

Think Like a Farmer

Matthew 13:1-23 - NCBC, June 14, 2020

Main Point: **God's gospel will either condemn or change you based on how it's received.**

Jesus' Use of Parables (13:10-17, 34-35)

- Parables are real-life stories illustrating a spiritual truth.
- Parables express both God's mercy and God's judgment
 - Mercy: Revealing truth to those who believe the mysterious
 - Judgment: Hiding truth from those who deny the obvious

The Parable of the Soils (13:1-9, 18-23)

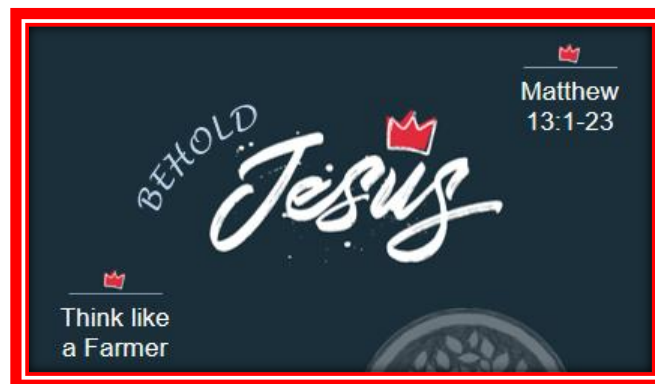
- The seed is the gospel of salvation under Jesus' reign (19)
- The sower is Jesus and/or His kingdom workers (37)
- The soil is the human heart (19)
- **4 Different Ways People "Receive" the Gospel:**
 - Outwardly rejected by a hard heart (4, 19)
 - Outwardly received by a superficial heart (5-6, 20-21)
 - Outwardly received by a divided heart (7, 22)
 - Inwardly received by a prepared heart (8, 23)

Application: **Ask God to prepare your heart and produce spiritual fruit**

Opening Announcements:

- **Remember to visit myncbc.org** and follow our NCBC Facebook page to stay informed on all ministry/event updates during this season of careful regathering.
- **This Weds, June 17th, at 6:30pm** we have another Wednesday Worship Gathering! All are invited to come and hear Kris Mettelmann teach on "Faith vs Faithfulness: Resting in Christ." Attendees will spread out in the Intersection Building's large Assembly Room. Masks are optional for this event.

<<Speak O Lord>>



Good morning church! I love whenever we sing that song together before we listen to the preaching of God's Word. For we desire for our Lord to speak to us...to plant the truth of His saving Gospel deep into our hearts...that we might be shaped and fashioned more for His glory.

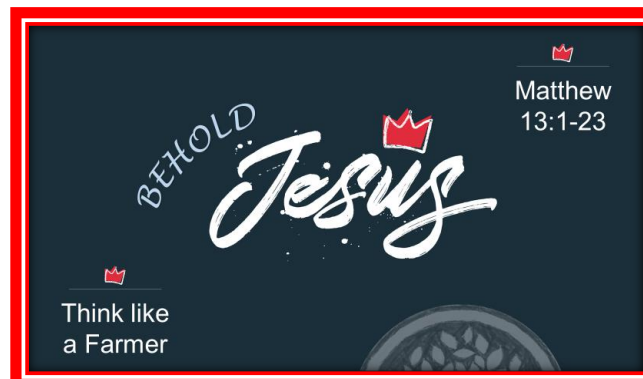
Today **Matthew 13** invites us to *Think Like a Farmer*, so please open your Bible to **Matthew chapter 13** and prepare for our Scripture reading in just a moment.

A friendly reminder that the links alongside this livestream offer you fill-in-the-blank sermon notes, the

preaching manuscript, and children’s coloring pages. At any time you may pause this video, print those files, and then rejoin our worship with those notes in front of you.

Last Sunday was a great time together outdoors – smoldering the mortgage, remembering Christ’s sacrifice for us in communion, and taking time to Behold Spiritual Unity from **Psalm 133!**

Now this morning we return to *Beholding King Jesus* from **the Gospel according to Matthew.**



A parable that invites us to think like a Farmer.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW				
1-3 Presentation of the King				
4-7 Proclamation of the King <i>Sermon on the Mount (5-7)</i>	8-10 Power of the King <i>Sending out the 12 Apostles (10)</i>	11-13 Rejection of the King <i>Kingdom Parables (13)</i>	14-20 Priorities of the King <i>Topsy-Turvy Values (18)</i>	21-25 Progress of the King <i>Olivet Discourse (24-25)</i>
Kingdom offered to Israel		12 Kingdom offered to all Nations		
26-28 Passion & Proof of the King				

And as you may remember, our study just concluded **chapter 12**, which is a major turning point in history.

