

The Parable of the Sower
Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23, Mark 9:3-10, 13-25, Luke 8:5-9, 11-18

Review

Those of you who have been attending Grace Bible Church for more than a couple of months have probably noticed that one of the elements that is consistently in my prayers is that God will open our hearts and minds to understand the things of His Word that we might live according to them. The necessity of that was explained in last week's sermon. We cannot understand God's revelation unless the Holy Spirit enlightens our minds and teaches us the truths of the Scriptures. Paul made it clear in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that *"the natural man"* - man without the Holy Spirit - *"does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."*

Regardless of how accurately I or any other teacher understands the Bible, and no matter how clearly we may communicate that understanding to you, if all you go home with is some additional Biblical knowledge and perhaps an emotional response, then all you received were crumbs. I strive to present to you an accurate and clear exposition of the Scriptures and to exhort you to live according to them, but it takes the Holy Spirit working in your heart to effect a change in your life. I can tell you what the Scriptures say is sinful, but it is the Holy Spirit that convicts you individually of sin. I both encourage and admonish you to live by Biblical principles, but it is the Holy Spirit that leads you into applying those principles and precepts in your own life. It is the Holy Spirit that converts and transforms you into being more like Jesus.

Jesus began to speak to the multitudes in parables so that He could reveal truth to His followers while at the same time conceal those truths from His enemies. The spiritual understanding of His followers would increase while what little understanding the rest did have would be taken away. Today we will venture into a practical application of this principle as we start examining the parables Jesus taught. Many have stumbled in interpreting these stories. Liberal theologians fail because they presume that by their supposedly superior intellect they can discern what each element of the story means and thus interpret it, but again, without the Holy Spirit you absolutely cannot correctly understand the Scriptures. Conservative theologians have often presented erroneous interpretations too. Sometimes this is due to the same intellectual pride as the liberals, but also occurs because of a failure on the opposite end. They presume the Holy Spirit will guide them to the truth without any need on their part to do the diligent study to understand the text in its context and in comparison with what the other Scriptures teach.

In order to keep from stumbling into any of these traps, I want to quickly review the purpose of the gospel accounts and the nature of salvation as presented in them.

The Nature of Salvation

While each gospel account varies in emphasis due to each one's target readers, each documents that Jesus is the promised Messiah. Jesus came in fulfillment of prophecy being conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the right genealogy at the right time and in the right village. Throughout His life Jesus fulfilled many additional prophecies concerning the Messiah. He went to Egypt at the right time and returned to grow up in the right town. He fulfilled all righteousness when He was baptized by John the Baptist and proclaimed the right message: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* Jesus resisted temptation and defeated the devil. He taught with the authority of God Himself and performed miracles that only God could do including healing every kind of disease and sickness, casting out demons, controlling nature by His command, forgiving sin and raising the dead. Even Jesus' speaking in parables was the fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures. There should have been no doubt that Jesus was the Messiah, but most of the Jewish religious leaders, the scribes, Pharisees and chief priests, refused to acknowledge the truth due to their pride, self righteousness and jealousy.

There should have been neither confusion then nor now about what Jesus taught about Himself and the nature of Salvation. Yet, we find that man is the same today as he was then for people are still often more interested in using Jesus' words to prove their own thoughts than in conforming their beliefs to what Jesus taught.

What is the nature of salvation? It is not, as is popularly taught today, simply a change of mind that may or may not have consequences in one's lifestyle. That is intellectual assent, not conversion. It is not verbalizing, "*Jesus is Lord,*" and going on your merry way as is taught by some cults. That is viewing salvation as the result of an incantation, not faith in Jesus Christ.

The nature of salvation is such that it will result in an extremely radical change in the very being of a person. Paul expressed this in Ephesians 2 explaining that what was dead in trespasses and sin is made alive with Christ due to God's love and grace. There is no statement or even an allusion in Scripture to the idea that entrance into God's kingdom can be gained by mere intellectual consent or repeating an incantation. Jesus always presented salvation as a matter of believing or having faith in Him. It is intellectually dishonest to claim to believe in Jesus and then refuse to obey His commandments. To believe in Jesus includes all His claims about Himself, including being the promised Messiah, God incarnate. You cannot believe that Jesus is God in human flesh and remain indifferent to the rest of His claims, commands and promises.

Jesus often presented salvation in the terminology of entering into the Kingdom of Heaven or Kingdom of God. Jesus stated plainly in the Sermon on the Mount that "*unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 5:20). Jesus described the characteristics of the truly righteous in the Beatitudes beginning with "*blessed are the poor in spirit, for there is the kingdom of heaven.*" True righteousness begins with understanding that there is hope or means by which to have your sinful soul redeemed except to beg that God will do so based solely on His mercy and grace. Salvation begins with humility, not good self-esteem. Salvation includes the other elements of the Beatitudes as well such as mourning over sin, meekness, hungering and thirsting after righteousness and purity of heart.

