

The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1-23

¹ On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. ² And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

³ Then He spoke many things to them in

parables, saying, ⁴“Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁵ And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. ⁶ Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁷ But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. ⁸ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. ⁹ But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ¹⁰ He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

¹⁰ And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”

¹¹ He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

Mark 4:1-20

¹ And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. ² Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching:

³ “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow.

⁴ And it happened, as he sowed, *that some seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. ⁵ Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. ⁶ But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. ⁷ And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. ⁸ But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

⁹ And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

¹⁰ But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.

¹¹ And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, ¹² so that

‘Seeing they may see and not perceive,
And hearing they may hear and not understand;

Luke 8:1-15

¹ Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve *were* with Him, ² and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, ³ and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.

⁴ And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable, ⁵ “A sower went out to sow his

seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. ⁶ Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. ⁸ But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.” When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

⁹ Then His disciples asked Him, saying, “What does this parable mean?”

¹⁰ And He said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is given* in parables, that

‘Seeing they may not see,
And hearing they may not understand.’

The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1-23 cont

'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;
¹⁵ For the hearts of this people have grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing, And *their* eyes
they have closed, Lest they should see with *their*
eyes and hear with *their* ears, Lest they should
understand with *their* hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.'

¹⁶ But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and
your ears for they hear; ¹⁷ for assuredly, I say to
you that many prophets and righteous *men*
desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*,
and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.
¹⁸ "Therefore hear the parable of the sower:
¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom,
and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one*
comes and snatches away what was sown in his
heart. This is he who received seed by the
wayside. ²⁰ But he who received the seed on
stony places, this is he who hears the word and
immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no
root in himself, but endures only for a while. For
when tribulation or persecution arises because of
the word, immediately he stumbles. ²² Now he
who received seed among the thorns is he who
hears the word, and the cares of this world and
the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and
he becomes unfruitful. ²³ But he who received
seed on the good ground is he who hears the
word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit
and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty,
some thirty."

Mark 4:1-20 cont

Lest they should turn,
And *their* sins be forgiven them.' "

¹³ And He said to them, "Do you not understand
this parable? How then will you understand all
the parables? ¹⁴ The sower sows the word. ¹⁵ And
these are the ones by the wayside where the
word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes
immediately and takes away the word that was
sown in their hearts. ¹⁶ These likewise are the
ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear
the word, immediately receive it with gladness;
¹⁷ and they have no root in themselves, and so
endure only for a time. Afterward, when
tribulation or persecution arises for the word's
sake, immediately they stumble. ¹⁸ Now these are
the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones
who hear the word, ¹⁹ and the cares of this world,
the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for
other things entering in choke the word, and it
becomes unfruitful. ²⁰ But these are the ones
sown on good ground, those who hear the word,
accept *it*, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some
sixty, and some a hundred."

Luke 8:1-15 cont

¹¹ "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word
of God. ¹² Those by the wayside are the ones
who hear; then the devil comes and takes away
the word out of their hearts, lest they should
believe and be saved. ¹³ But the ones on the rock
are those who, when they hear, receive the word
with joy; and these have no root, who believe for
a while and in time of temptation fall away.
¹⁴ Now the ones *that* fell among thorns are those
who, when they have heard, go out and are
choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life,
and bring no fruit to maturity. ¹⁵ But the ones
that fell on the good ground are those who,
having heard the word with a noble and good
heart, keep *it* and bear fruit with patience.

LEADER'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions: "The Parable of the Sower"

