

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Back in 2001, the company that I worked for decided to have a contest in order to promote teamwork.

It was a giant pumpkin growing contest.

They supplied the land for the different groups to use, they supplied us with free irrigation products to use – we had to put it altogether of course, they supplied us with a water source.

However, it was up to each individual group to plant their seedling, to maintain the ground, etc.

Initially, everyone was excited about the project. I was the lead of our group.

Most of the people in my group showed up the first day to rototill the plot that we were given, to install the necessary valves and the sprinklers in order to get the project going.

We planted our seedlings in May and didn't realize the commitment we were about to take.

Every day after work, we were there making sure that our plant was getting water, we were giving it food, we were pulling weeds, we were building canopies to provide shade to protect the pumpkins from collapsing underneath the hot sun, we had a misting system to cool them off – it was a lot

of work. We even had to pollenate them ourselves – trying to figure out which ones were the male flowers and the female flowers.

By the time September came around, 75% of the groups had quit. Their plots were left abandoned.

In my group, we had a handful of guys that stuck it out. And when it was time to harvest them and weigh them, our biggest pumpkin weighed in at over 240 lbs. [Show pic](#)

We came in second place, the biggest thing I learned besides never entering another pumpkin contest again was the importance of the preparation of the soil.

Many of the other groups failed because they didn't take the time to prepare their plot and maintain their plot. When they didn't see any progress – that is when they quit.

Now, this morning – we are going to cover the parable of the Sower. This is probably the most significant parable that Jesus – because if we truly understand the parable of the sower, we will see that the conditions of our hearts will determine how we respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Will we be that seedling that produces no fruit or will we be the seedling that produces the 240 lbs pumpkin???

[Let's pray...](#)

**[Mar 4:1-20 NKJV] 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; 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."**

Now, before we get into the parable, I think it is important to read it context –

Jesus is no longer preaching in synagogues, He has the multitudes following Him around either looking to get healed or they are there to witness Jesus heal people or cast out demons.

The crowds had been getting so big that in our last chapter, we saw Jesus ask His disciples to get a boat ready because of the multitudes.

So here Jesus gets into the small boat – He is floating a few yards from shore and He is able to deliver His message to the multitude as they stand at the edge of the Sea of Galilee.

The acoustics created by the water and the surrounded hills allowed Jesus' voice to be magnified –

Now, Jesus begins to speak to them in parables –

What is a parable?

A common description of a parable is that it is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

The parable of the Sower is one that the multitudes would be able to identify with because that is what the people around Galilee did – they would grow stuff.

Now, why is Jesus speaking to them in parables???

Parables serve two purposes –

- The parables reveal truth to those that have accepted Him,
- The parables conceal truth – to those that have rejected Him. It conceals truth from those that are too lazy to think or too blinded or prejudice to see.

The reason that Jesus is speaking to the multitudes in parables is that He is separating the wheat from the chaff.

Separating those who are following Him for who He truly is – the Son of God, versus those who are simply following Him for superficial reasons - maybe it was physical healing they were after or maybe they were expecting Jesus to overthrow Rome and establish His kingdom right there.

Now, before Jesus begins to tell them the parable, He grabs their attention – He says listen!!

Now, there is **one variable** in the parable of the sower.

The soil type is the only thing that changes in all four examples.

The seed stayed the same.

The seed is the word of God. The word of God never changes.

**[Heb 13:8 NKJV] 8 Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, today, and forever.**

The soil is our hearts and we see four different soil types in this parable.

**Why is the heart so important???**

**[Pro 4:23 NKJV] 23 Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it [spring] the issues of life.**

What King Solomon is telling us here in Proverbs 4:23 is that our heart is like a reservoir – if it is polluted with junk, junk will come out of our lives.

All of our problems originate at the heart – it makes no sense addressing other aspects of our lives if our heart is polluted. Change must begin at the heart and we must be diligent in what we allow into our heart.

So let's take a look at the different heart types...



## 1. The hardened heart – (verse 4)

The wayside is better known as the foot path.

When the sower would sow his seed, there were areas set aside as the foot paths so that **no one** would walk among whatever has been sowed.

You don't want people stomping over your vegetable gardens so you set aside a wayside.

Because of the heavy traffic, **the soil was compacted** – for those of you that have ever golfed, think of an unpaved cart path on a golf course.

Because the soil was so hard, the seed simply stayed at the top and the birds would come and eat the seed. It would never have an opportunity to germinate because of the condition of the soil.

Now, Jesus explains to us who the birds are – Satan (verse 15).

**It is important to see that Satan doesn't want the word of God to take root in a person's heart. Like a bird swooping down and snatching a seed, he wants to "remove" the seed of the word from the "soil" of a person's heart.**

**This is Satan's preferred result. He wants to keep the word from ever having a place in a person's life so that they will never be fruitful to God.**

## Who are the people that have this type of heart?

This may be someone who you start sharing the gospel to and then they stop you and tell you that they are not interested.

This may be someone who is so caught up in religion and traditions that they harden their hearts. The scribes and the Pharisees were a perfect example of this.

This may be someone who comes to church and listens to the Word being preached and leaves the same way that they came in. The Word has no effect on them.

I remember in my life as my boss Ed Pena would share the gospel with me as a young 18 year old and I would laugh at his face – it was because of the condition of my heart.

