

## Christ's Object Lessons Series

### 01 The Parable of the Sower

Mark 4:1-10 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. <sup>2</sup> Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: <sup>3</sup> "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> "And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. <sup>5</sup> "Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. <sup>6</sup> "But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. <sup>7</sup> "And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. <sup>8</sup> "But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." <sup>9</sup> And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" <sup>10</sup> ¶ But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.

Jesus was teaching many things in parables. Why was He speaking in parables? When Jesus had first begun to preach, even though He spoke openly, many people did not assimilate His lessons. Their hearts were not prepared to accept truth. Matthew gives a few extra details than Mark in his gospel:

Matthew 13:10-13 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" <sup>11</sup> He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup> "For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. <sup>13</sup> "Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

The people were hearing what Jesus taught but they did not understand. Today the situation is nearly the same. People's attention and interests are so much on worldly business that when you talk to them about eternal life and the hereafter, you can awake little or no interest. They behave as if eternal life was not a very important subject.

In Jesus' time, teaching in parables was a respected and popular method. Jesus took His object lessons mostly from nature and people's daily life. His goal was that while people were going about their daily duties, the lessons He gave would come to mind and they would settle more deeply. By using a variety of lessons He was able to explain truth in its varied aspect to different people.

Along with this, some of Jesus' hearers were enemies. If Jesus had condemned their hypocrisy and evil deeds openly, His work for the people would have been restricted because they would have tossed Him in prison. Those who wanted to trap Jesus understood His parables but they could not accuse Him.

But Jesus' disciples did not understand His parables. But because their hearts were open, He explained the meaning of the parables to them.

Mark 4:13-14 <sup>13</sup> And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? <sup>14</sup> "The sower sows the word.

In Jesus' time, the word of God was the Old Testament. Jesus continually directed His hearers to the Old Testament.

Luke 10:26 <sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading *of it?*"

But Jesus is the Word of God and He came to this world to communicate the knowledge of God.

John 1:1-4 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus, the Word of God, came to this world to confirm God's word, to explain it correctly and to share new revelation.

In a parable similar to the parable of the sower, Jesus said,

Matthew 13:37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

The one who sows the good seed is Jesus Himself. The sower, Jesus, did not come as a king as the people wanted. He did not come to set up a new form a new state. God kingdom would not be established by power and violence. The kingdom of God would be established by implanting a new principle in the hearts of people.

In our day, many people want to set up a religious state. They say our world will be more moral, more safe. But laws and rules cannot turn people's hatred to love. Laws and rules cannot change people's natural selfish thoughts and actions to unselfishness. There needs to be a new power in the heart. Jesus did not come to set up a power kingdom, He came as a sower to set up God's spiritual kingdom.

There is power in God's word. God created the world by speaking. When He spoke, matter came into existence. In God's word, the Old and New Testaments, there is God's power to fulfill every promise and command of God. The Lord wants us to forsake our sins. He will help us by giving us power. Let no one say, "I can't quit my sins." God's word is able.

Mark 4:3 "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow.

In Jesus' day, mortal danger was an every-day part of the people's lives. Most people lived inside city walls and went out of the city to work the fields. The sower went out to sow. Jesus is the one who sows the good seed. He left heaven and came to this world to sow God's word. In the same way that God called Abraham from his country and his people to go to a different land, in the same way that Paul was appointed to go afar and share the gospel with heathen peoples, even today He is calling common people from the places they reside to share the gospel.

Jesus continued to explain the parable.

Mark 4:15 "And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

The seed that fell by the wayside represents God's word which comes to careless and indifferent hearers. Their spiritual perceptions are dull. The uninterested hearer who loves the ways of this world do not perceive God's love or their need of Him. Satan and other fallen angels bring an criticism, a ridicule, or an insult through other people to the ones who show an interest and these people leave off taking spiritual subjects seriously.

Mark 4:16-17 "These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; <sup>17</sup> "and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.

Some people are easily convince and they appear to be disciples with a bright future. But the love of self is not subdued. They do not see that how terrible and evil is sin. These people trust in their own good works and righteousness. Their strength is not in the Lord. They rejoice for a time, but when a duty or sacrifice is commanded of God, they are offended. They do not want to abandon their sins. For them, religion is not an absolute principle but a hobby if it is convenient. In a short time they are gone.

Mark 4:18-19 "Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, <sup>19</sup> "and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

In your garden, the weeds grow of themselves, there is no need for you to care for them! But to raise good plants a careful attention is needed, isn't that right? If you do not leave off the old life 100%, sooner or later the old habits, like weeds will spring up and show themselves. What is our danger? The cares of this world. Jesus said,

Matthew 6:25-26 " Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

What is another of our dangers? The deceitfulness of riches. Some people are always working and thinking about such things but they do not consider their eternal destiny. Death comes in a moment like a thief and they go their graves unprepared. They sold their life for a little money.

Some people are always working for the good of others but they don't set aside time for devotion and communion with God. They wander away from their source of strength.

Others have desires for other things. Perhaps it is entertainment. Perhaps it is ease and comfort. Perhaps it is a hobby, a pastime. Perhaps the pastime is not evil in and of itself but because of it many people neglect eternal things.

Up until now, the seed we have talked about and the sower are the same. The thing that is different is the soil. You are the soil. You can prepare your soil. Your eternal destiny is in your hands. The decision is yours!

Not all of the seed will be lost.

Mark 4:20 "But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it*, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

The good soil takes God's word as God's word. Learning the truth is not so much a matter of intellect as it is having a pure purpose.

John 7:17 "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own *authority*."

The Holy Spirit will be given to the humble and those open to be taught.

Are you searching for the truth? What do you need to do to be good soil?