



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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The Sower!

Scripture: Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15

Jesus used many illustrations, or *parables*, when speaking to the crowds. A parable compares something familiar to something unfamiliar helping us understand spiritual truth by using everyday objects and relations. Jesus was not hiding truth from sincere seekers, because those who were receptive to spiritual truth understood the illustrations. To others they were only stories without meaning. This allowed Jesus to give spiritual food to those who hungered for it while preventing His enemies from trapping Him sooner than they might otherwise have done. When people reject Jesus, their hardness of heart drives away or renders useless even the little understanding they had.

Jesus' parables compel the listener to discover truth, while at the same time concealing the truth from those too lazy or too stubborn to see it. To those who are honestly searching, the truth becomes clear. Paul told the church at Corinth: *"God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"* (1 Corinthians 2:10, 14).

Why didn't the crowds understand Jesus' words? Some people do not understand God's truth because they are not ready for it. God reveals truth to people who will act on it and make it evident in their lives. When you talk with people about God, be aware that they will not understand if they are not yet ready. Be patient, taking every chance to tell them more of the truth about God and praying that the Holy Ghost will open their minds and hearts to receive the truth and act on it.

Isaiah 6:9-10 says: *"Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."* We hear with our ears, but there is a deeper kind of listening with the mind and heart that is necessary in order to gain spiritual understanding from Jesus' words. Some people in the crowd were looking for evidence to use against Jesus; others truly wanted to learn and grow. Jesus' words were for the honest seekers. Jesus said: *"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"* (Matthew 11:15).

No matter how skillful, no farmer could keep some of his seed from falling by the wayside, from being scattered among rocks and thorns, or from being carried off by the wind. Some of the seed that produced no crop was not the fault of the faithful farmer or of the seed. The yield depended on the condition of the soil where the seed fell. So the farmer would throw the seed liberally, and enough would fall on good ground to ensure the harvest.

Wayside people, like many of the religious leaders, refused to believe God's message. Rock-hard people, like many in the crowds who followed Jesus, believed His message but never got around to doing anything about it. Thorn-patch people, overcome by materialism, left no room in their lives for God. Good-soil people, in contrast to all the other groups, followed Jesus no matter the cost. The four types of soil represent different responses to God's message. People respond differently because they are in different states of readiness. Some are hardened, others are shallow, others are contaminated by distracting cares, and some are receptive. For example, you may be open to God about your future, but closed concerning how you spend your money. You may respond like good soil to God's demands for worship, but like rocky soil to His demand to give to those in need. We must strive to be like good soil in every area of our lives at all times. **How has God's Word taken root in your life? What kind of soil are you?**

That's why John tells us, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love 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 pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever"* (1 John 2:15-17).

This parable should encourage spiritual "sowers"—those who teach, preach, and seek to lead others to the Lord. The man sowed good seed, but not all the seed sprouted, and even the plants that grew had varying yields. **Don't be discouraged if you do not always see results as you faithfully teach the Word.**