

One Seed, Four Soils: The Parable of the Sower

Matt 13:3-23 (Isaiah 6:9-10 NIV)

This parable is one of the most important ones that Christ ever taught.

Whenever we hear the word of the kingdom there are only ever **four** different responses to it -only four. Christians that no longer live for Christ can package their excuses in many different ways but there are only ever three basic reasons (out of these four responses) why believers do not continue to do the will of our Father.

Fruit is produced or not produced in our lives according to **our** response to hearing the word of the kingdom.

There are only four different responses:

1. The first seed that was sown fell on **hardened** soil and produced no fruit.
2. The second seed was sown on **rocky** soil and produced some fruit but only for a short time.
3. The third seed was sown on **thorny** soil and also produced some fruit but just for a short time.
4. The fourth seed was sown on **good** soil and produced three different amounts of fruit: some thirty, some sixty and some a hundredfold.

There are two important points that we must remember:

1. In each of these four categories **the seed sown was exactly the same**, no one was given any more or any less than the others; it was the condition of the soil that varied, not the seed itself, and that therefore determined the result.
2. “The seed” that is sown is **not** referring to the Gospel of Grace that we teach to sinners in order to get them to believe in Christ; it’s not that evangelistic message that we offer to unbelievers but “the seed” is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Luke 8:11

This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God.

The Seed = the Word of God. So what is the Word of God referring to here?

Matt 13:19

When anyone hears the message (word) 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.

So “The Seed” or “The Word of God” = the Message of the Kingdom

The First Soil: Hardened (Matt 13: 4, 19)

As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

¹⁹ 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

EXPLANATION: Today this typifies Christians who have believed on Christ but never really lived for him. They have no desire to learn more about the bible or the things of God and therefore their heart is hardened to the truths concerning the kingdom. The devil (typified as “the birds of the air”) comes and snatches away the word from their heart and therefore they never believe in the gospel of the kingdom.

(They hear but don't understand)

The Second Soil: Rocky (Matt 13:5-6, 20-21)

5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.

6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

20 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.

21 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.

EXPLANATION: This is likened to believers today who first hear about the kingdom and get excited about it, but they never really make it their own. They ride on everyone else's enthusiasm and passion but because they never put their roots down far enough, when persecution comes because of the word or circumstances in their lives are difficult to deal with, they are too shallow to stand strong on what the word says and they fade away. They are unwilling to pay the price.

(They hear and understand)

Matt 7:13-14

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction (in the kingdom age), and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life (in the kingdom age), and only a few find it.

Read for Review:

Luke 13:22-30 -The narrow Gate vs. The Wide Gate

Ephesians 6:10-17 -How to stand during hardships and temptation

The Third Soil: Thorny (Matt 13:7, 22)

Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

22 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.

EXPLANATION: This represents believers today who receive the word of the kingdom but not with joy. They hear it, but the thorns that grew up in the soil choked the life out of the seed so that it didn't bear fruit.

Christ tells us that the thorns represent the cares of this world (lit: "the worries of this age") and the deceitfulness of riches. These believers are mostly concerned with what they can get here and now in the material realm and how they can make a name or reputation for themselves.

(They hear only)

How to avoid the worries of this age:

Matthew 6:25-34

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

How to Avoid the Deceitfulness of Riches:

1 Timothy 6:6-11

But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹ People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹ But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

Read for Review

Col 3:1-14 -Setting our Minds on Heavenly Things.

TO REVIEW:

All three types of unfruitful believers are not willing to pay the price to enter into the kingdom. They are mostly interested in the things of this world; they want to profit from this age, make a name for themselves and have all the trappings here.

Some are involved with political factions; saving the planet; multiple charities and organizations to make the world a better place. They call themselves Christians, followers of Christ, but it's in name only as they do not follow the words of Christ; they do enough to get themselves saved but not much more.

The Fourth Soil (Matt 13:8, 23)

8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

23 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."