- 1. What are parables?** A parable comes from the Greek word "parabolē" meaning "comparison." They are designed to teach some general truth. In Jesus' example, it was mostly spiritual truth. He did this for clarity, purity, instruction, and simplicity.
It is best to read in groupings to compare and contrast each Gospel's observations and interpretations. Read in blue: Matthew 13:1-3a, Mark 4:1:2, and Luke 8:4. Next read in red: Matthew 13:3b-9, Mark 4:3-9, and Luke 8:5-8. Next read in green: Matthew 13:10-14, Mark 4:10-12, and Luke 8:9-10. Next read in purple: Matthew 13:16-23, Mark 4:13-20, and Luke 8:11-15.
- 2. What is specifically different in Mark 4:3? Which is not mentioned in Matthew or Luke?** Mark states with the exclamation, "**Listen!**" Jesus is boldly, stating, "Pay attention" Jesus will mention this again in the parable "**He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**" Mark 4:9. Listening and teaching are the messages Jesus is trying to convey.
The meaning of the parables and how do they impact us today.
- 3. What is meant by the parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed."**
This is found in Matthew 13:3, Mark 4:3, and Luke 8:3a, also in Matthew 13:16-18, Mark 4:14, and Luke 8:11.
Meaning: Jesus cannot articulate a more striking illustration of the man preaching the gospel than a sower who plants a seed in the ground for it to spring to life and bear fruit. The seed is God's message. Mark describes in it Mark 4:14, calling the seed "the Word," Luke expresses the seed in Luke 8:11 as "the Word of God." Matthew clarifies it the best in Matthew 13:19, stating the seed is "the Word of the kingdom." The seed metaphorically represents Jesus' good news of the kingdom of God. The man or "sower" represents God/Jesus delivering the message.
Today: As a seed starts to grow into a plant, so does the Word of God, and it begins to grow within a person.
- 4. What is meant by the Parable: "Some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them."**
This is found in Matthew 13:4, Mark 4:4, and Luke 8:5, also in Matthew 13:19, Mark 4:15, and Luke 8:12.
Meaning: The seed represents people who hear the Word of Jesus, but they don't pay attention. These are people with a hardened heart. The birds represent Satan or the devil. Matthew refers to him as "the evil one," Mark refers to him as "Satan," and Luke refers to him as "the Devil." Satan represents the fowls in the sky who see the vulnerable seed easily be devoured, preventing "the Word" from taking root. Metaphorically the devil comes and takes away the Word from a person who does not either understand the Word of the Lord or cannot comprehend the Word.

LEADER'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions: "The Parable of the Sower"

Today: These are people who hear the Word, and do not follow the path of Jesus, represent the seed that fell by the wayside. They are "of the World." We are called to be "in the world" but not "of the world."

5. **What is "by the wayside?"** By the wayside is hard ground that has not been plowed yet. There is no opportunity for the seed to be buried so it can be grown properly.

NOTE: Stony places. Notice how Luke adds in the verbiage "because it lacked moisture."

6. **What is meant by the Parable: "Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture."**

This is found in Matthew 13:5-6; Mark 4:5-6 and Luke 8:6, also in Matthew 13:20-21, Mark 4:16-17 and Luke 8:13.

Meaning: The seed that fell on rocky places represents those who engage with gladness. These are the people with a shallow heart. All three gospels mention the Word was received with joy. They receive something new and are drawn to it. But they do not root themselves in the Word. Their hearts are not changed when they hear the Word. When faced with challenges in life, hardship, or persecution, they stumble or fall away. Just as a young, rootless plant, it withers in the scorching sun and falls away easily. The sun represents the challenges or hard times.

Today: People who are attracted to the Word, the bible, Jesus, God, Christianity but give up when the going gets tough they represent the seed that fell on rocky places. It is not an easy road to commit to a Christian lifestyle.

7. **What is meant by the Parable: "Some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up and choked them."**

This is found in Matthew 13:7; Mark 4:7 and Luke 8:7, also in Matthew 13:22, Mark 4:18-19 and Luke 8:14.

Meaning: The thorns that grew into thorn bushes actually choke God's message. These are people with a crowded heart. People hear God's message, but they are focused and more concerned about getting rich or worry. They focus on life instead of the Word. The deceitful lure of wealth and riches causes one to change the focus away from God and on one's own pursuit of happiness. Wealth may provide temporary happiness, but it is not long-lasting, and the soul is not satisfied. Wealth possesses the desire to obtain more wealth, and to this end, there is only death--no wonder the thorns choke the Word.

