

Hello brethren and friends,

I apologize the delay in continuing this study - this week was fairly eventful, but good in ministry and spiritual growth. Thanks for your prayers.

Okay, now (picking up where we left off), I was working on a study on the 4 types of soils (6 examples) shown in Matthew 13:

- 1) **the hardened soil** - not caring, not listening
- 2) **the rocky soil** - slightly interested in God's truth, but only for what is in it for them
- 3) **the thorny soil** - even more interested, but only as long as they can hold onto their selfish wants and pleasures
- 4) **good soil** - the one who hears, values, applies, and is growing in obeying God's Word and wanting more
  - A - **100-fold** - produces spiritual fruit that is 100 times what they received
  - B - **60-fold** - produces spiritual fruit that is 60 times what they received
  - C - **30-fold** - produced spiritual fruit that is 30 times what they received

Now, as we are looking at this, we need to remember that Jesus said that this is a foundational parable and full of spiritual truth that, as we understand more and more of it, will continue to transform our lives and show us how to more effectively reach out to those around us. (Another study I hope to put out soon is on the basic thinking structures of men and women in general and the demonic winds of false doctrine that push them around, so that we can more effectively minister to those around us. Please pray for me on that as I work to collect my thoughts and observations, as well as what I've learned in many conversations and working with youth for over 10 years. I will want feedback on that study, for many reasons, but that's still some time in the future. But, the reason I mention it is because this study lays some foundation for that one. ~ Thanks for the prayers, and I'm praying for you.)

Okay, so, back to the text of Matthew 13, but before I do, I just wanted to look at one highlight Jesus said about this parable which is recorded in Matthew 14, Mark 4, and Luke 8 - "**And He said to them, 'Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?'**" (Mark 4:13) ~ That was Jesus talking with the core of His disciples (the 12, plus others) and working to answer their question, but giving that answer a very important starting thought - the parable explains all others. I think as we continue to dig deeper into it, and compare the details from all 3 passages (which I plan to do some of in these next few weeks) we will see and work to rebuild a solid foundation under our feet, as well as learn how to establish solid foundation under others feet ~ :) Sound good? Yep, so, here we go!

**1st part - the Sower:**

**"Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: 'Behold, a sower went out to sow.'**" ~ Matthew 13:3

**"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow."** ~ Mark 4:3

"A sower went out to sow his seed..." ~ Luke 8:5

*1st part - explanation:*

"The sower sows the word." ~ Mark 4:14

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God." ~ Luke 8:11

*notes:* So, obviously Jesus is the Sower and that shows up more in the next parable, as well. And the seed - is the Word of God. So, what is sowing? Proclaiming the Word of God - what is comfortable to hear and what is not comfortable, in season and out of season, when it's popular and when it's not - when they people say thank you and when they don't. There are many themes throughout Scripture that aren't popular, but that doesn't mean we need to stop preaching, teaching, and explaining them - no, we need to talk about them even more. Here are several that stand out in my mind as becoming missing from more and more pulpits:

\* **sin** ~ man and woman's original rebellion

\* **Hell** ~ a very real and eternal fiery prison for those who refuse to repent of their rebellion against

our holy and righteous Creator and Judge

\* **The "fear of the Lord"** ~ a phrase and concept used many times throughout God's Word, and it's

neither a dread that causes sheer panic in us, nor a comfortable 'respect' for God, but an honoring

understanding that everything we do, and say, even the idle words, will be reviewed before God's

Throne and we had better get ready for that day and learn to walk blameless before Him

\* **repentance** ~ turning from our rebellion and interest in demonic distractions and false teachings,

to God's Word and a desire to please Him only

\* **discipleship and it's costs** ~ more than just the simple inconveniences, but the day to day experiences

of learning that it's an either/or type choice: will I choose today to follow and serve Christ, or will I choose

to do what I want to do and to follow and please the crowd, my peers, and/or the world (chasing after glittery

distraction after glittery distraction till your time is up)?

Those are just 5 (of many more) essential doctrines from the whole counsel of God's Word that we need to value and understand, if we are to understand and please our Creator. *<span>Another note on this</span>*: How we dearly need more godly men (and women) in America today! Men who not only hear God's Word in passing, but value it enough to spend time in it, grow from it, and teach others to obey and follow Jesus, as well. We need men who will not fear man nor love the perverse entertainment of this evil age - men who instead fear God, and love people enough to tell them and explain to them the life-changing truths of God's Word. To those

reading this, my question goes to you - are you one of them? Will you stand and grow in God's Word? I pray you do.

Okay, so now, let's look at the first soil and other verses in these passages that apply to see what we can learn about how to sort of identify this kind of person/heart, so that we might reach out to them in a way that can lead them to repentance.

**"And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them." ~ Matthew 13:4**

**"And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it." ~ Mark 4:4**

**"... And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it." ~ Luke 8:5**

Jesus then explained a key truth that sort of shows the extremes: the clear difference between those who care about God's Word and those who don't, those who desire to please God and those who don't. I'm just posting the part that applies to the hardened heart/soil:

**"For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him... For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them." ~ Matthew 13:12, 15**

Please note a few key words: **"hearts... have grown dull... ears... they have closed..."**  
~ There are some who have the opportunity to repent and the opportunity to have the new life in Christ, yet what was their response? No. Notice, the choice to close their eyes was theirs... That is why we need to keep reaching out them, trying to reason with them, because they have allowed Satan to blind their eyes, as the Scripture says: **"But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them."** ~ 2nd Corinthians 4:3-4

So, let's look at Jesus' explanation of how they fell:

**"When anyone hears the Word of the Kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside." ~ Matthew 13:19**

**"And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts."**  
~ Mark 4:15

**"Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." ~ Luke 8:12**

The birds, by the way, are descriptive of every distraction and false teacher that takes away truth from people - we need to pray that God exposes, stops, and tears down the lies and deceptions of those who neither enter Heaven themselves, nor allow others to: **"Woe to you teachers of God's Law! You take away the key of knowledge: you not only do not enter the Kingdom of Heaven and you prevented and hindered the one entering."** ~ Luke 11:52

***Other words to note:*** Jesus lays a key part of the blame on who steals the truth from people on Satan, the father of lies. And, just the note that truth can be lost should put a healthy terror in us that we too, can lose the truth we do know. We need to value the Word of God that we do understand, apply it to our lives, learn to communicate it to others, so that we might draw closer to the God of Truth (our Creator, Master and Judge) and gain more of His amazing, wonderful wisdom and understanding.

We can either get discouraged with this crowd and give up on them, or keep reaching out to them with the life-giving truth of God's Word. Though they may not care right now, the love and truth that we share with them will stick with them for years, especially if we pray for them, so we **must** keep reaching out to them, for if we don't care, we may be the last person who did.

Well, my time is up for now, next time I want to cover the next soil/category. Please pray God illuminates my mind and understanding and helps me to collect the pieces together in a way that is accurate and makes sense. ~ Thanks so much for each of your prayers! They are very dear to me!

Till next time, let's reach out to the lost, wherever we find them! ~ your brother/friend, and a growing servant/life-slave of Jesus, SH