

The Sower, the Seed, and the Soils

Christ's very first parable was that of the Sower: "Behold, a sower went forth to sow" (Mat 13:3), "Behold, there went out a sower to sow" (Mar 4:3), "A sower went out to sow his seed" (Luk 8:5). He is the Sower in this parable and the seed is the message He preached: "Jesus began to preach" (Mat 4:17); "preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (4:23, 9:35); "he departed thence to teach and to preach" (11:1); "the poor have the gospel preached to them" (11:5); "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mar 1:14); "that I may preach there also" (1:38); "And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee" (1:39); "he preached the word unto them" (2:2); "preach the gospel to the poor" (Luk 4:18); "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also" (4:43); "And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee" (4:44); "to the poor the gospel is preached" (7:22); "he went throughout every city and village, preaching" (8:1).

The soils, of course, are four conditions or states of people's hearts that hear His preaching: way side; stony places; among thorns; good ground. Way side hearts are people who never have the correct understanding of the message, "understandeth it not" (Mat 13:19). It's because the devil hinders and obstructs it, "then cometh the wicked *one*" (Mat 13:19), "Satan cometh immediately" (Mar 4:15), "then cometh the devil" (Luk 8:12). Through false doctrines, corrupted Bible translations, religions and denominations, wolves in sheep's clothing, confusion, division, and isolation, the devil keeps the masses from ever understanding the message in the first place. So long as we're deceived, we're kept on the broad way that leads to destruction.

Stony places are those who understand the Lord's message yet have a shallow commitment or loyalty to Him, "hath he not root in himself" (Mat 13:21), "have no root in themselves" (Mar 4:17), "have no root" (Luk 8:13). When conflicts come, "tribulation or persecution ariseth" (Mat 13:21), "affliction or persecution ariseth" (Mar 4:17), "in time of temptation" (Luk 8:13), they don't endure but fall away. Flavorless salt, even salt that once had flavor, is useless. Therefore, salt that has lost its flavor isn't retained but thrown out, "if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out" (Mat 5:13), "if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? ... men cast it out" (Luk 14:34,35). Likewise, unproductive soil is left as wasteland.

Thorns in the heart are "the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches" (Mat 13:22), "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things" (Mar 4:19), "cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life" (Luk 8:14). John delineated three main categories of sin, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1Jo 2:16). These are primarily sexual deviations, coveting riches and possessions, and loving the praise and approval of people. As in the beginning, "And Adam was not deceived [*apataō* 538], but the woman being deceived [*apataō* 538] was in the transgression" (1Ti 2:14), the serpent entices us with "the deceitfulness [*apatē* 539] of riches." Coveting and lusting deceives us from the truth Christ taught, "But ye have not so **learned Christ**; If so be that ye have **heard him**, and have been **taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus**: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to **the deceitful [*apatē* 539] lusts**" (Eph 4:20-22). Sin is deceitful because we think we can handle it—that we can sin and still be fruitful to our Lord and right with God.

Good ground, however, "heareth the word, and understandeth *it*" (Mat 13:23), "hear the word, and receive *it*" (Mar 4:20), "having heard the word, keep *it*" (Luk 8:15). These aren't deceived by false doctrines but correctly understand God's message preached by His Son, then keep and retain it. As good soil bears fruit for a planter, these hearts produce for the Lord His intended result. They worship the one true God, "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Mar 12:29), "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (Jhn 4:23), "the only true God" (Jhn 17:3). And they obey the Lord, "heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them" (Mat 7:24), "observe all things whatsoever I have commanded" (Mat 28:20), "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luk 6:46).

Having ears to hear, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Mat 13:9), "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Mar 4:9), "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Luk 8:8), is using our ears to hear and understand Christ's message. After all, if we're not using our ears for the greatest endeavor, what good are they really? Christ's message in His preaching on earth is the same from the right hand of God in heaven, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit [*Breath*] saith unto the churches" (Rev 2:7,11,17,29, 3:6,13,22). And our hearts are still the soils today. We must hear the truth He preached about God and about Himself, and obey what He commanded. But if we won't listen to Him, we have no hope.