

Message #47**Matthew 13:3-9; 18-23**

We come now to our first parable – the parable of the sower and the seed. This parable is presented to the multitudes of people (**13:3-9**). However, the interpretation of this parable was only given to the disciples (13:10-11, **18ff**). This parable is slightly different than all of the other parables, but it does set the stage for all the others.

- 1) There is no mention of the “kingdom is like” (13:24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 52).
- 2) Mark implied this was an introductory parable to the rest of the parables (Mark 4:13).

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER AND THE SEED IS GIVEN TO SHOW THAT UNTIL THE KINGDOM IS ESTABLISHED ON EARTH, IT WILL BE A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE (25%) WHO WILL TRULY RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD.

This point is true in any dispensation.

- 1) The “seed” is the Word of the kingdom (**13:19**). This was the kingdom message that was first preached by John, then Jesus, and then the apostles. This message is not the Gospel of grace; it is the Gospel of the kingdom. Now the mysteries of the kingdom (13:11) include the mystery of the Church, which the apostles would later see and understand (Eph. 3:4-11). **We could understand the seed as being the Word of God as it pertains to the entire program of God that will culminate in Christ’s kingdom reign.** The message proclaimed in different dispensations is different (i.e. kingdom, grace, Tribulation), but each message is the Word of God and is to be responded to.
- 2) The “Sower” is Jesus Christ (13:37). He is the One who authorizes the sowing of the seed.
- 3) The “field” is the world (13:38). The world is not the Church.
- 4) The Sower “went out” to sow (**13:3**). This means Jesus Christ is going to sow the truth of God outside of Israel to the rest of the world.

This parable is given to show what will happen when the sower takes the Word of God out from Israel to the rest of the world. Will the whole world respond? Will the world be won? Will the world become a wonderful place that embraces Jesus? No way. The dream of “world conversion” is a fictitious dream. It will not happen. There is not going to be a universal acceptance of the Word of God.

Response #1 - Some seed fell by the road and birds immediately ate them up (**13:4, 19**).

The interpretation of this response is given in **verse 19**. When any person hears the Word of God and does not understand it, the devil snatches away the seed immediately. Now the word “understand” means to understand in the sense of putting things together (Smith, p. 429). When someone hears God’s Word and does not put it together in his own life, Satan comes and snatches away the truth. Now there are some important points to see from this:

- 1) It is important that when the Word of God is sown, it is sown in such a way that people may understand it.

2) When people understand the Word of God, there is a responsibility to apply it.

3) The devil and his forces carefully monitor responses to God's Word.

Response #2 - Some seed fell by rocky places and seemed to produce some results, but really didn't. **13:5-6, 20-21**

Now the seed by the rocky places generated some emotional response. Those who heard the Word of God were emotionally moved. They received it with joy. But they did not have any firm roots. It was only some temporary emotional response that wasn't real.

The tip-off is the kind of emotional response. When someone really gets right with God, typically the response is an overwhelming sense of shame and sorrow over sin. I have never seen any person who really responded to God's Word who just started jumping up and down for joy. All of this is emotional nonsense.

Response #3 - Some seed fell in a thorny area and the thorns choked them off. **13:7, 22**

Now this response is of one who hears the Word of God and knows it is true, but the cares of the world prevent him from responding. For a while he hangs around the religious arena, but he does not really respond to the Word of God because He is too worldly minded.

Response #4 - Some seed fell on good soil and yielded a great crop. **13:8, 23**

This is the person who hears the Word of God, understands it, applies it and bears fruit.

This person has a real appetite for the Word of God and the deep things of God. This person not only understands the Word, but is able to communicate what the Word says to others.

The difference was the soil. The good soil is ground that is ready to receive the seed. We know that in this dispensation the good soil is a heart that has been prepared by the Holy Spirit to receive the Word of God.

There are several applications we want to make from this first parable:

- 1) Our job is to sow the seed of the Word of God. Our job is not to generate response.
- 2) The person who hears the Word is one responsible to respond to the Word. There is a personal will and accountability for use of that will right here.
- 3) This world is not going to be converted; in fact, the vast majority of people will not respond to God's Word.
- 4) Our ability to bear fruit increases as we grow deep in our understanding of God's Word.
- 5) It will not be the majority of people in any setting who will really respond right to God's Word.