Do you remember what happened in **Matthew 12**? Yes, the unpardonable sin! Israel’s official rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. Instead of receiving Jesus as their Lord – Israel’s religious leaders attributed Jesus’ power to Satan and began to plan His murder.

So Jesus responds now to Israel’s Rejection of their King by teaching 8 kingdom parables in **chapter 13**. Today we consider the overall significance of Jesus’ parables, and dive into the first parable specifically,

So for those who are able, please stand with me in honor of the public reading of Scripture. I’m reading from **Matthew 13, verses 1-23**, in the ESV:

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ² And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³ And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, ⁶ but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears, let him hear.”
¹⁰ Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” ¹¹ And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of

the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ¹³ This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ““You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.” ¹⁵ For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’ ¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷ For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. ¹⁸ “Hear then the parable of the sower: 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 what was sown along the path. ²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²³ As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

This is God's Word. **Let's Pray Together.**

This week I got a brief glimpse into something powerful that God's Spirit is doing among us here at New Castle Bible Church. Even though this has already been going on for a few weeks, this week was the first time I personally experienced it for myself.

Last Thursday evening 9 people gathered on behalf of our church family, prayed together, and then spread out in groups of 2 or 3 to knock on the front doors of some of our Mackinaw neighbors.

Whenever someone answered their door, they were greeted with a warm smile, and this invitation:

“Hello, my name is _____ and this is _____, and we're from New Castle Bible Church, and we're just walking around tonight to see if there's any way our church family could be a blessing to you or your neighbors in the midst of this difficult time in our nation. Do you have any physical needs that our church might be able to assist you with in this season?”

After discussing their physical needs, we would ask if they had any prayer requests, and if it would be ok to pray with them at that very moment.

Talk about the *Art of Neighboring!* Friendly ambassadors from a local church joyfully seeking to genuinely love our community – no matter who they are, or what their needs are – to sincerely incarnate the love of God as we seek to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in this broken world.

And here's what I noticed: sincerely loving our neighbors with their physical and spiritual needs opened a wide door to share the good news of God's salvation. Most of our groups actually had an opportunity to clearly share God's Gospel Thursday night! As pastor Somers would say, that "rolls my socks up and down!!"

Because the Gospel is the good news of God's salvation for sinners like you and me. The Biblical Gospel is the good news of how sinners can *live loved forever ruled by Jesus*.

In the words of the apostle Paul, *the gospel... is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, For in [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*¹

Let me just say it plainly – God's gospel is so powerful that God is glorified every time you share it!!

Every time you open your mouth and try to humbly explain how *God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son Jesus Christ – so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life...*² every time you share the story of God's forgiveness and reconciliation of sinners through the sacrifice of His Son in our place... God's holiness is going public!! God is being glorified. No matter how your loved one responds.

And this all helps us understand **Matthew 13**. Because remember in **chapter 12** Israel had just rejected Jesus. And **verse 1 of Chapter 13** notes that Jesus taught all of

these 8 parables *on the same day* as Israel's formal rejection of Him.

These parables are connected to Israel's blasphemy because Jesus wants to make clear the reason Israel rejected Him as their Spiritual King was because of their hard hearts. There was nothing wrong with the kingdom message. There was nothing wrong with the King. The problem was Israel's heart condition.