Salvation requires regeneration of the soul because you go from death to life (Ephesians 2:1-10). You are transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13). You become a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) that will be conformed into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). Your purpose in life is changed from seeking your own kingdom to seeking God's kingdom (2 Peter 1:10,22).

Why this emphasis on the nature of salvation? Because it is vital to understanding the first parable that Jesus gives in this chapter. Remember that these parables are given to reveal the nature of God's kingdom to Jesus' disciples while hiding those truths from Jesus' enemies. The Parable of the Sower deals with the message of the kingdom of heaven, how it would be received, and what it would accomplish in individuals. The mystery being revealed is that the kingdom would come through the proclamation of a message that would bear fruit in some and not bear fruit in others. The Jews expected the kingdom to come by the force of a conquering King. The question of who is and who is not saved is part of the message of this parable, and so an understanding of what Jesus teaches about the nature of salvation is required to properly interpret it.

The Parable Presented - Matthew 13:3-9, Mark 4:1-9; Luke 8:4-8

Jesus gives the parable in verses 3-9. Remember that Jesus had already had a very busy day in which He cast out the demon and healed the man who was blind and mute. He had a very serious confrontation with the Scribes and Pharisees in which He has condemned them because their accusation that Jesus was doing miracles by the power of Satan was blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Jesus had also revealed that the relationship of His followers with Him is superior to that of even blood relatives. Jesus is now sitting in a boat just off the shore of the Sea of Galilee and teaching the people many things in parables.

“Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. And others fell upon the rocky places where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. And others fell on the good soil, and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. he who has ears, let him hear.”

This is a simple story that the people of that agrarian society would have understood easily for they would have seen it many times or done it themselves. A man goes out to his field carrying a sack or a basket full of seed, and as he walked through his field he would reach in to grab a handful of seed and then toss that seed in front of himself and to each side. They could easily picture the seed falling onto each of the types of soil that Jesus described. They understood the story, but they did not understand the message, and neither did the disciples.

As I pointed out last week from verses 10-17, the disciples come to Jesus privately to ask Him why He was speaking in parables and they ask Him to explain some of them. Jesus told them that they were blessed to be *“granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,”* which included things into which the prophets and righteous men of old desired to see, but did not. Through the parables Jesus would reveal truth to them, but the parables would at the same time conceal these mysteries from those who would not follow after Him. Those who hardened their hearts and rejected Jesus would fulfill the prophecy of those who *“seeing do not see and hearing do not hear.”*

The Parable Explained - Matt. 13:18-23, Mk 4:13-20; Lk 8:11-15

“Hear then the parable of the sower. 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. And 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; 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. 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 riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 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.”

The seed is the word of the kingdom, or as Luke puts it, *“the word of God.”* This could be a general reference to anything that God has spoken, but in view of Luke’s statement that it concerned believing and being saved, its primary focus is the gospel. It is the good news that Messiah has come and salvation is being offered to those who will repent and believe on Him.

The sower is not specifically identified here because the focus is on the seed, the soils and the results. The sower could be anyone who is sowing the seed of the Word of God. The prophets were the sowers in ancient times. John the Baptist and Jesus were sowing in that time. Jesus’ disciples were trained to preach the word of God, and the church has had the responsibility to proclaim the gospel ever since it was established on the day of Pentecost. In Jesus’ later *Parable of the Tares*, the sower is specifically identified as the *“Son of Man,”* and ultimately, regardless of who is physically proclaiming the word of God, it is God at work through people in preaching the Gospel.

There are four different types of soil and each effects the ultimate outcome of the sown seed.

Seed on the Road - Matthew 13:19; Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12

The first condition is the seed that falls by the road which is eaten by the birds. In this case the Word of God is proclaimed, but the hearer does not understand it. Their lack of understanding is compounded as the devil comes and takes away even what little had been sown in their heart. Why? As the passage in Luke puts it, in order that they may not meet the first condition leading to salvation which is to believe the

message. Paul described this in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, “*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*”

The seed, the word of God, was sown in the heart, and please remember that “heart” in the scriptures refers to the seat of the mind and will, not the seat of emotion as we use it figuratively in English. The seed was sown but there was no effect for the individual did not understand it, and then the devil took away what little understanding was there. This is by far the largest category. The gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and those hearing it do not understand it, so they turn their backs on it and the devil takes them even farther down the path leading to destruction.