EXPLANATION: This “good ground” represents those believers who hear the word of the kingdom and receive it. They then go on to produce spiritual fruit.

These believers set their hearts on things above and search the scriptures to know Christ better and to live within the will of the Father. They embrace tribulation and persecution because they know that to be glorified with Christ they will also have to suffer with him.

Romans 8:17:

Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.)

They do not worry over the politics of the day, environmental issues or the state of the economy. They don't spend their time trying to “save the planet” or with protest demonstrations against the evil of this world, because they know that the devil is the “god of this world” and that true peace and harmony will only be restored here on earth when Christ returns to reign in righteousness as King of kings and Lord of lords.

1 Timothy 6:8

But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

In this fourth soil there are also **three** different amounts of fruit:

- ✚ some produce thirty;
- ✚ some produce sixty and
- ✚ others produce a hundredfold.

Scripture also teaches that within the kingdom of God there are various levels; the lower level for those who produced “thirty-fold”; the higher levels being reserved for those who bring forth the greater amounts of fruit: namely the sixty and hundred-fold.

Read for Review:

Compare **Matt 24:47; Luke 12:44** with **Matt 25:21-23**.

Although the planted seed was the same, the results from the soil were different. When Christ taught the word of the kingdom:

- ✚ Some didn't respond because their heart was hardened.
- ✚ Others responded for a period of time then fell away.
- ✚ Another group received the word and became fruitful to different degrees.

We can think of the soil as our **hearts** and whether we are willing to hear what Christ is proclaiming as the **condition** of our hearts. So the more we are willing to listen and to obey, the better the condition of our heart (soil) becomes.

One Seed, Four Soils: The Parable of the Sower

Revision

DAY 1 (THURSDAY):

Review pages 1 and 2.

Read The Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:3-20 and in Luke 8:5-18.
Compare.

QUESTIONS:

DAY 2 (FRIDAY):

Review pages 3 and 4.

“Read for Review” scriptures in blue on page 4

QUESTIONS:

DAY 3 (SATURDAY):

Review page 5.

Meditate on the scriptures given for Matt 6. What do you feel you can learn from Christ's exhortation here?

QUESTIONS:

DAY 4 (SUNDAY):

Enjoy being at church!

Think of ways that you can serve those present; chose someone to bless that you don't normally hang out with or think about.

DAY 5 (MONDAY):

Review page 6.

“Read for Review” the scriptures in blue on page 6

Think of ways that you can avoid the “deceitfulness of riches” affecting your life in a negative way. Can you find scriptures to back this up?

Pray to God to show you areas in this realm that you need to work on.

QUESTIONS:

DAY 6 (TUESDAY):

Review page 7.

Think about ways that you can cultivate your soil to be in this fourth category. What are some of the things you could work on?

QUESTIONS:

DAY 7 (WEDNESDAY):

Review page 8.

“Read for Review” the scriptures in blue on page 8.

QUESTIONS:

FOCUS ON THE KINGDOM –PART 1

Preparation

DAY 8 (THURSDAY):

Read and meditate on Luke 4:43; Luke 8:1 and Matt 4:17, 23

QUESTIONS:

DAY 9 (FRIDAY):

Read “The Lord’s Prayer” in Matt 6: 9-15 noting especially verse 10.

Continue reading the rest of Chapter 6. Meditate on verse 33.

QUESTIONS:

DAY 10 (SATURDAY):

Read “The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard” in Matt 20. Note the opening phrase: “For the kingdom of heaven is like...”

QUESTIONS:

DAY 11 (SUNDAY):

Enjoy church!

Write down the names of 5 people at church and pray for them during the coming week.

DAY 12 (MONDAY):

Read “The Parable of the Wedding Banquet” in Matt 22. Note verse 2: “The kingdom of heaven is like...”

QUESTIONS:

DAY 13 (TUESDAY):

Read “The Parable of the ten virgins” in Matt 25. Note the opening phrase in verse 1: “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like...”

QUESTIONS: