

## **The Seed and the Sower: A Sermon on Receiving the Word (Introduction)**

**Brothers and sisters, we gather today to reflect on one of Jesus' most potent parables: the parable of the sower and the seed.**

**This story, found in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8, isn't just about farming; it's a profound teaching about how we receive and respond to the Word of God.**

**It's a mirror reflecting back to us the state of our hearts and a call to cultivate fertile ground for spiritual growth.**

### **(Reading of the Scripture)**

**Let us read together the parable of the sower from Matthew 13:1-9, and then the explanation 18-23].**

### **(The Sower and the Seed: An Overview)**

Jesus describes a sower who goes out to scatter seed. Some seed falls along the path, where it's eaten by birds. Some falls on rocky ground, where it springs up quickly but withers for lack of roots. Some falls among thorns, which choke the young plants. And some falls on good soil, where it produces a bountiful harvest.

**This sower represents God, or perhaps anyone who shares the Gospel.** The seed is the Word of God, the message of salvation, hope, and love. The different types of soil represent different kinds of hearts, different responses to this divine message.

### **(Exploring the Soils)**

\* **The Path:** This represents the hardened heart, the person who hears the Word but doesn't understand or value it. The cares of the world, distractions, and even the enemy himself snatch it away before it can take root. **(Matthew 13:19**

***“When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.”) How often do we let the noise of life drown out the still, small voice of God?***

\* **The Rocky Ground:** This symbolizes the emotional heart, the person who receives the Word with initial enthusiasm, but lacks depth and commitment. When trials and tribulations come, they quickly fall away. **(Matthew 13:20-21** - “The one who received the seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and at

once receives it with joy. But since they have no roots, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.”) **Are we fair-weather Christians**, joyful in times of ease but easily discouraged when life gets hard?

\* **The Thorny Ground:** This signifies the divided heart, the person who hears the Word but allows worldly concerns, riches, and pleasures to choke it out. **(Matthew 13:22 -** “The one who received the seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.”)

Are we so entangled in the things of this world that we neglect the eternal? Do our desires for comfort and security overshadow our desire for God?

\* **The Good Soil:** This represents the receptive heart, the person who hears the Word, understands it, and allows it to take root and grow. It produces a harvest of righteousness and good works. **(Matthew 13:23 -** “But the one who received the seed sown on good soil is the one who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case **a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.**”) Are we cultivating the good soil of our hearts through prayer, study, and obedience?

### **(Application)**

**Brothers and sisters, which soil are we?** This parable is not meant to condemn, but to challenge and encourage.

It’s an invitation to examine our hearts and ask God to till the soil, to remove the rocks, to clear away the thorns, and to make us fertile ground for His Word.

\* **Hunger for the Word:** Develop a genuine desire to know God's Word. **(Psalm 119:105 -** “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”)

\* **Prayerful Reflection:** Don’t just read the Word; meditate on it, allow it to sink deep into your heart. **(Psalm 19:14 -** “May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”)

\* **Obedience:** Put the Word into practice. Faith without works is dead. **(James 1:22 -** “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”)

\* **Fellowship:** Surround yourself with other believers who will encourage you in your faith. **(Hebrews 10:24-25 -** “And let us consider how we may spur one another on

toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”)

**The sower goes out to sow. The seed is offered to all.**

But the harvest depends on the condition of our hearts. Let us strive to be good soil, receptive to the Word, that we may bear much fruit for the glory of God. Amen.

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**How do we cultivate good soil?**

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**(Conclusion)**

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**Core Concepts:**

- \* Sower: God, messenger of the Gospel, anyone sharing the Word
- \* Seed: Word of God, Gospel message, truth
- \* Soil: Heart, receptivity, spiritual condition
- \* Harvest: Fruitfulness, spiritual growth, good works, results of the Word taking root

**Types of Soil/Hearts:**

- \* Path: Hardened, unreceptive, distracted, worldly
- \* Rocky Ground: Shallow, emotional, temporary, easily discouraged
- \* Thorny Ground: Divided, worldly concerns, choked by riches/pleasures

- \* Good Ground: Receptive, obedient, understanding, fruitful

#### **Actions/Processes:**

- \* Sowing: Sharing the Word, evangelism, teaching
- \* Hearing: Listening to the Word
- \* Understanding: Comprehending the Word's meaning
- \* Receiving: Accepting the Word into one's heart
- \* Rooting: The Word taking hold, developing deep within
- \* Growing: Spiritual development, maturing in faith
- \* Bearing Fruit: Producing good works, living a transformed life

#### **Spiritual Qualities:**

- \* Faith: Trusting in God and His Word
- \* Repentance: Turning away from sin
- \* Obedience: Following God's commands
- \* Humility: Recognizing one's need for God
- \* Perseverance: Enduring trials and remaining faithful
- \* Love: Loving God and others

#### **Challenges/Obstacles:**

- \* Temptation: Enticements to sin
- \* Distractions: Worldly cares and concerns
- \* Persecution: Opposition to the faith
- \* Doubt: Questioning God's Word

#### **Call to Action:**

- \* Examine your heart: Assess your receptivity to the Word
- \* Cultivate good soil: Nurture spiritual growth
- \* Be doers of the Word: Put faith into action
- \* Share the Word: Be a sower of the seed

#### **Related Scriptures (beyond the parable itself):**

- \* Psalm 119: The importance of God's Word
- \* Hebrews 4:12: The power of God's Word
- \* James 1:22: Being doers of the Word, not hearers only
- \* Galatians 5:22-23: The fruit of the Spirit (related to good soil's harvest)

Using these keywords as a springboard, you can develop different angles and emphases within your sermon, connecting them to relevant scriptures and applying them to the lives of your congregation.