pr. 14:12)

(2) Satan Seeks To Remove The Influence Of The Seed Before It Germinates.

➤ They’re “aware” of the gospel but not *“awakened”* to their true condition. (Eph. 5:14) *“Hears ...and understands not...”* Vs 19 (suni’emi) to put together, join, associate with.

They hear it, but don’t associate themselves with it or act in faith upon it.

- The seed (God's Word) must be germinated by our faith. Heb. 4:2

Example: Hydrogen and Oxygen can produce water. ($2\text{H}_2 + \text{O}_2 \rightarrow 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$)

This reaction requires the catalyst of energy to break the covalent bonds.

In much the same way, the Holy Spirit acts as the catalyst between the gospel and our faith.

God's word + God's Spirit produces conviction (of our sin) and clarity (of Christ's sacrifice).

When we add our own personal faith (commitment) it produces Salvation! (Ro. 8:16)

Germination is required for Salvation.

Saving Faith requires that we cultivate an open mind/heart.

A Receptive vs. Resistant (or deceptive) heart.

- 1) Some "Can't" hear from God. Without God's Spirit, we can't hear from God!

(We Lack a receiver!) 1 Cor. 2:14

- a) The soil (heart) must be open (broken) to receive the seed. (Ro. 10:10)

The Seed must penetrate to germinate!

- 2) Some "Won't" hear God.

- a) God's Spirit is working, but they're resisting Him. Simply not "tuned in" (or Interested!?!)

Acts 7:51,52 *"Ye always resist the Holy Ghost. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed the coming of the Just One; whom ye have been the betrayers and murderers"*

Mt. 13:15 *"This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."*

b) Possible Causes A Closed Mind:

- Pride: "I don't need God's direction..." (Pr. 3:7)
- Fear: "I'm afraid of what God might want from me."
- Anger/ Bitterness: (Hard hearted Over past failures/frustrations.)

We often tend to "blame God" for what we or others have done. Pr. 19:3

"The Foolishness of man perverteth his way and his heart fretteth (zā'ap: boils in anger) against the Lord."

- a) The "hard soil" had been "trodden down". Lk 8:5

- b) Bitter people are seldom fruitful because they've become hard and narrow.

- (1) God understands your Pain and cares. (1 Pt 5:7)

- (2) Run to God with your pain, not away from Him. (He's the comforter.) 2 Cor 1:3,4

The tragedy of that hard path is that it's barren!

The Devil takes the seed before it can even take root, much less produce Fruit.

Application: Is your heart closed to God's voice?

- 1) Are you "able" to hear from God?

Have you ever really "opened" your heart up to voice of God's Spirit? (Rev. 3:20)

- 2) Are you "willing" to hear from God?

Is pride, fear, or anger deafening you to Him or distracting you from Him? Pr. 3:5,6

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith" Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22