

Sunday Morning

March 17, 2019

Which One Are You? – Staying Faithful; Becoming and Remaining Fruitful

Text – Matthew 13:1 – 23 (Compare with Luke 8:4 – 15)

Congregational Reading – Matthew 13:18 - 23

Introduction

Read the text – Matthew 13:1 - 9

Explain the use of parables – Matthew 13:10 – 17;

The immediate context sheds light on Jesus' use of parables - Matthew 12:22 – 50

Parables both reveal and conceal truth.

A Parable is an earthly story that reveals a deeper spiritual truth.

Jesus explains the parable of the sower – Matthew 13:18 – 23.

Transition

Jesus explains in the parable of the sower that there are four different types of soil that seed will land in, and each type of soil is explained to be illustrative of a person's heart. **There are four different types of people represented here – Which One Are You?**

1. **The Disinterested (Hard-headed or Hard-hearted) Person** – the wayside (a road) – Matthew 13:4; 19 - this seed never enters into the soil. It is snatched up by the birds. According to Luke's gospel, the seed is the Word of God, and the fowls are representative of the devil.

Notice – they don't understand the Word:

They either don't listen or don't get it, because of stubbornness.

We need to try to explain it to them.

We need to pray that God softens up their hard hearts.

We need to keep giving them the Word of God. It might eventually soften them up:

"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer 23:29)

2. **The Discouraged (Rocky Soil) Person** – Matthew 13:5 – 6; 20 – 21 – This is described as a plant that springs up, but because it is not deeply grounded in the soil, it's exposed roots burn up in the sun. Jesus explains that this is like a person who makes a decision for Christ, but is quickly discouraged due to tribulation and persecution, and he quits.

Is this person saved? There is no mention of fruit. However, a birth did take place.

The only solution for a person in this situation is to get them grounded deeply in the Word of God – Discipleship; Devotions; Encourage them to come to every service.

3. The Distracted (Thorny) Christian – Matthew 13:7; 22 – This person receives the seed and grows well for a while, and even produces some fruit (he becomes unfruitful). However, as the thorns (the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches) surround the plant, they eventually destroy it.

This person starts out well, but eventually becomes distracted with the things of this world. Eventually, they are no longer concerned with the will of God, and they fall away.

If you find yourself being distracted from God's will for your life, pull some of the weeds that are choking the Word. (Your job; your hobbies; your friends; your family – all good things, but they cannot replace the will of God)

4. The Devoted Christian – Matthew 13:8; 23 – This person gets saved, and then gets grounded in the Word of God, and then keeps his focus and continues to produce fruit in his life.

Notice – even among the devoted Christians there are different levels of fruitfulness. Why? Because God has equipped each of us for different things.

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." (Rom 12:5-8)

See also Matthew 25:14 – 30 – The Parable of the Talents

"... For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." (Luke 12:48)

Conclusion

This Parable of the Sower contains general observations regarding people and their reception to the Truth of the Word of God. Some don't get it at all; some get it, but never get in all the way, and when problems come, they fall away; some get it, and get grounded, and then let a lot of junk enter into their lives, which then pulls them out of God's will; some get it and stay with it, and continue to produce spiritual fruit throughout their lives. Which one are you?

Biblical Illustrations:

Timothy: 1 Timothy 4:16; 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 3:14 – the secret to the Christian life is continuing – continue loving God; living for God; serving God; reading your Bible; coming to church; going soulwinning; etc. – don't be a "used to be" Christian.

"Jesus said, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31)

"Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life." (Proverbs 4:13)

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." (Hebrews 2:1)

Paul: 2 Timothy 4:6 – 8;

Demas: 2 Timothy 4:10

Explain the four types of soil in relation to rewards:

The Disinterested – Punishment

The Quickly Discouraged – no reward because of no fruit

The Distracted – little fruit; little reward or possibly loss of reward

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." (2 John 1:8)

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev 3:11)

Don't let anyone else get the reward that you could have.

The Devoted – Great reward due to much fruit

Which type of soil represents you?

Illustration – Hold the Fort

The hymn with chorus "Hold the fort, for I am coming!" written by P. P. Bliss, was suggested to him by an incident in the American Civil War. At Altoma Pass the fort being held by General Corse was besieged by the enemy under General Hood, who summoned it to surrender. Corse refused to surrender. Many were the casualties, but in spite of the hopeless situation the defenders remained faithful. Then a white signal flag across the valley, some twenty miles away, waved the message, "Hold the fort, for I am coming." General Sherman was marching to the relief of the beleaguered and faithful defenders.¹

Christian – Don't let discouragement or distraction pull you out of God's will – stay devoted!

¹ Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), 406–407.