

A Survey of the Parables of Jesus
Lesson 2 – The Parable of the Sower
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Introduction: Jesus wants His followers to understand “the kingdom of heaven.”

- A. Late in His 2nd year of preaching He begins to winnnow out those who are not serious by teaching in parables.
 - 1. A major focus of His teaching concerns the kingdom of God. **(Lk 17:20-21)**
 - 2. Almost everyone at this time does not understand it, including His own apostles! **(Mt 20:21-22)**
 - 3. The key thought is the rule of God in our hearts and not a physical kingdom.
- B. Jesus uses well understood things to teach about the kingdom.
 - 1. From the boat He taught in along the western shore of Galilee the audience likely could see the fields where seed was sown!
 - 2. This is a group of 7 parables on the nature of the kingdom of heaven.

I. The significance of the parable of the sower (Mt 13:3-9, 18-23)

- A. Jesus explains that this parable is a key to understanding all parables. **(Mk 4:13)**
 - 1. We will learn how to handle parables from His explanation.
 - 2. We will learn the most basic truths about the kingdom of God when we see the place of the seed (God’s Word) and the soil (Men’s hearts).
 - 3. If we do not understand this parable, we will not understand how God rules!
- B. Earlier that same day the scribes and the Pharisee’s publicly challenged Jesus.
 - 1. They claimed Jesus healed by Satan. **(Mt 12:22-29)**
 - 2. They demanded a sign. **(Mt 12:38-42)**
 - 3. The move to kill Jesus and destroy His influence had begun.
 - 4. Shallow followers will not last. Many were confused at the dwindling numbers.

II. Understanding The Parable of the Sower

- A. Jesus gave this parable as a key to understanding all parables. **(Mk 4:13)**
 - 1. It you wish to understand the word of God let the word of God be your teacher!
 - 2. Many are thinking “scholarship” is the key to understanding the word.
 - 3. If the wisdom of men is the key then the common man does not have a chance. **(Mk 12:37; Mt 11:5)**
- B. This is a parable about the power of God’s word. **(Lk 8:11)**
 - 1. The key to this parable is in understanding what the seed is and what the soil is! **(Lk 8:11-12)**
 - 4. God’s word planted in honest hearts changes lives. **(Lk 8:15; Jn 6:63, 67-68)**
- C. Satan wants to stop the sower! Jesus asked for men to pray for more sowers. **(Mt 9:36-38)**
 - 1. Because the power is in the word and not in man’s wisdom, all can play a role in this work! (Ex. Public Bible readings)

2. Many try to use food, medical care, entertainment, worldly show and even changing the gospel as a means of “evangelizing.” (2 Cor 4:2-5)
 3. The pure word of God will drive away many and draw a few!
 4. If you want to evangelize use *God’s word* and *not the books of men*. (Gal 1:6-7)
- D. The ***wayside soil*** shows a heart that does not seek to understanding. (Mt 13:19)
1. How does Satan do this? By creating hatred and fear towards change.
 2. God’s word is given to *block the careless from understanding*. (Mt 13:11-16)
 3. Why do some understand and others do not?
- C. The ***shallow soil*** shows a heart that is *unstable* and are *swayed by emotion*. (Mt 13:20-21)
1. Unstable people are unreliable people. (Acts 14:11-12, 19)
 2. The greatest disappointments in evangelism have come here. It is amazing how quickly someone who recently obeyed the gospel can turn on you.
 3. There is an integrity and seriousness that is unwilling to quit when confronted with an obstacle.
 4. This is a serious challenge for those “raised in the church.” (Lk 6:48)
 5. Look at the difference between the shallow and the determined. (Jn 6:66-68)
- D. The ***thorny soil*** represents a divided heart, one that compromises with the world. (Mt 13:22)
1. We need to find daily repentance and commitment.
 2. Soft preaching will never help one to overcome the wicked one. We live in a time where many of our battles are fought against our own brethren.
 3. Are we sowing the word or tares? There are two very different directions these two seeds will produce. There will be conflict. (Mt 13:36-42)
 4. The sowing of pride, bitterness and dishonesty can cause hearts to turn from God’s word. (1 Jn 2:7-11; 4:1, 4-6)
- E. The ***good soil*** represents an honest heart that seeks God’s pure word! (Mt 13:23)
1. Can a soil change over time?
 2. How can we help one another remain as good soil?

Questions

1. What was the most common misconception of the “kingdom of God” in Jesus’ day?
2. How do the apostles show a lack of understanding of the kingdom of God?
3. Describe the way a sower does his work in Jesus’ day.
4. Describe the four kinds of soil that the sower will come across.
5. What does the seed represent? What does the soil represent?
6. What are the consequences from misunderstanding how God has chosen to change the hearts of men? Give examples!
7. How can we determine the kind of soil we are personally?
8. What common mistakes do Christians make that place them as having “thorny soil?”
9. What is the first step to having a good heart?