**THE SOWER**

***Matthew 13:1-23***

Sunday School Lesson

*Parables of Jesus Christ*

Week 6 – 11/26/2017

**Introduction:** The parable of the sower shows us the varying responses that people have to the Word of God. In this parable, the sower represents a preacher of the Gospel, seed represents the Word of God, and the different grounds represent different types of people. Out of the four types, only one is portrayed as good. As we study this parable, we ought to observe whether we fit into this type. If we do not, we should strive to make changes in our lives to help the seed flourish as it should. The problem is never with the seed, as the Word of God will never fail us. If we properly handle It, we will always produce good fruit.

1. WE MUST REALIZE THAT SOME WILL HEAR THE WORD OF GOD BUT NEVER LET IT TAKE ROOT IN THEIR HEART. (4,19)
2. **Notice that the Word of God affects the heart of every person.** In verse 19, we see that even with the toughest ground, the Word of God still sows something in the heart of a person. This ought to be an encouragement to us as Christians. The message that we carry when we share the Gospel with others is a powerful message. While many will still reject the truth of Jesus, it is not due to a lack of supernatural power in the message that we carry. It should also remind us that our primary message should not be our own but based solely on the Word of Truth. (Isaiah 55:11; Hebrews 4:12)
3. **Notice that we have a responsibility to teach the Word of God.** Those who do not let the Word of God take root are those who do not understand it. God has given the Christian the responsibility to teach His Word to the unsaved. We should study the Scriptures daily in order to better teach it to those who do not know Jesus. The greatest example of this is the story of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch found in Acts 8. In this story, we see a man reading the Word of God and not understanding it, but Philip was sent by the Holy Spirit to explain to the man the truth of the Gospel. (Romans 10:14-15)
4. **Notice that Satan is actively working against the Word of God.** From the time God created man and spoke to him, the Devil has been working against God’s Word. We must understand that the Devil is actively looking for every opportunity to question the Word of God. He does this to both the saved and the unsaved. If he can cause the Christian to question God’s Word, we will not actively teach it to others. If he can cause the unsaved to question the Word of God, he can keep them in the same condition. For this reason, we must be vigilant in protecting ourselves and continuing to witness unto those who are unsaved. (Ephesians 2:2; Genesis 3)
5. WE MUST REALIZE THAT SOME WILL ACCEPT THE WORD OF GOD BUT NEVER GIVE IT ENOUGH TIME TO PROPERLY TAKE ROOT IN THEIR HEART. (5-6, 20-21)
6. **Notice that our faith requires patience to grow.** Regarding this second type of soil, Jesus points out that this person initially received the Word of God with gladness. Unfortunately, they are not able to endure long enough to see the fruits of their faith. The rocks represent the hard times in the Christian’s life. It takes work to get through those rocks. Sadly, some fall away from the Word of God because they are not willing to endure the hard times in their Christian life. The disciples provide us a great picture of this. Many of them were surprised when the Lord advised that they would have to endure great persecution for the work of Christ. (James 1:2-4)
7. **Notice that our faith should not be focused on convenience.** A convenient faith is a weak faith. Many of the people who were lame or ill in the New Testament came to Jesus to be healed. After they were healed, some of these same people were there in the crowd that was shouting for Him to be crucified. It is obvious that their faith was based on convenience alone. Now that they had received healing, they wanted to continue in their normal, everyday life. Thomas struggled because he had a convenient faith. He needed it to be easy for him to believe. In John 20:25, Jesus reproves Thomas because he had to see Him and touch Him in order for him to believe. Jesus said that those who did not see were greater. We should not have to constantly receive mountaintop-level experiences in order to keep our faith strong.
8. **Notice that our faith should compel us to submit to the Word of God.** Accepting the Word of God and submitting to the Word of God are not the same. The parable states that these people ultimately become offended. In another gospel, Jesus advises that they do not have enough water to grow. In the New Testament, we see that water represents the Holy Spirit. The issue here is that they do not wish to obey the more challenging aspects of the Christian walk. They get offended with the preaching of the Word of God, but the problem is ultimately a heart problem. They want Christ to save them from their sins, but they do not want to do anything about their sinful behavior after salvation. (John 14:15-21)
