

What Type of Soil Are You? (Corrections to Last Devotional)

I want to begin today's lesson by first making a correction to a section of the last devotional lesson. As you recall I read 'The Parable of the Sower' (Matthew 13:1-9) and I then asked the question, "What type of seed are you?" What I should have asked was, "What kind of **soil** are you?" The seed is not a reflection of what we are, but rather the Word of God that is presented to everyone. Sorry for my mistake.

To recap, let me read The Parable of the Sower:

The Parable of the Sower¹ (Matthew 13:1-9)

¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, ⁶but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹**He who has ears, let him hear.**"

The seed is the Word of God that is presented to everyone, while the different types of soil describe the hearts of people when they hear God's message of salvation, the kingdom of God. Jesus' explanation of this parable as follows:

The Parable of the Sower Explained (Matthew 13:18-23)

¹⁸"Hear then the parable of the sower: ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²³As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

<p style="text-align: center;">ALONG THE PATH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it" • hearts indifferent to the Word of God, not allowing any roots to form • people who do not understand, & choose not to learn or understand 	<p style="text-align: center;">ON ROCKY GROUND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the Word, immediately he falls away" • hearts that allow the Word of God to only take only shallow roots, not standing the test of difficulties • only emotionally attachment, fall away when there is a sacrificial price to pay (faith of convenience)
<p style="text-align: center;">AMONG THORNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches" • hearts that allow the Word of God to take root • hearts that are divided with the interests of the world • people whose hearts love of money & the thing of the world, so these things take priority over striving after the true treasure of the kingdom of God • ⁹"Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ¹⁰ and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. ¹¹For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits." (James 1:9-11) 	<p style="text-align: center;">ON GOOD SOIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "the one who hears the word and understands it." • hearts that allow the Word of God to take root and joyfully bears much fruit and riches for the Lord • A Tree and Its Fruit ¹⁵"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus you will recognize them by their fruits." (Matt 7:15-19)

¹ **Sower:** Planter, one who scatters seeds over land, earth, for growth.

The Parable of the Weeds (*Matthew 13:24-30*)

²⁴ He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds² among the wheat and went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷ And the servants³ of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹ But he said, ^x ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, ^y Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

The weeds mentioned here are probably **darnels**, a wheat-like **weed** that can hardly be distinguished from wheat until the head matures. In an agricultural setting, sowing darnel in someone else’s wheat field was a way for enemies to destroy someone’s livelihood. This is a picture of Satan’s efforts to deceive the church through subtle contamination (by mingling his children with God’s), in some cases making it impossible to discern the true from the false.⁴

Because of Satan’s deceptive schemes, we need to turn to the Bible for all truth, for ^{“16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”} (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*). I encourage everyone to turn to the Bible for all truth and answers, especially if you call yourself a Christian, ^{“14 so that we may no longer be children, “tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”} (*Ephesians 4:14*)

The Bible also warns us, through the teaching of Paul, ^{“17 ...to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; ^yavoid them. ¹⁸ For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but ^ztheir own appetites,⁵ and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.”} (*Romans 16:17-18*) How can you avoid false teachings if you do not know the true teaching?

Let us try to relate this back to The Parable of the Weeds by hearing Jesus’ explanation of this parable to his disciples (*Matthew 13:36-43*).

The Parable of the Weeds Explained (*Matthew 13:37-43*)

³⁷ ...“The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed is the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds ^oare gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. **He who has ears, let him hear.**

So, wheat represents God’s children, those who TRULY believe and have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, whereas the weeds are the very opposite. We cannot tell who is ‘wheat’ and who is ‘weed’ until the time of the

2 Probably **darnel**, a wheat-like **weed** that can hardly be distinguished from wheat until the head matures.

3 Greek *bondservants*; also verse 28; **Bondservant**: A person obligated to service without wages. A slave or serf.

x [1 Cor. 4:5] ⁵ Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

y [Matthew 3:12] ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

4 John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc. 2007), 59

w [James 1:6] ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like “a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

y [2 John 10] ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, ¹¹ for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

z [Phil. 3:18-29] ¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

5 Greek *their own belly*

o [John 15:6] ⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. [Matthew 3:12] (cf. above)

harvest, the end times, when the Lord will separate His children from those who do not belong to Him. Since we cannot tell the weeds from the wheat until the time of harvest, the end times, let us be on guard and use the Bible as our guide.

What is amazing in all of this is that the Lord continues to invite everyone to become His children. He does not pull out the weeds until the time of harvest, so there is still opportunity for weeds to become wheat. The Lord encourages, warns and instructs us after both parables, “**He who has ears, let him hear.**” Let’s not waste this time or opportunity that God has provided for us to come before Him and accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

LESSONS/APPLICATIONS:

1. How receptive is your heart to the gospel? Do you need to change your heart and attitude towards God?
 - Let us all strive to be that good soil for the Lord, so that He can work His will in our lives.
2. What do you treasure? Where do you stand before the perfect God?
 - Just as the Lord repetitively instructs, “**He who has ears, let him hear.**” let us not be indifferent to the Word of God, but instead seek after the priceless treasure of the gospel.
 - For those of you who are **Christians**, strive to learn and apply the great teachings in the Bible, the Word of God, so that you will be knowledgeable and mature Christians without being naïve or easily tricked by false, deceptive teachings.
 - For those of you who are still seeking answers (**non-Christians**), and do not fully know God and the true joy of being a Christian, a part of God’s family (a child of God), I urge you to seek out the answers to the questions you have about Christianity. You can ask your governors these questions. I’m sure you can spare a few moments ...especially if it leads to obtaining the most precious, and valuable treasure in life!
 - Let me encourage you with Jim Elliot’s wise words, “**He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.**”⁸
 - This warning goes out to both Christians and non-Christians, but especially to Christians who have not given God the priority He deserves in their lives, “⁷**Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.** ⁸**For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.**” (*Galatians 6:7-8*)
 - What are the desires of your heart, the things you seek after and want? Where do you stand before the perfect God?
 - ¹⁹“**Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,** ²⁰**but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.** ²¹**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**” (*Matthew 6:19-21*)

⁸ Jim Elliot’s journal (1927 - 1956, 29-yr), a modern martyr, gained international recognition when he died with four others at the hands of Auca Indians. His story and memoirs have become a source of missionary inspiration through the writing and speaking of his wife, Elisabeth.

ADDITIONAL NOTES & BIBLE VERSES

Matthew 7:15-19 (A Tree and Its Fruit)

¹⁵“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

John 15:1-17 (I Am the True Vine)

¹⁵“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

Matthew 13:10-16 (The Purpose of the Parables)

¹⁰Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” ¹¹And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹²For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ¹³This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

“ ‘You will indeed hear but never understand,
and you will indeed see but never perceive.
¹⁵For this people’s heart has grown dull,
and with their ears they can barely hear,
and their eyes they have closed,
lest they should see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their heart
and turn, and I would heal them.’

¹⁶But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.