Therefore, the main point of these verses are that,



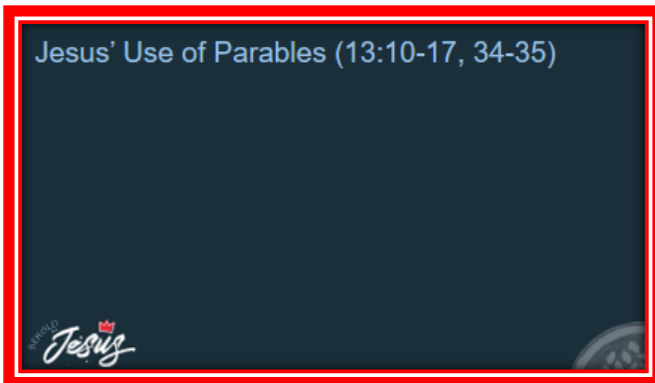
God's gospel will either condemn or change you based on how it's received. It doesn't matter if you are a Jew living in the 1st century, or you live in a central IL neighborhood today – everyone is responsible for how they personally respond to God's gospel.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is not weak. It will make a powerful difference in your life every time you are exposed to its live-giving truths.

So before we dive into the farming parable of **Matthew 13**, let's skip down to **verses 10-17** to first consider,

¹ Romans 1:16-17

² John 3:16



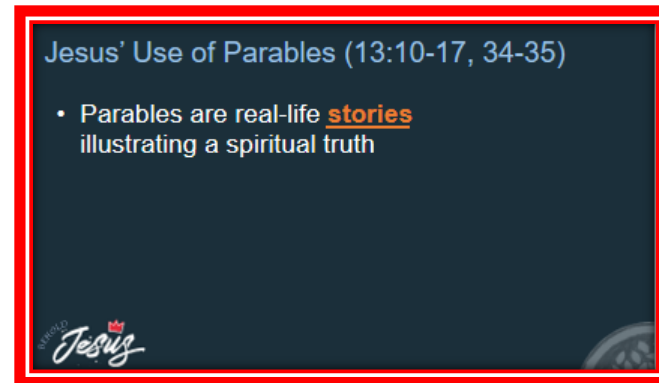
Jesus' Use of Parables in general. After all, **Matthew 13** is the first occurrence of parables in Jesus' ministry.

He's already a year and a half into his public ministry ...and from this time of Israel's rejection going forward, **verse 34** says *he said nothing to* [the unbelieving crowds] *without a parable*.

Before Israel's rejection – Jesus spoke plainly to the unbelieving crowds about the kingdom of heaven.³ But after **chapter 12's** rejection, Jesus only spoke about the kingdom to unbelieving Jews using parables.

So what is a parable?

³ Matthew 4:23; 9:35
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Parables are real-life stories that illustrate a spiritual truth. Parables are riddles pulled from practical life. But riddles and parables require explanation to be understood...and you'll notice in **chapter 13** that Jesus only explains the parables to His believing disciples – and not to the unbelieving crowds.⁴

That's why the disciples ask Jesus in **verse 10**,

Why do you speak to them in parables?

You see, they weren't asking why Jesus told stories.

They were asking why Jesus didn't explain His riddles to the Jewish people. Why was Jesus now hiding truth from the Jews?

And so Jesus explains in **verses 11-17** that,

⁴ Matthew 13:10, 36

Jesus' Use of Parables (13:10-17, 34-35)

- Parables are real-life **stories** illustrating a spiritual truth
- Parables express both God's **mercy** and God's **judgment**

Jesus

Parables express both God's **mercy** and God's **judgment**. The difference depends on the heart's reception to Jesus. Let me explain.

Jesus makes it clear that His audience is now clearly divided into two groups. Look at **verse 11**: *To you – disciples, to those who believe on Jesus – it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.*

*But to them – the unbelieving Jews; the crowds – to them it has not been given.*⁵

⁵ C.f. Mark 4:11, 34. Can you imagine how shocking this truth must have been for Matthew's original Jewish audience? It would have been unheard of for Jews to not be recipients of God's best blessings – for they were God's "chosen" people!

⁶ If you wrestle with the concept of saving faith being a grace-gift from God rather than the ability of unregenerate man, please carefully consider 2 Corinthians 4:3-6, 1 Corinthians 2:7-16, and Philippians 1:29. Also see John 6:29, 37, 44, 63-65; Romans 4:16-17; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Peter 1:3, and 2 Peter 1:3-4 along with John 3:3-8. All give a strong combined testimony that while saving faith and repentance is the commanded responsibility of all people (Acts 16:31; 1 Timothy 2:4), it is impossible for the sinful human heart to truly love and believe in Jesus (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 8:8) apart from God's granting us a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26-27; 1 John 5:4). Saving faith is more than attaining a certain amount of spiritual knowledge (2 Timothy 3:7). Saving faith is a new love, worship, treasure, and affection for God's glory (1 Peter 1:8; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 3:16-19; Romans

