

## Parable Of The Sower

- This parable is recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. (Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23; Mk. 4:1-9, 13-20; Lk. 8:5-10, 11-15).
- It is one of the most familiar of all the parables, but one that is not understood by most even though Jesus gave the explanation of it.
- Matthew and Mark state He gave the parable "by the sea." (Matt. 13:1; Mk. 4:1). Luke does not give the location. He simply says "The sower went out to sow his seed." (Lk. 8:5).
- He does indicate that "a great multitude" was present (Lk. 8:5), and this agrees with the accounts of Matthew and Mark. (Matt. 13:2; Mk. 4:1).
- Matthew and Mark both indicate Jesus gave this parable from "a boat." (Matt. 13:2; Mk. 4:1).

MAT 13:1 On that day Jesus went out of the house, and was sitting by the sea.

MAT 13:2 And great multitudes gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole multitude was standing on the beach.

MAT 13:3 And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow; MAT 13:4 and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.

MAT 13:5 "And others fell upon the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil.

MAT 13:6 "But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

MAT 13:7 "And others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out.

MAT 13:8 "And others fell on the good soil, and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

MAT 13:9 "He who has ears, let him hear."

MAR 4:1 And He began to teach again by the sea. And such a very great multitude gathered to Him that He got into a boat in the sea and sat down; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

MAR 4:2 And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching,

MAR 4:3 "Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow;

MAR 4:4 and it came about that as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up.

MAR 4:5 "And other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil.

MAR 4:6 "And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

MAR 4:7 "And other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

MAR 4:8 "And other seeds fell into the good soil and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."

MAR 4:9 And He was saying, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

LUK 8:5 "The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road; and it was trampled under foot, and the birds of the air ate it up.

LUK 8:6 "And other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.

LUK 8:7 "And other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it, and choked it out.

LUK 8:8 "And other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great." As He said these things, He would call out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

LUK 8:9 And His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable might be.

LUK 8:10 And He said, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, in order that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.

### Interpretation Of Parable

<p>MAT 13:18 "Hear then the parable of the sower.  MAT 13:19 "When 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 the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.  MAT 13:20 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy;  MAT 13:21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.  MAT 13:22 "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.  MAT 13:23 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."</p>	<p>MAR 4:13 And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? And how will you understand all the parables?  MAR 4:14 "The sower sows the word.  MAR 4:15 "And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.  MAR 4:16 "And in a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy;  MAR 4:17 and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.  MAR 4:18 "And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word,  MAR 4:19 and the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.  MAR 4:20 "And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it, and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."</p>	<p>LUK 8:11 "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.  LUK 8:12 "And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved.  LUK 8:13 "And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.  LUK 8:14 "And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.  LUK 8:15 "And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance."</p>
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- This parable is often called “Parable of the Sower,” but it might better named “Parable of the Soils.”
- The main emphasis of the parable is the different kinds of soils.
- The “sower” is not a specific person, but represents a teacher of the word of God.
- This teacher can be anyone who shares the word of God with others.

**LUK 8:4 And when a great multitude were coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable:**

1. The word parable comes from the Greek "parabole" and means "to lay or thrown alongside for the purpose of comparing."

- “para” [pah **rah**] means "beside."
- “bole” [bah **lay**] means "to cast, to throw." It comes from the Greek “ballo” [**bahl** loh].
  - a. It is "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning."
  - b. Some parables are not stories. (Lk. 4:23; Mk. 7:15-17).

LUK 4:23 And He said to them, "No doubt you will quote this **proverb** to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your home town as well.'"

MAR 7:15 there is nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.

MAR 7:16 [ "If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." ]

MAR 7:17 And when leaving the multitude, He had entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the **parable**.

- 1) Though the word “parable” is used in these passages, it is used to refer to a figurative saying or proverb.
  - 2) The NIV render “parable” “proverb.” (Lk. 4:23).
2. It is important that one does not try to make every detail of a parable mean something.
  - a. This will miss the point of the parable and leads to many false conclusions.
  - b. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, for example, it is a mistake to make the donkey and the inn-keeper have some special meaning. This was part of the story.

### **Some Seed Fell Beside The Road**

**LUK 8:5 "The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road; and it was trampled under foot, and the birds of the air ate it up.**

1. The path would be packed and hard, not allowing the seed to penetrate and germinate.
2. The birds would quickly eat the expose seed.
3. In Palestine the land was divided into smaller plots. There were no fences or walls separating the plots, only narrow paths that were accessible to every one.

### **Seed Fell On Rocky Soil**

**LUK 8:6 "And other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.**

1. The reference is to a substratum of rock covered by a layer of soil which would allow growth but which would dry quickly in the sun.
2. The plants, unable to penetrate the rock to find moisture, would wither.

### **Some Seed Fell Among The Thorns**

**LUK 8:7 "And other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it, and choked it out.**

1. This was soil infested with thorns.
2. They destroyed whatever was planted.

### **Some Seed Fell On Good Soil**

**LUK 8:8 "And other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great." As He said these things, He would call out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."**

1. Luke, apparently interested in the fact of productively, not degrees of it, omits the one hundred, sixty, and thirty-fold of Matthew and Mark. (Matt. 13:8; Lk. 8:8).
2. "A hundred times as great" means this many bushels for each one sown.
3. Some converts produce much fruit through their lives and teaching.

