

Matthew 13:1-10 | The Parable of the Sower and the Soils

- Verses 1-3 –
 - It was important for us to know that this parable took place **the same day** (v. 1) as Jesus had given instruction to the nation about the unforgivable sin (see Matt. 12:31).
 - This sin was a national sin of refusing the testimony of the Kingdom given in the early portions of the book of Acts.
 - It was a "generational" sin (Matt. 12:34, 39, 42, 45) and the only sign was the death and resurrection of Jesus (Matt. 12:39-41).
 - If we try to apply this parable to the Christian faith, we will encounter many theological problems (see notes on vv. 11-17).
- Verses 4-10 –
 - As with most parables, the story itself is easy to understand, but the hearer instinctively knows that the story is about something else.
 - Our definition of a parable is a story that "has a truth about the work of God that is *hidden* from view and requires interpretation."
 - Verses 9-10 tell us that this is not an agricultural story, but something much deeper.
 - Warning: Though we are looking for *hidden* meaning, we want to know the *revealed* meaning which is often given in Scripture, but only in private. If we look for the hidden meaning without the benefit of revelation, we can easily make things up.

Matthew 13:18-23 | The Lord's Interpretation of the Parable

- Verse 18 - In verse 9 the listener was instructed to **hear**, beginning in this verse the Lord will reveal what they should hear!
- Verse 19 –
 - The text has made it plain that parables concern **the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven** (v. 11), and this verse reaffirms that **the word of the kingdom** is the key to the parable.
 - In today's world, almost 100% of Christianity **heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not**. What happens then to that word? **The wicked one** comes and **catcheth away that which was sown**.
 - Note that the Greek word **catcheth away** is ἀρπάζω [harpazo], which is the word used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 for the rapture, where believers are **caught up** to meet the Lord.
- Verses 20-21 –
 - The **stony places** presumably have some ability to take root, but not to thrive long term.
 - The one who receives **the word of the kingdom** (v. 19) in this way **anon with joy receiveth it** (the King James era word **anon**, when used as an adverb, means "at once").
 - This one with no **root in himself** comes upon **tribulation or persecution** and **by and by he is offended**. The word **offended** carries the meaning of "striking your foot against a stone" or "tripping" more than emotional offense.
- Verse 22 - The **seed among the thorns** is when the Kingdom message (v. 19) is choked by worldly matters and thus does not grow to a fruit-producing stage.
- Verse 23 –
 - The key for understanding the parable is for an individual to have **received seed** and that the person **heareth the word and understandeth it**. Once again, few there are in the church today who are even open to receiving a word about the Kingdom, namely because a false Kingdom message has been repeated so many times as to become pseudo-truth.

- When the individual receives, hears, and understands, then the seed **bearth fruit** of various measure.

Faulty Interpretations

- The typical evangelical response: <https://youtu.be/l1yqXp7C9uU>
 - The teaching for “got questions,” -
 - Only the “good soil” person is truly saved.
 - “Salvation is more than a superficial, albeit joyful, hearing of the gospel. Someone who is truly saved will go on to prove it.”
 - The problem: *works become an inherent part of faith, thus are required for salvation.*
 - Where did they go wrong?
 - They ignored the key of verse 19, **the word of the kingdom.**
 - They equated this key to be “the gospel.”
- The “fall from grace” model:
 - Based on the wording of Luke 8:13, those **which for a while believe.**
 - The logic: since belief is the requirement for salvation, therefore these people have to be saved, but **in time of temptation fall away** (Lk. 8:13) and thus no longer believe and are no longer saved.
 - The flaw of this model: It assumes that **the word** is *the word of the saving Gospel* rather than the word of the Kingdom.
 - Example of this model: <https://www.evangelicaloutreach.org/images/parable-of-the-sower.pdf>
- The “spiritual kingdom” model:
 - From <https://www.toughquestionsanswered.org/2016/11/09/commentary-on-matthew-13-parable-of-the-soils/>
 - “Most commentators agree that the first soil is not saved and the fourth one is. However, there is no consensus about the second and third soils. Some argue they are not saved and some argue they are. I do not know the answer to that question, but I will say that everyone agrees that the *only soil Jesus commends in the parable is the fourth.* So, any Christian who does not aspire to be like the fourth soil is completely missing the point of the parable. The first three soils don’t cut it in Jesus’ kingdom.”
 - “Jesus will now start revealing to his disciples that the kingdom of God (heaven) that the OT predicted will be delayed until Jesus returns to the earth some time in the future. Until he comes back, however, the kingdom of God will exist, but in a different form than what the Jews would have expected. Jesus, then, is going to reveal to his disciples the characteristics of this new form of the kingdom which will exist between his first and second coming. This new form has never been revealed before, so that is why it is referred to as a “secret” or “mystery.””
 - The flaw of this model:
 - It rightly speaks of mystery, but it equates the mystery with the church, thus invalidating the teaching of Paul that the mystery was given to him (Eph. 3:3, etc.)
 - By equating the mystery of the Kingdom with the church, it is forced into confusion about who is really saved.

Proper Interpretation

- The Kingdom message was the message that would be given, in the power of the Holy Ghost (Mt. 12:31, etc), to the Jewish nation (then expanding to all nations, Mt. 24:14), under the leadership of Peter (Mt. 16:19), concerning the re-establishment of the Davidic Kingdom (Acts 1:6).
- The Kingdom message would be...
 - Rejected by some – Acts 4:1-2.
 - Received but short-lived by some – Acts 5:1-11.
 - Received but eventually choked out by some – Acts 8:9-13, 18-21.
 - Received and bear fruit by some – Acts 4:32-37.