

115. The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us faith in Jesus and making us Your children. Please always make us grow in faith. Then we can live following You, serve You, and bring many other people to know about You and Your gift of life. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Matthew 13:1-3. Jesus left the house and went down near the sea. A huge crowd came to Him. So Jesus entered a boat and sat down. All the people stood on the beach and listened. Jesus told them many things in parables (stories).

- How many people followed Jesus now?
- How did Jesus teach all these people, some smart, some slow, from different towns, different ages, all different backgrounds?

Matthew 13:4-9. Jesus said, "A man went out to sow (throw out) seed. While he sowed, some seed fell on the road. The birds came and ate the seed. Some seed fell on soil with rocks. The dirt was shallow, and the plants grew up quickly. But when the sun came up, it burned the plants. Why? They didn't have good roots. The plants withered quickly. Some seeds fell near thorns. The thorns grew up and choked the plants. Some seed fell on good dirt. Those plants grew up and grew a crop, some increased 100 times, some 60 times, and some 30 times. Pay attention to what this says!

- You may remember this story and what it means. Jesus uses this story to teach something about God's kingdom. Try to imagine this is the first time you have read or seen the story. Would you know what Jesus is talking about?

Matthew 13:10-13. Jesus' disciples came and asked Him, "Why do you talk in stories?" Jesus said, "God gave you knowledge about the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. But God didn't give them that knowledge. Because if a person already has something, God will give him more. Then he will have much. But if someone has nothing, even the little bit he has, God will take away from him. That is why I speak to them in parables. Their eyes work, but they can't see. Their ears work, but they can't hear. They don't understand."

- Did Jesus' disciples understand the story?
- Jesus said, "If a person already has something, God will give him more... if someone has nothing, even the little bit he has, God will take away from him." What is the "something" Jesus is talking about?
- If the disciples didn't understand the story, why does Jesus talk to them like they already have knowledge and understanding? What one thing did the disciples have?
- Why did Jesus use parables (stories) to teach?

Matthew 13:14-15. "Isaiah prophesied about them. He said, 'You will continue to hear, but you won't understand. You will continue to see, but you don't know what you are watching. These people's hearts are slow. Their ears don't work, and they closed their eyes. Otherwise, their eyes could see and their ears could hear, and their heart would understand. Then they would come back and I would heal them.'"

- What is Isaiah talking about, hearing and seeing? Does he mean physical hearing and seeing, or spiritual learning, understanding, and believing?
- If people would pay attention to God's word, what would happen?

Matthew 13:16-17. Jesus said, "Your eyes are blessed because you can see. Your ears are blessed, because you can hear. I tell you the truth, many prophets, many righteous men wanted to see and hear Me, just as you see and hear Me. But they didn't."

- What did the disciples see that the prophets and righteous men in the Old Testament didn't see?

Matthew 13:18. "This is the explanation of the story about the man sowing seed."

- Why did Jesus explain the story for the disciples? If they didn't understand, why not just let them continue not to understand?

Matthew 13:19. Jesus said, “When anyone hears the news about the kingdom of God and they don’t understand it, the evil one (the devil) comes and steals the word from his heart. That is the seed that fell on the road.”

- What did God do for that person who is like the road?
- What happened to God’s word? Who deserves the blame?

Matthew 13:20-21. “The seed thrown on rocky soil is like a man who hears the word and immediately believes and is full of joy. But he doesn’t have a strong root. His life is short. When trouble or persecution comes because he is a believer, immediately he leaves the faith.”

- What did God do for that person who is like the rocky soil?
- What happened to God’s word? Who deserves the blame?

Matthew 13:22. “Another man is like the seed thrown in the middle of thorns. That man hears the word. But worries about the world and concerns about things in this world deceive him and chokes him. So he grows no fruit.

- What did God do for that person who is like the dirt with thorns growing?
- What happened to God’s word? Who deserves the blame?

Matthew 13:23. “Another man is like the seed thrown on good soil. That is the man who hears God’s word and understands it. He grows and increases fruit, some 100 times, some 60 times, and some 30 times.”

- What did God do for that person who is like good soil?
- What happened to God’s word? Who deserves the credit and honor?