### **Disciples Ask Meaning Of Parable**

**LUK 8:9 And His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable might be.**

1. This parable did not mean anything to them without an explanation.
2. Even today we could not be sure of its meaning without the explanation or interpretation of Jesus.
3. Jesus gave a spiritual meaning to something they had done or witnessed on many occasions.

### **Mysteries Of The Kingdom**

**LUK 8:10 And He said, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, in order that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.**

1. Some did not understand the spiritual significance of the parables because they were blinded by sin and refused to search out the meaning of the parables.
2. Those eager to learn the truth would search out the spiritual meaning of the stories Jesus related to them.
3. Jesus explains the four kinds of soil represents different kinds of hearts or minds.

### **Jesus Explains Parable**

**LUK 8:11 "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.**

1. Jesus quickly defines "the seed." See 1 Pet. 1:23-25.
  - a. He says "the seed is the word of God."
  - b. Matthew says "hears the word of the kingdom." (Matt. 13:19).
  - c. Mark says "The sower sows the word." (Mk. 4:14).

2. It was not something strange or mysterious or the teachings of men, but “the seed is the word of God.”
3. The word of God is God’s power unto salvation. (Rom. 1:16; Jas. 1:21).
  - a. Human teaching and traditions do not have the power to save.
  - b. God’s word alone is the power of God to save men.

### **Seed Beside The Road**

**LUK 8:12 "And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved.**

- Jesus recognized the reality and vicious activity of Satan.
1. This was soil that had been hardened by the coming and going of passers-by.
  2. This soil represents hearts which have been hardened by sin. See Heb. 3:13.
  3. The devil is not ignorant and he knows the great power of the word of God.
  4. The devil knows the power of God's word and he snatches the word away before it can penetrate the heart and produce repentance. (Matt. 13:18; Mk. 4:15).
  5. He certainly does not want us to meditate on the word and make application of it to our lives. See Psa. 119:11.
  6. Here are some ways the devil snatches the word of God from men.

Convince them the word of God is not true	Convince them one does not have to take it seriously.	Persuade them that the word of God can be a head knowledge - not a heart knowledge.
Convince them they can obey the word later. (Prov. 27:1).	Convince them that smart people do not accept the gospel.	Convince them that the word of God can be obeyed a short time.

### **Rocky Soil**

**LUK 8:13 "And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.**

1. This was a layer of rock covered by a thin layer of soil.
2. This soil represents those who accept Christ without counting the cost.
3. They come to Christ quickly and easily, but they often leave in the same way.
4. Jesus taught that those coming to him should count the cost. (Lk. 14:27-33).

LUK 14:27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

LUK 14:28 "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?

LUK 14:29 "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, LUK 14:30 saying, ' This man began to build and was not able to finish.'  
LUK 14:31 "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?  
LUK 14:32 "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace.  
LUK 14:33 "So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

5. Jesus taught that those coming to Him must deny themselves and take up their cross. (Matt. 16:24).

MAT 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

### **Seed Among The Thorns**

**LUK 8:14 "And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.**

1. This was soil that is deep , but covered by thorns or had an abundance of weed-seeds buried underneath the soil.
2. A thorn is anything that crowds Jesus out of our lives.
3. This soil represents those who let the cares of the world choke them out.
  - a. They listen to the world and conform to the world.
  - b. They reject the word of God that calls upon them to come to God, and remain faithful to Him.
4. Christians are warned about loving the world. (1 Jn. 2:15-17). See Rom. 12:2.

### **Good Soil**

**LUK 8:15 "And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.**

1. This was soil which was clean, loose, and deep.
2. This soil represents those who accept the word and obeys it under all circumstances.
3. This is the one who brings forth much fruit.
4. This is the person who understands the parable after meditation.
  - a. He asks "What does this mean?"
  - b. He says, "I will not stop thinking about this until I discover what it really means."
  - c. He then says, "I will obey what the Lord teaches me to do."**
  - d. He does not follow his own teachings or the teachings of men, but he obeys what the Lord teaches in His word. (Jas. 1:21).**

5. The words “hold it fast” means he accepts it and obey it under all circumstances.
  - a. Mark uses the word “accept it” meaning he believes it and takes it into his mind. He does not let it go into one ear and out the other.
  - b. Matthew has “understands it,” that is he asks, “What does this mean?” He says, “I will not stop thinking about this until I discover what it really means.”

## **Some Observations**

1. Jesus teaches we must sow the seed even though much of it may be wasted.
  - a. We must never be stingy with the word.
  - b. The Lord anticipates that much of the seed will be wasted, that is, not all will accept it or hold fast to it.
  - c. We are to make sure that every person have an opportunity to hear and obey the gospel. (Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8).
  - d. When dealing with men, one cannot know in advance the good soil.
    - 1) We must sow the seed and the good soil will manifest itself.
    - 2) See Acts 18:10, 8; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.
2. We must never change or alter the seed to accommodate the different kinds of soils or hearers. (2 Tim. 4:2).
  - a. The same seed was sown on the different soils.
  - b. One seed was not sown on one kind of soil and other kinds of seeds sown on other kinds of soils.
  - c. This does not mean the method or methods cannot vary, but it does mean all acceptable methods present the pure, unadulterated word.
3. The seed that falls upon the good soil (hearts) will bring forth a great harvest. (Matt. 13:8).
  - a. Every righteous person may not bring forth this much fruit, but many will.
  - b. Some have led hundreds, even thousands, to Christ.
  - c. Some do this indirectly. They bring others to Christ who in turn lead many souls to the Lord.

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