Today: It is common to see people who are more concerned with what others may think, and they worry too much represent seeds that fell among thorns. Posting one's life on social media to display what an awesome life

LEADER'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions: "The Parable of the Sower"

they have. Often, they are jealous or angry and focus on what other people have.

8. Sub-question: (Seeds that fell on stony places) **Why would the ones who hear the Word immediately receive it with joy?** The ones who receive the Word with joy do so because they have sinned, and they an opportunity for their sins to be forgiven. It offers them peace and salvation, and for a brief time, they feel happy and forgiven of their sins.

9. **What is meant by the Parable: "Some seed fell on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit."?**

This is found in Matthew 13:8; Mark 4:8 and Luke 8:8, also in Matthew 13:23, Mark 4:20 and Luke 8:15.

Meaning: 3 parts that take place here. The first one has a fruitful heart and hears the Word. Having a fruitful heart prepared by God's grace allows us to be open without bias or prejudice to hear his Word. Second, accept and understand the Word. To understand the Word of God, we should first pray. God inspires everything we read in the bible. Seek his guidance. Next, read in context. Read the whole section or paragraph to understand the message. Next, study the Word. Read footnotes, the references of another scripture with the superscript letter next to the word or passage. The third and most important is to put what you have learned into practice. This is to bear fruit.

Today: People who hear Jesus' message and live by it and practice every day.

10. **What is meant by "some thirtyfold, some sixty and some a hundred."?** This means the seed was produced to its full potential. Some grains will yield a range of 12 to 1500 grains. However, it was usually 30:1, or up to 60:1. From just one seed, if cultivated properly, it will yield much more than its own worth as just one seed. We are called to do the same. As we grow in our walk with God, we discover our true calling. For some, it is discipleship; for others, it is service. Think of your journey as water dripping on a rock. At this moment, you may be in contact with someone who needs to hear the Word, to hear there truly is hope, that they can be saved. That person may or may not fully understand it right now, but you are the dripping of water on the rock today. Tomorrow it might be someone else. Next week, it may be another person.

11. **What is meant by "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"** Jesus uses this expression frequently. It is everyone's duty to pay attention to what is spoken.

12. **What does Jesus mean when he states, "To you, it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God?"** Mark 4:11, Some versions use the word "secret" instead of mysteries. The Greek

LEADER'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions: "The Parable of the Sower"

word is translated as "mysterion" The difference is a secret can be uncovered, but a mystery must be discovered. It also does not mean learning the mysteries are incomprehensible. The disciples were given the doctrines about preaching the gospel and establishing the new kingdom, which they had not yet comprehended. It was the disciples' responsibility to preach the Word to the Gentiles and the Jewish community, begin his church and spread his Word to the rest of the world.

The mysteries of heaven (there are many more than these):

1. 1 Peter 3:18: Jesus was to die on the cross for our sins.
 2. Matthew 25:31-36: Jesus spells out what he will do at judgment time.
 3. Colossians 1:25-27: Another mystery of the kingdom of heaven is Jesus is in us, and we are inside Jesus.
 4. Ephesians 5:22-33: Another mystery we the people are the bride and Jesus is the bridegroom.
 5. Luke 10:25-37: **How to inherit eternal life?** The good Samaritan. This was an important message the disciples had to go out and teach the gospel.
13. In Matthew 13:11, Mark 4:11, Luke 8:10: **Why are the mysteries of the kingdom of God given to the disciples but not to those who are outside? It is given in parables.** They were too engrossed in earthly possessions and groveled too much about the concept of Jesus' kingdom. They could not comprehend the truth. Jesus explains the kingdom to the followers through parables because we could not have comprehended the same level of understanding of God as Jesus. It is also simpler for people to understand.
14. **What is meant by the Parable:** Matthew 13:12 **"For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."** (not covered in Mark or Luke): Someone who improves their walk in Christ, when an opportunity presents itself, their relationship will be improved. But the one who does not have a walk-in Christ, "even what little he has," will be taken away.
15. **What is the seed?** The seed is the Word of God.
16. Mark 4:13: What did Jesus mean when he stated, **"How then will you understand all the parables?"** Jesus meant this was one of the simplest parables to understand.
17. Bonus question: **Where is Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled in Matthew 13:14-15** **"Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing. And their eyes they have**