Can you see the two audiences Jesus identifies in **verse 11**? Those who have been given faith (Jesus' disciples), and those who have not been given faith (the Jewish crowds and leaders).⁶

In other words Jesus' kingdom parables express,

Parables are both a Mercy and a Judgment (13:10-17, 34-35)

- **Mercy**: Revealing truth to those who **believe** the mysterious
- **Judgment**: Hiding truth from those who **deny** the obvious

Jesus

Mercy by revealing kingdom truth to those who already believe the mysterious⁷... but they also express God's Judgment by Hiding truth from those who deny the obvious.

5:5). Therefore both repentance and faith are God's saving gifts which He freely bestows according to His sovereign will to His elect (Ephesians 1:3-14; 1 Peter 1:2), to bring about their salvation and righteousness in Christ (Acts 11:18, 13:48; 2 Timothy 2:25; Titus 1:1).

⁷ Kingdom secrets or mysteries here simply refer to how the New Testament further explains or reveals what was hidden in the Old Testament. Remember - the strong majority of the Old Testament teaching concerning God's kingdom relates to the 2nd coming of Christ – His millennial reign and ultimate defeat of evil on earth. So whenever the New Testament writers refer to the mysteries or secrets of God's kingdom, they are referring to how God intended for the Messiah to die in the place of His people to usher in a *spiritual* reign through the church for people of all tribes and nations before His 2nd coming which then will ultimately fulfill all the Old Testament prophecies for King Jesus ruling over a converted Israel on a renewed earth.

Parables reveal God's kingdom agenda to those who believe, but conceal the gospel from those who do not believe. And in this way, Jesus' parables are both a mercy and a judgment – it just depends on whether you've received a heart prepared to believe Jesus or not.

Verse 12 further explains – *For to the one who has [faith or the ability to see and understand God's gospel], more [faith] will be given, and he will have an abundance of [faith].*

But from the one who has not [faith], even what [faith] he has will be taken away.

Jesus says in **verse 13**, *This is why I speak to – the unbelieving Jews – in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.*

Now look carefully at **verses 13 through 17**. Notice Jesus uses sight words like “see” or “seeing” or “eyes” or “perceive” 12 different times.

He also uses listening words like “hearing” or “hear” or “ears” 12 different times in the same 5 verses.

This is because Jesus is comparing our physical senses of understanding – sight and hearing – to the spiritual realities of faith and obedience.

In the Bible believing is seeing, and hearing is obeying.

So in **verses 14-15** Jesus quotes from **Isaiah chapter 6**⁸ proving that Israel's rejection of their Messiah is the ultimate consequence of their unbelief.⁹ As long as the Jews don't believe the revelation they've already been given – and their hard hearts deny the obvious revelation that Jesus is their Messiah – they will not receive any further revelation of His kingdom.

However, you believing disciples – **verse 16** – have been richly blessed! For God's Spirit has caused your hearts to be born again such that you can now understand spiritual truth. The Spirit of Christ has given you the gift of saving faith! **Verse 17** – You are now receiving more explanation about God's kingdom and Jesus' first coming than any of the Old Testament saints have received before you.

So before we move on church... let's pause long enough to Thank God!! right now for the gift of faith. Will your heart soar in thanksgiving right now with humble gratitude for the grace-gift of saving faith?

⁸ Most of us know Isaiah 6 for the glorious vision of God's throne room, and the atonement of Isaiah's sin followed by the ministerial call of Isaiah to “Send Me!” But when God does in fact send Isaiah as His spokesman to Israel, He tells Isaiah that Israel will not heed his message for repentance.

