

The Soils Part 2
Mark 4:1-20
February 3, 2013

Introduction

Matthew 28:19-20 *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*

Our Lord Jesus laid out the chief duties of the church when He commissioned the church to go out and proclaim the gospel to the utter ends of the earth, making disciples as we proclaim, teaching them to obedience to the Word.

What kind of responses will we receive when we proclaim the gospel? This is the parable that Jesus teaches us about how people will respond to the gospel. It is the parable of the Soils. He gives us this warning and encouragement that people will either respond negatively or exceedingly fruitful to the gospel.

So Jesus presents to us the parable of the soils to help us understand the gospel evangelism and its effectiveness. This is the foundation parable. If we understand what Jesus is saying and apply this to our church, then we will be protected from such foolishness that is practiced by other churches.

I. Review (4:1-12)

- The parable

Mark 4:2-9 *He taught them many things by parables, and in His teaching said:³"Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times." ⁹Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

- Purpose of parables

Mark 4:10-12 *When He was alone, the Twelve and the others around Him asked Him about the parables. ¹¹He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables ¹²so that, "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"*

- Judgment against the people
- He no longer gave clear meaning of the kingdom of the heaven
- However, He gave full explanation to His followers

John 15:15 *I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*

- Purpose of the Soils parable
 - Explain the resistance and rejection to the message
 - Encourage that when successful—inexplicable and awesome result

II. The Meaning (4:13-20)

Mark 4:13-20 *Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? ¹⁴The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. ¹⁶Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ¹⁸Still others, like seed sown*

among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²⁰Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

- Farmer sows the word
 - Farmer
 - Anybody who is a true proclaimer of the gospel of Jesus Christ
 - Seed
 - Seed = Word of God, saving gospel
 - We are saved by the word of God

Romans 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

1 Peter 1:22-23 *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, ²³having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.*

Note: The Holy Spirit regenerates us through the word. The words of God is powerful and changes us.

- We have received the word of God from someone

1 Thessalonians 2:13 *For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*

- The seed does not need to be changed—it is perfect

Note: It is interesting that Jesus ignores the farmer. He just says that the farmer sows the seeds. Nothing more. The churches in recent years have tried to dress up the farmer to make him/her more palatable—more likable. To be culturally relevant does not matter because the farmer does not affect the conditions of one's heart.

- Bad soils
 - Soil = heart
 - We are not responsible for plowing the heart
 - God is responsible for the plowing and the growing

John 6:65 *And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."*

- We are responsible for the sowing
- Understanding why people reject the gospel
 - Hard hearts (unresponsive)
 - This is the smooth, hardened heart
 - Resistant to the things of God
 - This is a foolish heart (like the Fool in Proverbs)

Proverbs 1:7 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.*

Proverbs 10:23 *A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct.*

Proverbs 12:15 *The way of a fool seems right to him.*

Proverbs 15:5 *A fool spurns his father's discipline.*

Psalms 14:1 *The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.*

- When seeds fall, Satan grabs it immediately
- They are cooperating with Satan!

John 8:44 *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

▪ Unstable hearts

- Receive the words with gladness (joy)
 - No root—not in Christ
 - This is not a conversion experience
 - They have joy—of the selfish kind

Note: They are responding emotionally—not at the mind or the heart. They believe in Jesus, but they have not been broken hearted over sin, or are they denying their self.

- This is only temporary
- Tribulation or persecution come
 - Immediately they fall away

John 6:64-69 *"Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray Him. ⁶⁵He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless the Father has enabled him." ⁶⁶From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him. ⁶⁷"You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve.*

▪ Distracted hearts

- These people are the ones who want Christ, but also want the world

Luke 9:59-62 *He said to another man, "Follow Me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ⁶⁰Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹Still another said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first let me go back and say good bye to my family." ⁶²Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."*

Note: The cost of following Jesus is high. You have to abandon everything to follow Him. If we hold on to this world, we will never become His disciples. Essentially both said let me get my money first, then when I have the money, I will follow You. Jesus said, "No way, if you look back, you are not fit for the kingdom of God."

- Cannot be done
- The heart is distracted by three things
 - Worries of the world
 - Deceitfulness of riches
 - Desires for other things

Notes: Weeds and the seed cannot co-exist. This is a lie from hell when people say that you can have all the material blessings on earth while serving Christ. This is the message of the health, wealth, prosperity cults. All this does is cater to the sinful heart's desires. When you come to Christ, you must give up all of them.

- You cannot have two masters
- Loving the world is equivalent to hating God

1 John 2:15 *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

James 4:4 *You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.*

Transition: What is the evidence of true conversion?

Matthew 5:3-4 *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

James 4:7-10 *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

Salvation is a regeneration. It is a real transformation, turning a person from loving self to loving God, from pride to humility, from the reigning power of sin to the reigning power of righteousness (Edwards, Jonathan. *A Treatise On Religious Affection*, 122).

There are plenty of people who have false affections for self-interest, but the saved have true and deep affections. They are marked by a holy life manifested in a holy love. They love God, they love Christ, they thus are pursuing the fulfillment of the greatest commandment, to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. Holy love out of a holy life directed at the Holy One is directed at the chief affection of the redeemed. (Edwards, Jonathan. *A Treatise On Religious Affection*, 109).

- Good soils

Proverbs 20:9 *Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin"?*

- What does this soil look like?

Note: The good soil is not natural—has to be broken up. Who does this? Only God can.

Deuteronomy 30:6 *The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love Him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.*

Note: This good soil person cannot have this soil on his/her own. God must prepare it

- Bears good fruit
 - 30, 60, 100 times—we do not need to apply those numbers to ourselves—that is not the point
 - God is doing things through the lives of His people to build His kingdom
 - It is by His design

Mark 4:26-29 *He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."*