It must be remembered that the gospel is “foolishness” to the “natural man” (1 Corinthians 2:14). Apart from the Holy Spirit, the things of the Spirit seem stupid to men. The devil uses different means by which to “snatch away” the word of the kingdom and to lead them to believe it is foolishness. Some reject that the Lord God created everything and the devil uses the lie of Evolution to blind their minds. Others accept a creator God, but they reject the idea of having to be personally accountable before Him. The devil uses the lie of universalism, the idea that all paths lead to God and no one will be punished by Him, to blind their minds. Still others believe there is a creator God or gods that will hold people accountable, but the devil uses false religions that worship nature or demons instead of Jesus Christ to keep them from salvation. There are also those that believe in the God of the Bible, but they substitute the teaching of men for the word of God and are striving to appease God and gain His favor by their religious rituals and works. The devil uses the lies of the cults to keep them from trusting God’s mercy and grace and believe Jesus’ promises to redeem and forgive all who have faith in Him.

The seed by the road speaks of all those who hear the message of the kingdom of God, but they reject Jesus as the Messiah and His message that He is “*the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through [Him]*” (John 14:6). The devil snatches away this truth by leading people to believe that there is no God, or in a false god or gods, or that they can earn their way to heaven.

Seed on Rocky Ground - Mt. 13:20-21; Mark 4:16-17; Luke 8:13

In the second condition the seed falls on the rocky ground as explained in verses 20-21. This is more accurately described as shallow soil over a rocky ledge. There are many places on the church property where this condition exists. There is a thin layer of soil on top of the underlying bedrock of shale. Seeds spout quickly because the rain pools on the shale instead of percolating into deeper soil. The roots of those plants remain shallow because they cannot penetrate the bedrock. When the weather becomes sunny and it gets hot, that shallow soil dries up quickly leaving the plants without water so they wilt and die.

This is the condition of people who hear the word of the kingdom and quickly respond with great joy and excitement. They are happy, but they remain shallow in their faith. They may become very involved in many things and even read their Bible, but they stick to passages that make them feel good and avoid those things that would force them to stretch their faith and think deeply. Difficulties in life eventually arise and they question why things are not easy anymore as they expected and they stumble and fall away. They allow themselves to be led into sin (*skandalivzomai / Skandalidzomai*). Luke 8:13 describes them as those who “*believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away (ajfivsthmi / ahistemi).*” That last word is the verb form of apostatize. They depart from what said they believed for some other belief.

I have met many people like this over the course of my life. They suddenly appear at church and are very excited about everything that is going on. They tell everyone how much they love Jesus and how wonderful life is. Then, just as suddenly, they disappear. You go to them and what do you find? Some difficulty has arisen in their life. Our text points out that this is at times because they want to avoid the persecution that comes from following Christ. As 2 Timothy 3:12 states, “*all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*” I have found that more often in America it is because of tribulation. They have entered into some personal difficulty such as a physical illness or financial problems or a troubled

relationship. Whatever the particular problem, it becomes the basis upon which they doubt God and then reject what they said they had believed and they depart from the faith. They become apostate.

Some claim that these people are still saved. Others say they were once saved but lost that salvation. Others just keep asking how such a thing could occur to someone who was so enthusiastic about Christ. The truth is that there was not genuine salvation and it took the tribulations of life to bring out the truth of what they actually believe.

The nature of true salvation is a radical change in person's being and not just behavioral changes. Outward change must arise from inward conversion and not the other way around. Being excited and enthusiastic even when accompanied by change in behavior is not proof of salvation. The very fact that they departed from the faith is evidence of an error in their faith. What did they really believe?

There are people who profess to be Christians, but they view salvation as fire insurance to them to keep them from hell. Others are misled to believe salvation brings a promise of a good life without troubles and trials. Some treat Jesus as if He is there to do their bidding. Still others have faith in faith and not in Jesus Christ.

1 John 2:19 explains the evidence and condition of apostates, *"They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they are not of us."* Those who heard the word and received it with joy but later became apostate had a shallow faith that did not go deep enough to change their hearts. They were and remain unregenerate.

Seed Among the Weeds - Matt. 13:22; Mark 4:18-19; Luke 8:14

The third category are the seeds that fall on weed infested ground. These are people who hear the word of God, but as time goes on other interests, concerns and a desire to gain the riches of this world choke it out so that the word has no effect on them. An example of this is a fellow named Demas whom Paul includes as co-worker in Colossians 4:14, but a few years later Paul writes of him in 2 Timothy 4:10, *"Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica."* You cannot love the world and God too. 1 John 2:15-16 is very direct on this point, *"Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."*

Those in this third category bore no fruit for they loved the world and what it has to offer more than God. You must be careful about what you think is important in life. It is easy to tell what is most important to you by examining how you spend your money and where you spend your time. What do those things reveal as most important in your life? Is it God and serving Him or the things of this world?