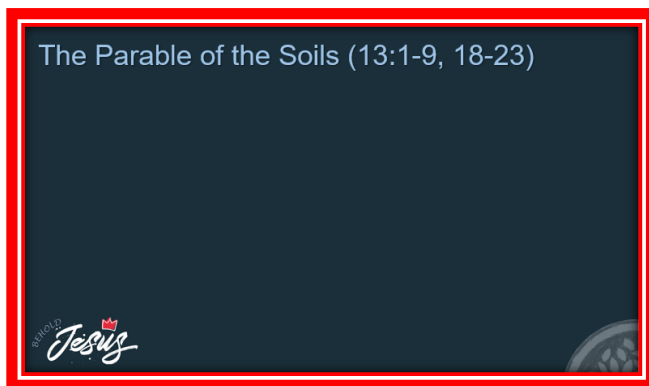
⁹ In the short-term, Isaiah 6:9-10 is fulfilled when Israel is taken into Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. But in the long-term, Isaiah 6:9-10 is fulfilled when Israel rejects Jesus as their Messiah, and is cut off from God's earthly kingdom plan until Jesus' second coming which is still future

today. C.f. Romans 11:7-12, 15, 25. Once Israel's participation in God's kingdom had been deferred, Jesus' audience turned from ethnic Israel to all people who genuinely believe on Him. Before the Jews had rejected Him, His ministry focused on offering His kingdom to Israel. But now Jesus' attention was turned fully towards the Gentiles – the most despised, the most outcast, the most sinful and irreligious people of the world, and so He began to use these riddles or parables from real-life to both reveal and conceal His kingdom agenda.

If you and I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and love His glory, and treasure the truths that He has revealed to us from His Holy Scriptures – it is not because we are more educated or more humble or more religious than others. It is simply because God’s Spirit has sovereignly given us a new heart – God has mercifully opened our spiritual eyes and ears through the new birth – so that we might behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!¹⁰

O how good is Jesus our Lord who opens our minds to understand His Scriptures,¹¹ and whose Spirit grants us the ability to believe God’s life-giving words!!¹²

So then let’s now consider Jesus’ first farming parable,



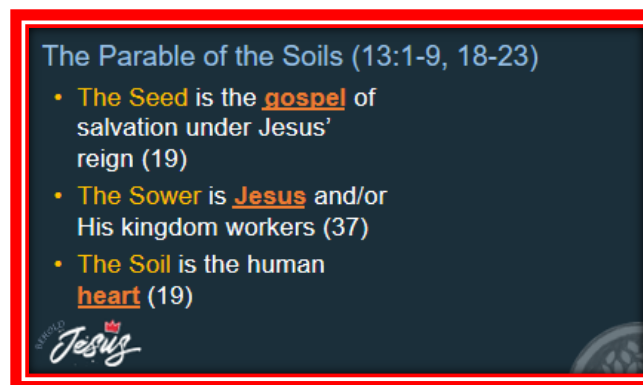
The Parable of the Soils which bookends the verses we’ve just considered.

In **verses 1-9**, we find a familiar enough farming illustration for this unbelieving Jewish crowd. In fact, it’s possible that even while Jesus was telling this parable,

the crowds could watch a local farmer sowing his October wheat into the fields around the Sea of Galilee.

Remember the crowds didn’t get to hear Jesus’ explanation found in **verses 18-23**. The explanation was only for believing ears.¹³

So let’s first review the three key elements of this parable before we consider its main point.



First, from **verse 19** we learn that the seed represents *the word of the kingdom*. In other words, **The seed is the gospel of salvation under Jesus’ reign**. **Verse 37** makes it clear that **The sower in this parable is Jesus and/or His kingdom workers**. And from **verse 19** again, it is clear that **The soil is the human heart**.

In light of Israel’s utter rejection of His kingdom, Jesus is telling this parable about 4 different kinds of soils to illustrate the various responses people have to His gospel message.

¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 4:6

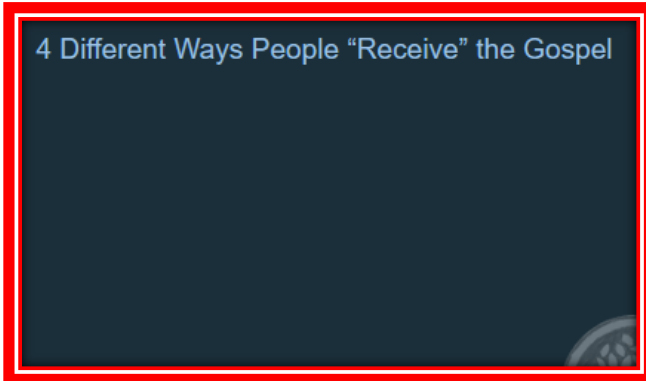
¹¹ Luke 24:45

¹² C.f. footnote 6 above.

