The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

INTRODUCTION:
The parable of the sower is one of only three parables (the sower, the mustard seed, the wicked husbandman) that is found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Also, it is one of the few parables Jesus explained for His disciples and others with them. Some have called the parable of the sower, the parables of parables, because it really contains four parables in one with each emphasizing one basic truth.

In New Testament times farming was simple. The common ground in Palestine was divided into long narrow strips. There was no fence around the strips, but separating the strips was a path or right way upon which anyone could walk. These paths were beaten as hard as pavement from the many passes-by. In many areas the land consisted of outcroppings of bedrock, and the surface of this rocky terrain was covered with only a thin layer of soil. Ridding the ground of thorny weeds was a continual problem. If the roots escaped the plow or if the weeds had produced seeds, a new growth of thorny weeds was inevitable.

The farmer carried his seed in a bag which was slung around his neck and shoulders. In the fall when the long, hot summer was ended, the farmer walked through the field and cast or broadcast the seed upon the ground. Then he plowed the field to cover the seed, waited for the winter rain to germinate the seed, and looked forward to the harvest the following year.

A. THE PARABLE

Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23

1That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea.

2And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach.

3And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow;

4and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.

5"Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil.

6"But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.
Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out.

And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

He who has ears, let him hear.

The Sower Explained

Hear then the parable of the sower.

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

1. As the sower scattered his seed, where did some of the seed fall? What happened to this seed?

2. Name the second type of ground described. What happened to the seed that fell on this ground?

3. Name the third type of ground. What happened to the seed that fell there?
B. THE INTERPRETATION
   a. What is the seed?

   b. Who are the sowers of the seed?

   c. What does the ground where the seed was sown represent?

   d. The road has been described as the hard, packed, walkway at the side or between the cultivated fields. What kind of heart does this ground represent?

   e. The birds that devoured the seed represent whom?

   f. The rocky places have been described as a thin layer of soil over bedrock. What kind of heart does this ground represent?

Ephesians 4:14
14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

   g. Paul compares those with a shallow faith to ___________ tossed here and there and carried about by every ________________.

   h. What kind of heart does the thorny ground represent?

1 Timothy 6:9-10
9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of
money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

i. Those that desire riches face what dangers?

j. The good soil is the fertile soil which is deep enough to receive the seed. The roots have room to grow and spread in order to draw needed moister and nourishment. Careful cultivation frees the soil from the choking thorns and weeds. What kind of heart does the good ground represent?

k. What is the yield from this type of ground (heart)?

Luke 8:15
15“But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance."

l. How do we bring forth this fruit?

C. THE PURPOSE

Psalms 78:2
2I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old,

Matthew 13:10-13
10And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" 11Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. 12“For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. 13“Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand."

a. Jesus spoke in parables to fulfill prophecy. What is prophecy?
Lesson 1

b. When the disciples asked Jesus He spoke in parables He
told them they were selected to understand the
________________ of the kingdom of heaven, but to others it
was not given.

c. Jesus said He spoke in parables because some have eyes
that do not___________ and ears that do not
________________, and neither do they understand.

Note: Those who hardened their hearts and refused to accept Jesus as the
Christ, the Son of God, could not understand the true spiritual meaning of
parables.

- Seeing they see not - they saw Jesus’ works and miracles, but their eyes
  were blind to His Divine power.
- Hearing they hear not - they heard Jesus’ words of salvation, but their
  ears were deaf to His Divine message.

D. THE LESSON

The Word is the same. The hearers are different because their hearts
are different. Some have hearts that are hardened. Some lack
commitment and lose interest. Some have an abiding and
overpowering desire for the material things of this world. Some hear,
understand, and obey.

Discuss - which one are you? If you fall away what do you do to
return? Finally - how many of the four types of people described in the
parable will be allowed in the kingdom?