## 2. The stony ground heart –

The soil around the area of the Sea of Galilee was very rocky – just like here in Southern Arizona.

There was usually a thin layer of top soil and underneath the top soil, you had limestone.

There was enough top soil to allow the seed to germinate and grow, however, because of the limestone, the roots were very shallow.

Under the intense heat and because they had shallow roots, they would wither away.



Here in Southern Arizona we sometimes see the wild flowers that spring up really quickly here in the spring or after the monsoons – if we have had a rainy season, as soon as it warms up – they wither away.

Now, what type of believer is one that has a stony ground heart???

Verse 16 is the key. Because in verse 16, Jesus tells us that this ground received the seed with gladness.

This is the believer whose walk is only based on emotion.

It is a shallow faith dependent on the circumstances around them.

They accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, they are excited – they begin to go to church regularly, they read their bibles, they put a Jesus fish emblem on their car but when they begin to face the trials and tribulations, they wither away.

This is the person who will tell you, “Yeah, I tried going to church– but it was just too hard”

### 3. The choking heart –

In order to have any type of garden, one has to be diligent in maintaining it.

You allow weeds into your garden of tomatoes; you are not going to have a very fruitful garden. You are simply going to end up with a garden of weeds.

You see, the weeds will take up the nutrients that you are giving your tomatoes, the water, the food, even the sun.

This speaks of the believer who accepts the word of God however his or her heart also has allowed other things into their heart that chokes away the word and thus – no growth and no fruit.

There was period in my Christian walk where I had a period of no growth – it was because there were other things in my life that I was allowing into my heart that were keeping me from growing.

My career, the desires of the flesh, my pursuit of riches.

The scriptures give us an example of such a person in Demas. Demas was one of Paul's boys, serving alongside Paul as he went from church to church.

**[Phm 1:24 NKJV] 24 [as do] Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.**

Demas was one of Paul's fellow laborers.

**[Col 4:14 NKJV] 14 Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.**

Then we get to Paul's second letter to Timothy -

**2Timothy 4:9-10 NKJV] 9 Be diligent to come to me quickly; 10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for**

## Thessalonica--Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.

The word of God was choked out of the life of Demas because of the weeds he had allowed into his heart. No longer was he interested in walking along Paul and preach the word of God, his pursuit turned to what the world had to offer.

This is the believer who allows compromise into their hearts.

It's the idea that I can have Jesus AND every "thing" the world wants to entice me with, and still think that I can be effective and bear fruit for God's kingdom.

### 4. The good heart –

[Mar 4:20 NKJV] 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."

The good ground not only hears the word but accepts the word. The good ground bears fruit. Not the same amount of fruit – but it bears fruit.

This is the measuring stick of an obedient believer – bearing fruit.

The good ground is the one that reproduces, not necessarily as an evangelist, but as a person who is actively living their life to serve Jesus.

It's the person who takes God's Word seriously enough to do what it says.

If you are the "good ground", then the cycle begins all over again and you jump from being "good ground" to being a "sower".

That is what we are all called to do. That is the great commission.

To be sowers of the seed, that is what the next parable is all about.

**21 Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? 22 "For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. 23 "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." 24 Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. 25 "For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."**

In this parable, Jesus is warning His disciples and us as well about the importance of sharing the truth of the gospel to others.

We all have a solemn responsibility to spread that truth in whatever way God gives us opportunity, just as someone who has the cure for a life-threatening disease has the moral responsibility to spread that cure.

This is not just the responsibility of the pastor or the evangelist.

We all play a part in this.

God didn't light our lamps so that we would hide them.

Let's look at the parable of the Growing Seed.

**26 And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, 27 "and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. 28 "For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. 29 "But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."**

The parable of the growing seed demonstrates that we have a role in sharing the good news to the multitudes but it is His mighty work that brings forth the harvest.

**[Isa 61:11 NKJV] 11 For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to**

**spring forth, So the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.**

God does most of the work through His Word and His Spirit.

Yet God still works through people to get the process moving. Some of us plant, some of us are called to water, and some to are called to reap.

Many times when we feel inadequate to share the gospel – we must remember, God is the one who saves. We are simply called to sow the seed – to sow the Word.

**30 Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? 31 "[It is] like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; 32 "but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." 33 And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear [it]. 34 But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.**

The small mustard seed can grow to a size of 10-12 feet tall.

The previous parable spoke of the growth that God provides as we sow seed. However, not all growth is good.

The parable of the mustard seed provides us with a warning on how the church can grow so out of control that Satan can



undermine the seed by placing false teachers within the church.

In the beginning of the book of Acts, despite all the persecution from both the Jews and Gentiles, the church started to grow rapidly. Satan realized that outside influence wasn't going to destroy the church so, he simply joined the church and people started dividing the church preaching heresies.

That is why it is so important that we study the seed, the Word of God, so that we will not be deceived.

You see, God's word is filled with all of the spiritual nutrients necessary for spiritual nurture and growth.

Every believer needs to study God's word so that they know what and why they believe and have been born again.

You see, feeding on God's word equips us to move into a life of discipleship where we share God's word with others.

Therefore, God's word is essential to spiritual growth from the onset of life in Christ to the sunset of life on earth until He calls us home.

But in order for the word to flourish, we must have the right type of heart to receive it.

Amen

## Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



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