¹³ C.f. Matthew 13:10

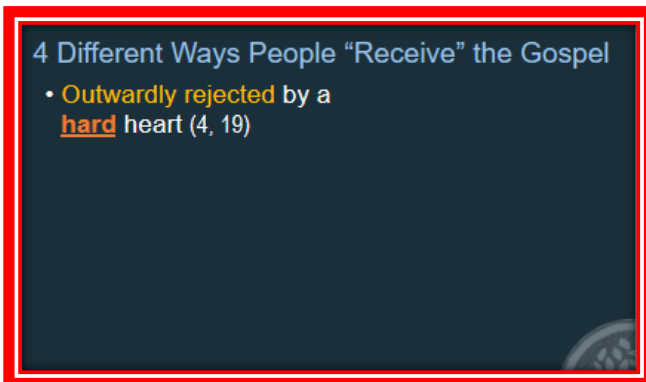
Every heart in this parable receives the same Gospel from the same Jesus. But God's gospel has a different result...based on how the heart actually receives the good news of Christ's reign.

So let's consider the



4 Different Ways People "Receive" the Gospel.

First in **verse 4**, God's message of salvation is not received at all but rather,



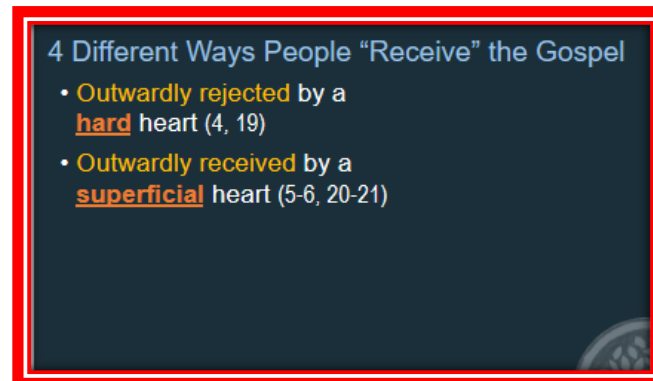
Outwardly rejected by a hard heart.

Verse 4: *And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path...*

So here the human heart is compared to a path – soil that has been trampled down over and over by those walking through the narrow foot paths that would weave between farmers' fields in Palestine.¹⁴ Today's farmers refer to this as soil compaction. Seeds cannot penetrate compacted soil, so they will just lay on the surface until birds eat it.

Verse 19 explains the hardened soil of the path represents the person with a hard heart of unbelief. This person is stiff-necked, proud, refusing to even consider that he needs forgiveness. He does not understand – meaning he is unresponsive to gospel glories...and so Satan is able to easily redirect this heart from any conviction the gospel may bring.

Next **verses 5-6 and 20-21** teach God's Gospel may be,



Outwardly received by a superficial heart.

¹⁴ I.e. Matthew 12:1

In **verse 5** some of the seed falls on rocky soil – where underlying beds of limestone were right at the surface, leaving only a superficial layer of soil for the seed to root itself in.

Since the soil depth was shallow, this soil would be warmer, so seeds could grow faster than the plants in deeper soil.

But rapid growth only leads to rapid wilting, for these plants had no sustaining root for the scorching sunshine that came a few months later during spring.

Now **verses 20-21** further explain this “easy-believism.” Sometimes people receive the message of God’s salvation with emotional joy but when their faith starts to truly cost them something and life gets hard – even if it’s years after their supposed decision for Christ, they prove they are nothing more than “fair-weather Christians.”

Loved ones – please listen carefully. **John chapter 1 verses 12-13** is clear: Decisions do not make Christians.

Yes, all true Christians will decide to follow Christ. But just because someone prays a prayer or accepts Jesus as their Savior and Lord does not make them a Christian. Genuine life in Christ must be tested before it can ever be assured.

We would be wise to learn from George Whitfield – whom God used mightily to preach His Gospel to thousands during America’s Great Awakening.

¹⁵ David Platt, *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary on Matthew*, 178.

