

## Parable of The Sower Matthew 13:1-23

**Introduction:** Parables have been described as “Earthly stories with heavenly meanings.” The longer Biblical dictionary meaning is, “*a somewhat lengthy utterance or narrative drawn from nature or human circumstances, the object of which is to set forth a spiritual lesson.*” It denotes a placing beside, to throw or lay beside, to compare. It signifies a placing one thing beside another with a view to comparison.

Jesus was a supremely gifted teacher. Accustomed to preaching to a crowd with a wide range of understanding and attitudes, he based each parable on the common, everyday events that made up first-century life—lost money, sheep, and shepherds, cruel creditors. Both Christ’s teaching and his parables focus on the issue of kingdom. Kingdom in the gospels does not have to do with territory or realm ruled over but with the rule or authority itself—God’s rule on earth in the person of Christ.

Parables brilliantly illustrate important truths about Christ’s kingdom, truths which demand a response. But the sad fact is that our rebellion and sin often close our minds and hinder our response. Thus, the brilliance of the illustration may only cause some people to persist more deeply in error. In our first parable we will get a chance to look at this sad fact.

This Bible Study introduces you to several of Jesus’s parables and their application for today. It is my prayer that you will be captivated and challenged by the parables, that you have “ears to hear” what the Lord is saying to you through them.

*Observation, Interpretation, and Application* are three keys that unlock the treasures of Scripture.

Let’s begin!

**Have you ever wondered** why the same book, or the same sermon will produce strikingly different results in different people? How is it, for instance, that some people seem unable to grasp the simplest and most obvious spiritual truths while others are transformed by them? In the parable of the sower, Jesus talks about different types of soil in order to tell why this happens.

**Think about it.** Think about a first-hand experience—serious or humorous--you have had with farming or with caring for plants in some way. I would think that most of us would agree that the condition of the soil can make a huge difference in the plant’s ability to thrive.

**Personal Reflection.** We all have areas of our hearts and minds where our “soil” is soft and receptive to God, as well as areas where our “soil” is hard and areas where you would like God to make you more receptive to his love and his will in your life.

### Turn to Matthew 13.

The parable of the Sower is Jesus’ most important parable because it provides more clues than any other parable as to the nature of parables and how they should be interpreted. The parable is followed by Christ’s own interpretation and discussion of its contents. It is an excellent place to begin our study of the parables.

This parable has three parts: 1) Jesus gives the parable (**vv.3b-9**), 2) He explains the purpose of speaking in parables (**vv.10-17**), and 3) Jesus interprets the parable (**vv.18-23**).

### Discussion:

1. Image you are a farmer or a farmer's child at the time of Jesus listening to this story with the rest of the crowd. Based on what you knew about images of seeds and soils, in your mind you could identify with and relate to what Jesus was saying. No doubt he would have captured your attention because you would be familiar with the subject matter.
  - a. There may have also been some curiosity as to why Jesus, seemingly out of nowhere, started speaking about soil and seeds.
2. In **verse 10**, the disciples asked Jesus, "Why do you speak to the people in parables? On the surface, you would think that Jesus would want everybody to understand every parable.
  - a. The seven parables in **Matthew 13** called by the Lord "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven"(**v.11**), taken together, describe the result of the presence of the Gospel in the world during the present age, that is the time of seed-sowing which began with our Lord's personal ministry and ends with the "harvest."
    - i. A "mystery" in Scriptures is a previously hidden truth, now revealed, but in which a supernatural element still remains despite the revelation.
    - ii. Some other mysteries are, the mystery of Israel's blindness in this age (**Rom.11:25**); the translation of living saints at the end of this age (**1Cor. 15:51,52**); the New Testament church as one body composed of Jew and Gentile (**Eph. 3:1-11; Rom. 16:25; Eph.6:19**); and the church as the bride of Christ (**Eph.5:28-32**).
  - b. God sovereignly uses the parables either to harden a person's heart so that he or she will be unable to respond (**v.15**) or to elicit the positive response of coming to Jesus, asking for an explanation, and accepting his message (**v.10**). The disciples had a positive response and wanted to know more. People are at different stages of readiness.
  - c. At His discretion, God gives even more understanding to those that have more, and takes away from others the little understanding they have. (**v.12**). This phrase means that we are responsible to use well what we have. When people reject Jesus, their hardness of heart drives away or renders useless even the little understanding they had.
3. In **verses 18-23** Jesus explains the meaning of this parable to his disciples. The seed is the message of the kingdom. The Sower or farmer is those that teach, preach, and lead others. The soil represents those unto whom the seed is scattered or the four types of responses.
4. The wicked one destroyed the value of God's Word for the first group of people.
  - a. All the seeds are good if they are the Word of God. The soils are different.

