

Are you Fertile Soil?

Matthew 13:1-23

Mark 4:1-34

What is a parable? It is a compound Greek word. It comes from the verb “ballo” which means “_____” and the prefix “para” which means “_____”. The idea is to place or lay something alongside of something else for the purpose of comparison. In Biblical times it would be used by comparing a physical example that was easily understood to a deeper spiritual truth. Common everyday examples were used to convey much deeper spiritual truths. Sometimes the story teller would reveal the hidden meaning while other times he would leave the interpretation a mystery for the hearers to ponder. Jesus loved to use parables when he taught.

The parable of the sower and seed is one of Jesus’ most famous parables in the Bible and gives a great description of the many ways the gospel is received by people. For you and I there are two profoundly important questions to answer: 1. Are we casting the seed of the gospel everywhere we go? 2. Even more important do we know we are fertile soil where the seed has taken deep root and will reproduce?

First here are a few definitions that will help you understand the parable.

* “_____” means to throw out seeds like a farmer who walks along dropping them out as he goes.

* _____ is the farmer, or “sower”.

* _____ are the word of God, or more specifically the gospel of the good news of Jesus.

* _____ is the heart of a person who hears the good news.

* _____ Can have two major interpretations: The fruit of the Spirit that only a believer can produce (Galatians 5:22-23) and other believers who we win for Christ.(John 15:1-11)

Jesus describes 4 basic types of people and their reaction to receiving the gospel:

- I. Hard soil beside the road where the seed of the gospel is rejected because the hearer cannot or will not understand it and Satan snatches it away. 1 Corinthians 1:18-20 chap 2:14
2 Corinthians 4:3-4
- II. Rocky places with thin soil where the person seems to accept the gospel quickly. However, the person has no deep firm roots, and when doubts or hard ships come he turns away from God and rejects him. Matthew 7:26-27 Galatians 6:9 James 1:1-4 &12
- III. Soil choked by weeds and thorns, where the hearer accepts the gospel but never really lets it grow deep because he is more concerned with the worries, and material pleasures and plans of this world. The seeds are choked out by the cares of this world and he never bears fruit for God. James 1:9-11 , Mark 10:17-27, James 4:13-17
- IV. Good fertile soil where seeds grow deep roots and reproduce other healthy plants many times over. James 1:21-25 John 15:1-11 Matthew 28:19-20

Let’s look at the 2 questions again and search yourself honestly for the answers:

#1 Is your heart truly fertile? Are you truly born again, or will you harden up when tough times or doubts come? Are you shallow and truly spending most of your time and energy on materials pleasures and worries?

#2 Are you bearing fruit for God by the fruit of the Spirit, and are you making disciples for Christ?

Answers: to throw or place, alongside, sow, Jesus, seeds, soil, bears fruit,