The things of this world are dangerous in two ways. First there is the pursuit after them which leads to all sorts of evil. An example of this is Paul's warning in 1 Timothy 6:10, *"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."* Such was the case of Demas. The same is true for the pursuit of pleasure, power or prestige.

The second negative aspect about the things of this world is the insecurity that comes with them. There is the fear you will not get all you want; the fear someone will take them from you, and the envy of anyone who has more. This nation has one of the highest standards of living in the world and yet survey after survey show that our people are some of the most unhappy. The things of this world - power, prestige, possessions and pleasure - do not satisfy, only God does. These are the people that heard of word of God and followed it for a short time, but the true desires of their hearts became evident over time. They were of the world and loved it, not God. These people are also unregenerate.

Seed on Good Soil - Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15

The last category is the seed sowed on good soil. These are the people who hear the word of God, understand it, respond to it, and bear fruit - much fruit. The hundredfold, sixtyfold and thirtyfold are increases of 1,000%, 600% and 300% respectively demonstrating the fruitfulness that comes from those who are truly sons of the kingdom.

What kind of fruit? It is the fruit that is born from hearing the word of God, understanding it, accepting it and holding fast to it. It is the fruit that arises from people who are genuinely saved from sin evidenced by hearts that are changed to be honest and good as listed in Luke 8:15. It would include the fruit born out of serving God to His glory as Jesus described in Matthew 5:13-17. You will be salt and light and your good works will glorify God. It is also the fruit of the Holy Spirit which Galatians 5:22-23 lists as love, joy, peace, patience, longsuffering, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. This fruit is in contrast to those who hear, but do not understand and reject; those who hear, quickly receive, but then depart when troubles come; and those who hear and may walk for a while, but do not bear fruit because the things of this world are more important to them.

It is only this last category of seed sowed on good soil that fulfills the reason the sower went out to sow. It is only those who bear fruit that fulfill the positive purpose of the Gospel being proclaimed. The point of the parable is that though the word of God is broadcast freely, it only bears fruit where there is genuine belief.

The Message to Us

So what does all this mean to us? First, if the Lord Jesus Christ is not yet your personal Lord and Savior, then keep in mind as you come and hear the word of God proclaimed that you cannot understand all of this by yourself. You need to be asking God to graciously open your mind and will to Him. Recognize that becoming a Christian is serious. You do not “try Jesus.” You recognize your own sinfulness and the need for His forgiveness. You must believe Jesus’ claims and promises resulting in yielding your life to Him because He is God and Savior. That is why there is a change of life. Consider the condition of your heart. Is it hard like that by the roadside? Is it shallow and superficial? Is it weed infested with the cares of this world? If so, then ask God to break up that fallow ground and prepare your heart to understand and receive the full gospel message without reservations or competing loyalties.

Next, be mindful that the purpose of salvation is to bear fruit for God. Romans 8:29 states that those who are truly God's children are “*predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.*” Ephesians 2:10 states “*for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*” True salvation believes in and follows the Jesus revealed in the Bible, and for that reason will bear fruit. You will become more like Him in character and will perform good works to His glory out of love for Him.

Remember that every Christian is responsible to be a “sower” who proclaims the Word of God to the lost and unbelieving world around us. You are responsible to proclaim God's message as accurately and as clearly as you can, but you are not responsible for the harvest. And remember that an untrained Christian faithfully scattering his few seeds will produce a greater harvest than the most learned and experienced believer who never bothers to sow at all. So sow the seed of the word of God and wait to see what harvest God will reap from it.

And finally, one last application. Be a good farmer and never be frustrated with soil preparation. Break up the soil by the side of the road. Ask probing questions to get people to think. Add mulch to shallow soils to deepen them. Talk freely about the true nature of the Christian life and how we deal with the problems of life and how God uses them to mature us. Anticipate weeds and control them when they are young and even better to do so before they spout. Stress the true purpose of life in glorifying God instead of pleasing self. Avoid manipulating people into false professions by catering to human desires and sharing only the nice parts of the gospel. Proclaim the whole gospel so that a person may believe and be radically changed.