9. WE MUST REALIZE THAT SOME WILL ROOT THE WORD OF GOD IN THEIR HEART BUT ALLOW THE CARES OF THE WORLD TO LIMIT THEIR FRUITFULNESS. (7,22)
10. **Notice that the spiritual and the physical compete for our attention.** The reality of life is that there is always something going on. If we are not careful, we will allow the daily things of life to choke out the spiritual tasks that the Lord has given us. It is amazing how there never seems to be enough time to read our Bible or spend a few minutes in prayer with the Lord. Somehow, the boss always seems to ask for overtime to be performed right when church is supposed to start on Sunday morning. We must intentionally make time for the things of God because our flesh has other priorities. (Romans 7:15-25)
11. **Notice that the cares of this world have a gradual and often unnoticeable impact.** The impacts of the thorns are not seen immediately or as a result of just one thorn. Instead, the thorns continue to grow and multiply until they have completely choked out the plant. This is why the Bible states that they become unfruitful. Over time, what was once a fruitful person gradually starts producing less and less fruit. The other challenge is that a new thorn can spring up so quickly that we barely even notice it there. We have to pay attention to what is hurting our Christian life. Thorns always cause pain; therefore, if we are aware and sensitive, we can pinpoint the problem and eliminate the thorn. (Ps. 139:23-24)
12. **Notice that the cares of this world often seem more important than what they are.** The parable mentions the deceitfulness of it. Whether it’s procuring more riches or investing your time in something, it is rarely as important as what it seems. That place you had to go to or that thing you had to buy is often of little consequence, yet it always seems to be so important at the moment it is needed. It reminds me of a teenager that spends all day playing video games. They get to the end of the game and then realize that there is no great excitement there. Several hours earlier, you could not get them to look at anything except for that game. (I Timothy 6:10)
13. WE MUST PRAY THAT MANY WILL ROOT THE WORD OF GOD IN THEIR HEART AND WORK TO PRODUCE ETERNAL FRUIT. (8/23)
14. **Notice that having a good ground takes regular maintenance.** As sinful man, we do not naturally have a good ground. We have to continually look to God to help us maintain it. In the Old Testament, Naboth had a great vineyard. It was obvious that he had put in quite a bit of work to maintain his property. Instead of putting in the work himself, Ahab was envious of the vineyard and sought to purchase it. Naboth was not allowed to sell it, and he ultimately gave his life to protect that little piece of land. We have to realize that there are no shortcuts to being a better Christian. We must put in the continual effort to prepare our hearts for the Word of God. (I Chronicles 16:11)
15. **Notice that the numerical results of the ground are not indicative of its fertileness.** The Bible gives different amounts that the ground will produce. We are not to be concerned with the amount of the fruit. We ought to only look within each one of us to determine if we are doing everything possible to provide a good ground for the Lord to work with. (2 Timothy 2:20-22)
16. **Notice that there are fewer that have the good ground than any other type.** For each of the other soils, the Lord uses the word “some.” However, when it comes to the good ground, He does not mention this word. Instead, He says that there are others. This tells us that there are a significantly fewer number of people who have not prepared their hearts for the Word of God. We ought to pray that some would allow God to soften and prepare their ground. (Matthew 7:13-14)

**CONCLUSION**: While we looked at a general approach to this lesson and its application, we ought to also look at the immediate application that can be made in the church. As the message from the Word of God is being delivered today, which type of soil will you be: the one who is so enamored with sinful living that the Word of God barely moves you, the one who is comfortable with the message until it starts to convict your heart, the one who is distracted from the message because of other issues on your mind, or the one with an attentive heart to what God is speaking to you about?