LEADER'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions: "The Parable of the Sower"

**closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I
should heal them?"** Isaiah 6:9-10.

STUDENT'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions: "The Parable of the Sower"

It is best to read in groupings to compare and contrast each Gospel's observations and interpretations. Read in blue: Matthew 13:1-3a, Mark 4:1:2, and Luke 8:4. Next read in red: Matthew 13:3b-9, Mark 4:3-9, and Luke 8:5-8. Next read in green: Matthew 13:10-14, Mark 4:10-12, and Luke 8:9-10. Next read in purple: Matthew 13:16-23, Mark 4:13-20, and Luke 8:11-15.

1. **What are parables?**

2. **What is specifically different in Mark 4:3? Which is not mentioned in Matthew or Luke?**

The meaning of the parables and how do they impact us today.

3. **What is meant by the parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed."
Meaning:**

Today:

4. **What is meant by the Parable: "Some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them."
Meaning:**

Today:

5. **What is "by the wayside?"**

Note: Stony places. Luke adds in verbiage "because it lacked moisture."

STUDENT'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions: "The Parable of the Sower"

6. What is meant by the Parable: **"Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture."**

Meaning:

Today:

7. What is meant by the Parable: **"Some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up and choked them."**

Meaning:

Today:

8. Sub-question: (Seeds that fell on stony places) **Why would the ones who hear the Word immediately receive it with joy?**

9. What is meant by the Parable: **"Some seed fell on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit?"**

Meaning:

Today:

10. What is meant by **"some thirtyfold, some sixty and some a hundred?"**

STUDENT'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions: "The Parable of the Sower"

11. What is meant by "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

12. What does Jesus mean when he states, "To you, it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God?"

The mysteries of heaven (there are many more than these):

1. 1 Peter 3:18: _____
2. Matthew 25:31-36:

3. Colossians 1:25-27:

4. Ephesians 5:22-33:

5. Luke 10:25-37:

13. In Matthew 13:11, Mark 4:11, Luke 8:10: Why are the mysteries of the kingdom of God given to the disciples but not to those who are outside? It is given in parables.

14. What is meant by the Parable: Matthew 13:12 "For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him." (not covered in Mark or Luke):

15. What is the seed? _____

16. Mark 4:13: What did Jesus mean when he stated, "How then will you understand all the parables?"

17. Bonus question: Where is Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled in Matthew 13:14-15 "Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing

STUDENT'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions: "The Parable of the Sower"

you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing. And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them?" _____

The Parable of the Sower Quiz

1. What does the seed represent?
 - a. Jesus
 - b. God
 - c. The word of God
 - d. Satan
2. Who does the sower represent?
 - a. Jesus
 - b. Satan
 - c. A farmer
 - d. The Disciples
3. What happened to the seed that fell on rocky soil?
 - a. Birds ate the seed
 - b. The seed was choked
 - c. The seed started to grow, but did not take root
 - d. The seed grew and produced a yield of 100 seed
4. What happened to the seed that fell on the path?
 - a. Birds ate the seed
 - b. The seed was choked
 - c. The seed started to grow, but did not take root
 - d. The seed grew and produced a yield of 100 seed
5. What happened to the seed that fell among the thorns?
 - a. Birds ate the seed
 - b. The seed was choked
 - c. The seed started to grow, but did not take root
 - d. The seed grew and produced a yield of 100 seed
6. What does Jesus mean when he says, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear?"
 - a. Listen to what is being said, evaluate it, and decide what is best to do.
 - b. Pay attention
 - c. Put my words to the test
 - d. Jesus is only talking to those people who have ears