Sermon Notes: *The Parable of the Sower*
Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23, Mark 9:3-10, 13-25, Luke 8:5-9, 11-18

Review

The ministry of the _____ is necessary to understand God's word - 1 Corinthians 2:14
Jesus spoke in _____ to reveal truth to His follower and conceal truth from his enemies
Both pride and lack of diligent study will result in _____ interpretations of Jesus' parables

The Nature of Salvation

The gospels clearly present Jesus' identity and message, but people are still _____ about salvation
Salvation _____ mere intellectual assent or from an incantation
Salvation is a radical _____ in a person's being - what was dead becomes alive - Ephesians 1:1-10
Entering the kingdom of heaven _____ righteousness which begins with humility - Matthew 5:3, 20
Salvation requires _____, a change of kingdoms, becoming a new creation, having a new purpose
The nature of salvation must be understood in order to properly _____ the parables of the kingdom

The Parable Presented - Matthew 13:3-9, Mark 4:1-9; Luke 8:4-8

This story would have been easily understood in an _____ society, but its meaning was not
Jesus explains the meaning of the parable when He is _____ with His disciples

The Parable Explained - Matt. 13:18-23, Mk 4:13-20; Lk 8:11-15

The seed is the "word of the kingdom" - "the word of _____" (Luke 8:11)
The sower is not identified - _____ proclaiming the word of God

Seed on the Road - Matthew 13:19; Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12

The hearer does not understand the message and the devil _____ away what was sown
2 Corinthians 4:3-4 - the god of this world _____ the minds of the unbelieving
1 Corinthians 2:14 - the gospel is _____ to the natural man
The devil "snatches away" truth by his _____ including: Evolution, Universalism, False religions, Cults
The seeds by the road are those who hear, but _____ Jesus' message - John 14:6 (the way, truth, life)

Seed on Rocky Ground - Matthew 13:20-21; Mark 4:16-17; Luke 8:13

Rocky ground = _____ soil over a rocky ledge (bedrock)
People who hear word of God and respond with joy, but remain _____ in their faith
Difficulties in life result in them questioning, then stumbling in sin, then _____
Christians should expect _____ - Matthew 5:10-12; 2 Timothy 3:12
Diverse personal _____ are part of normal life - which will mature the Christian - James 1:2-4
True salvation is a radical change in person's _____ and not just behavioral changes
_____ is neither fire insurance, a promise of a life without troubles, nor God fulfilling your desires
Departure from faith / fellowship of believers is the evidence of _____ having been a Christian - 1 John 2:19

Seed Among the Weeds - Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:18-19; Luke 8:14

People hear the word of God, walk for a while, but bear no _____ because of worldly interests - Demas

1 John 2:15-16 - You cannot love the world and _____ too

The pursuit of the things of this world result in all sorts of _____ - 1 Timothy 6:10

Love of the things of this world results in _____ - fear of lack of gain, fear of loss, envy of others

Seed on Good Soil - Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15

People who hear the word of God, understand it, respond to it and bear much _____

The fruit that is evidence of hearts _____ to be honest and good (Luke 8:15)

The fruit born out of _____ God - being salt, light and doing good works to His glory (Matthew 5:13-17)

The fruit of the _____ - Galatians 5:22-23

Only seed which bears fruit fulfills the purpose of the sower - _____ belief will be evidenced by its fruit

The Message to Us

1) You need the _____ to understand God's word - ask Him to open your mind and will to Him

2) Becoming a Christian is _____ - you must turn from sin to the Savior and put your trust in Him

3) The purpose of salvation is to bear _____ for God - Romans 8:29; Ephesians 2:10

4) Every Christian is to _____ seed - proclaim God's word accurately - but the harvest is up to Him

5) Like a farmer, prepare the soil before sowing the seed

_____ the soil - ask probing questions to get unbelievers to start thinking

Add _____ to shallow soils - talk freely about the true nature of the Christian life and dealing with trials

_____ weeds and control them - stress the true purpose in life is to please God, not self

Avoid manipulating people - proclaim the whole gospel so that people will believe and be radically _____

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up later. 2) Count how many times the words "seed" or "fruit" is said. Talk with your parents about what fruit is evidence that someone is a true Christian.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. Why is the Holy Spirit necessary to understand the word of God? Why did Jesus speak in parables? What is the nature of salvation? What is necessary for a person to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5)? What happens to a person when they are saved? What is the seed? Why is the sower not specifically identified? What keeps people from understanding the word of God? How does the devil "snatch away" what truth from unbelievers? Examples? Describe the person who fits "seed sown on rocky ground." Why do they lead into sin and become apostate? Is such a person saved? Why or why not? Describe the person who fits "seed sown among thorns." Why don't they bear fruit? Is such a person saved? Why or why not? What are the fruits born by a person who is "seed sown on good soil"? What is a Christian's responsibility in sowing seed? What are some ways you can prepare the soil before sowing the seed?