

WHAT ARE PARABLES?

- They are common, culturally relevant stories that reveal a moral, spiritual, or Kingdom truth.
- They reveal the heart of Jesus in practical ways for us to live out.
- They break through pretense to get to reality and reveal heart motives.
- They force us to go beyond the words we read and bring us face-to-face with truth.

WHY PARABLES?

Jesus had a clear and powerful message to deliver in an interesting, compelling way that would challenge listeners.

Matthew 13:13-15 ¹³This is why I speak to them in parables: “Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. ¹⁴In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. ¹⁵For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.”

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF WHILE READING A PARABLE:

- What was going on in the passages before and after the parable? Get context!
 - Who was the primary audience?
 - What was the setting? What is the historical and cultural background?
 - What is Jesus revealing about Himself and people?
 - Is there a principle to follow or a sin to avoid?
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PARABLE OF THE SOWER - MATTHEW 13:1-9

Explanation:

Matthew 13:18-23 ¹⁸“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. ²²The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. ²³But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.”

1. WE ARE TO _____ THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

- This is a parable about the kingdom of God; the seed is the word of God.
- We must take it in carefully—listen, reflect on it.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

- What gets in the way of seeking and hearing?
- See **Hebrews 3:7-12**

2. SIN _____ THE HEART.

Matthew 13:19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

- “The path” is the heart hardened by sin.
- This is talking about someone who never made the gospel personal—it’s theoretical and knowledge only.

Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

3. ROCKY GROUND SETS US UP FOR _____.

Matthew 13:20-21 ²⁰The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.

- o “Shallow soil” is when someone has an emotional response to Jesus but not enough roots to withstand trouble.
 - If the person never really understood the radical nature of the Kingdom of God.
 - The person wanted Jesus to bless them; their view was about what Jesus could do for them.
 - They fell away because the things they lost in the heat of life were what they really worshipped.

4. A _____ HEART DISABLES.

Matthew 13:22 The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.

- o “The thorns” is when someone has a divided heart.
 - You are controlled by doubt, have an anxious life with little fruit, and lack trust.
 - You worship Jesus and....
 - See also Matthew 6:24 and Psalm 86:11-12

5. GOOD SOIL GROWS _____.

Matthew 13:23 But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.

- o “Good soil” is when you are being transformed; the seed has gone deep, producing roots.
 - The word of God gets so deep in your heart that you want to live in loving obedience to Him.
 - You realize life is hard and yet find peace and strength in God.
 - You are fulfilled seeing God use you in the lives of others.
 - You hunger and thirst for truth and righteousness.

APPLICATION:

If soil number one describes you,

- Repent, pray for the Lord to shatter your hard heart, humble yourself, and recognize you are a sinner in need of a savior—you need to stop loving sin!
- Listen to the Word and let it impact you personally.

If you are soil number two person,

- Repent and surrender to God. You have been wanting Him to bless your wants; stop being shallow and seek His will... this goes beyond how you feel.

If you are wrestling with soil number three,

- Repent and lay down the things competing with the Lord in your life—sex, finances, work, priorities—this is a Lordship issue.
- Your part is to receive the Word. It’s the gardener’s job to remove your rocks and thorns (John 15).

If you are soil number four person,

- Keep on abiding, worshipping, and serving the Lord.
- Encourage and help others!

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN LIFE GROUP OR WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

Passages to consider: Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15

1. What from the sermon caught your attention?
2. Take a look at one of the passages: Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, or Luke 8:4-15. What’s the context of the parable Jesus is telling? A) What is happening around Him? B) Who is listening? Who is He speaking to?
3. What details of the story did Jesus focus on when He explained the parable? A) What was the explanation He gave?
4. What understanding do you gain about God, people, and life through what Jesus taught?
5. What impact does that understanding have on you? A) To whom could you tell the story Jesus told?

Passage to prepare for next week: Matthew 13:31-50