



Kingdom Wisdom

The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:18-23

How to Prepare

Begin preparing by reading the full passage a few times. Then answer the questions for yourself. Then think about how your Small Group might answer them. Try re-wording the questions to fit you and your Small Group. Don't feel tied down to the discussion guide, just be sure to discuss the main point of the text in your conversations.

Resources-

<https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/many-hear-gospel-joy-dont-continue-faith>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/take-care-how-you-hear>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/can-satan-put-thoughts-into-our-heads>

Sermon Outline:

Matthew 13:18-23

1. Hearing and Rejecting. Vv. 18-19
2. Hearing and Abandoning. Vv. 20-21
3. Hearing and Worrying. V. 22
4. Hearing and Believing. V. 23

Matthew 13:18-23

The Sower Explained

18 "Hear then the parable of the sower.

19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

20 The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

22 And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

23 And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

Discussion Questions

Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 13:18-23.

INTRODUCTION

Here is a question or two to help introduce the topic and jump-start discussion.

1. In the parable of the sower, who is the sower, what is the seed, and what is the ground?

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

These questions should help your Small Group dig deeper into the text and then apply it to your lives today.

I. Hearing and Rejecting. Vv. 18-19

2. Based on the context of vv. 13-15, what does Jesus mean by saying that someone "does not understand"? What is intentional rejection and what is ignorant rejection? In what way are they different, and in what way are they the same?

3. How does the "evil one" actively work to prevent people from grasping the truth of the gospel? What tactics does the Bible teach us that he might use?

4. Is it possible for us to know the condition of someone's heart as to whether or not they will believe? Does this parable give us any clues as to who we should share the gospel with? How can we, as believers, communicate the gospel in ways that are more easily understood?

II. Hearing and Abandoning. Vv. 20-21

5. What does Jesus say the "rocky places" represent? What is lacking in their hearts? What happens when trouble or persecution comes because of the word?

6. Why do some people have an initial, enthusiastic response to the gospel but then quickly fall away? What might be the difference between genuine conversion and a superficial emotional experience?

7. What kinds of "trouble or persecution" might cause someone to abandon their faith? Are these always dramatic events? How can new believers develop deeper roots in their faith to withstand trials and what role does community and discipleship play?

III. Hearing and Worrying. V. 22

8. What do the "thorns" represent? What two specific things does Jesus mention "choke the word"? What does it mean for the word to be "choked"?

9. What is "the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth"? How do these keep people from trusting in Christ, and how can these distract Christians in their faith and hinder their spiritual growth?

10. What are some practical ways we can prioritize spiritual growth over worldly anxieties and the pursuit of material possessions?

IV. Hearing and Believing. V. 23

11. What does the "good soil" represent? What does it mean to "understand" the word in a way that leads to belief and fruitfulness? Is it just intellectual understanding?

12. What is the result of hearing and understanding the word in good soil? What is produced? Why do you think there are different levels of fruitfulness even among those who believe? What factors might influence this?

13. What are some indicators that someone is like "good soil"? What kind of attitudes and actions might they exhibit? How can we cultivate the "good soil" in our own hearts and encourage it in others?

Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

Matt. 13:18 Hear then the parable of the sower. Jesus explains the parable in response to the disciples' receptive hearts that lead them to ask him for clarification (cf. v. 10). (For additional notes on the parable of the sower, see Luke 8:11–15.)

Matt. 13:19 The seed in the parable (vv. 3–9) represents the word of the kingdom (i.e., "the gospel of the kingdom," cf. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14). All of Jesus' "seeds" are good, so the emphasis is on the various types of soil (13:19–23). The evil one is Satan, the devil (see note on 4:1). sown along the path. Hearts that are hardened, like the scribes and Pharisees.

Matt. 13:20–23 Sown on rocky ground depicts a heart that is immediately receptive, but hardened, so that the gospel never takes root and thus fails to bear fruit. The seed sown among thorns likewise is unfruitful, choked out by a heart weighed down with the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. The good soil depicts the heart that has been prepared to receive the gospel, yielding an abundant harvest according to individual potential.