7. Who does the seed that fell by the wayside and birds devoured them represent?
 - a. Those who hear the word, are drawn to it, but fall away when faced with hardship or persecution
 - b. Those who hear the word but don't pay attention to it
 - c. Those who hear the word, understand it and put it into practice
 - d. Those who hear the word, but fall away in pursuit of wealth and riches
8. Who does the seed that fell on good soil represent?
 - a. Those who hear the word, are drawn to it, but fall away when faced with hardship or persecution
 - b. Those who hear the word but don't pay attention to it
 - c. Those who hear the word, understand it and put it into practice
 - d. Those who hear the word, but fall away in pursuit of wealth and riches
9. Who does the seed that fell on rocky places represent?
 - a. Those who hear the word, are drawn to it, but fall away when faced with hardship or persecution
 - b. Those who hear the word but don't pay attention to it
 - c. Those who hear the word, understand it and put it into practice
 - d. Those who hear the word, but fall away in pursuit of wealth and riches
10. Who does the seed that fell among the thorns represent?
 - a. Those who hear the word, are drawn to it, but fall away when faced with hardship or persecution
 - b. Those who hear the word but don't pay attention to it
 - c. Those who hear the word, understand it and put it into practice
 - d. Those who hear the word, but fall away in pursuit of wealth and riches

The Parable of the Sower Quiz Answer Key

1. What does the seed represent?
 - a. Jesus
 - b. God
 - c. The word of God Luke 8:11**
 - d. Satan
2. Who does the sower represent?
 - a. Jesus Mathew 13:3 Mark 4:3 Luke 8:5 Mark 4:14**
 - b. Satan
 - c. A farmer
 - d. The Disciples
3. What happened to the seed that fell on rocky soil?
 - a. Birds ate the seed
 - b. The seed was choked
 - c. The seed started to grow, but did not take root Matthew 13:5 Mark 4:5 Luke 8:5 Matthew 13:20 Mark 4:16 Luke 8:13**
 - d. The seed grew and produced a yield of 100 seed
4. What happened to the seed that fell on the path?
 - a. Birds ate the seed Matthew 13:4 Mark 4:4 Luke 8:5**
 - b. The seed was choked
 - c. The seed started to grow, but did not take root
 - d. The seed grew and produced a yield of 100 seed
5. What happened to the seed that fell among the thorns?
 - a. Birds ate the seed
 - b. The seed was choked Matthew 13:7 Mark 4:7 Luke 8:7**
 - c. The seed started to grow, but did not take root
 - d. The seed grew and produced a yield of 100 seed
6. What does Jesus mean when he says, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear?"
 - a. Listen to what is being said, evaluate it, and decide what is best to do.
 - b. Pay attention Mark 4:3**
 - c. Put my words to the test
 - d. Jesus is only talking to those people who have ears

7. Who does the seed that fell by the wayside and birds devoured them represent?
 - a. Those who hear the word, are drawn to it, but fall away when faced with hardship or persecution
 - b. Those who hear the word but don't pay attention to it **Matthew 13:19**
Mark 4:14 Luke 8:12
 - c. Those who hear the word, understand it and put it into practice
 - d. Those who hear the word, but fall away in pursuit of wealth and riches
8. Who does the seed that fell on good soil represent?
 - a. Those who hear the word, are drawn to it, but fall away when faced with hardship or persecution
 - b. Those who hear the word but don't pay attention to it
 - c. Those who hear the word, understand it and put it into practice
Matthew 13:23 Mark 4:20 Luke 8:15
 - d. Those who hear the word, but fall away in pursuit of wealth and riches
9. Who does the seed that fell on rocky places represent?
 - a. Those who hear the word, are drawn to it, but fall away when faced with hardship or persecution **Matthew 13:20 Mark 4:16 Luke 8:13**
 - b. Those who hear the word but don't pay attention to it
 - c. Those who hear the word, understand it and put it into practice
 - d. Those who hear the word, but fall away in pursuit of wealth and riches
10. Who does the seed that fell among the thorns represent?
 - a. Those who hear the word, are drawn to it, but fall away when faced with hardship or persecution
 - b. Those who hear the word but don't pay attention to it
 - c. Those who hear the word, understand it and put it into practice
 - d. Those who hear the word, but fall away in pursuit of wealth and riches
Matthew 13:22 Mark 4:18 Luke 8:14