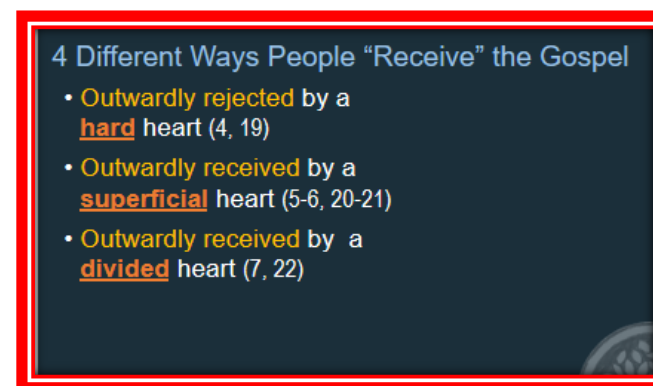
¹⁶ 1 John 2:19. Note the present of false professors in God’s family will exist until the end of time. But these false professors do not prove that

Whenever he was asked how many people were saved, he’d wisely respond, “We’ll see in a few years.”¹⁵

Not because people have to work their way into salvation. No. Simply because so many immediate positive responses to God’s Gospel are simply outward superficial responses of emotion, or felt-needs, or social pressure.

Learn from the parable of the soils. The superficial heart will look more alive than the saved heart for some time...but in the end fall away – offended that Christianity didn’t give him the return on investment that he expected...thereby proving his heart was never truly born again.¹⁶

The next kind of soil, or human heart condition, is also quite common today. In **verses 7 and 22** the Gospel is,



Outwardly received by a **divided** heart.

genuine salvation can be lost. Instead it proves that not all who profess faith in Christ truly possess saving faith in Christ, and their superficial faith will be exposed through the eventual testing of trials and persecution in life.

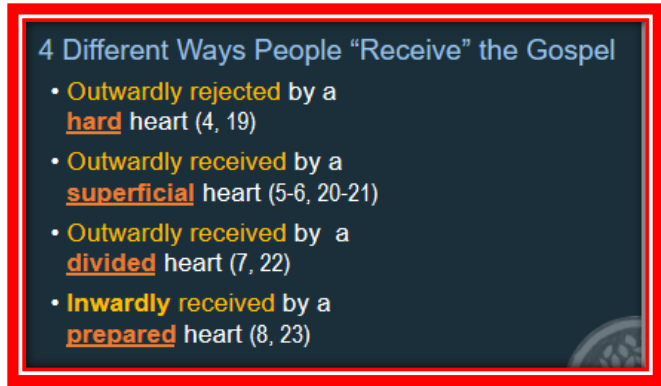
Here the seeds are received by soil that looks really good at planting time. It is fertile and has the ability to retain moisture. But inside this soil are all kinds of permanent residents – weedy roots and thorn seeds that aren't cleansed out before the Gospel seed is received.

So this heart is double-minded and divided. And when the spring sun-shine warms the soil, suddenly all these weeds and thorns spring up faster than the crop, gradually choking and suffocating the crop's ability to live.

So listen carefully to **verse 22**. If this is us – we must repent and cry out for a new heart today! For the divided heart first loves the world! The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches will slowly choke out all spiritual desire and life that had externally sprung up in our life.

You see... a heart who tries to add the worship of Jesus to materialism and greed will eventually be lost! The person preoccupied with their career, or family, or money, or fashion, or sports is a person with a weedy heart...and even if this person professes faith in Christ they are not truly born again. Jesus wants us to understand this parable.

There's only one kind of heart – one kind of soil – that gives the spiritual harvest which is evidence of true salvation. And that is when the Gospel is,



Inwardly received by a Spirit-prepared heart.

Look at **verse 8**:

Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

Verse 23 says this heart is the person who has been born again by the Spirit of God. They've received saving faith – so that when they hear God's message of salvation, they understand it – believe it, and obey it.¹⁷

And the Spirit's preparation of their heart is evidenced by the miraculous supernatural fruit-bearing that is obvious to everyone around their life.

True believers will always be known by the fruit of God's Spirit in their attitudes¹⁸ and behaviors.¹⁹

Now, please understand – Jesus' original audience knew an average wheat crop was eight-fold. Perhaps a Jewish farmer could get ten seeds for every one he had planted

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:10-13

¹⁸ Galatians 5:22-23

¹⁹ Philippians 1:11; Colossians 1:6

with a bumper crop. But a yield of 30, or 60, or 100-fold would be like saying a corn farmer today could expect yields of 600, 1200, or 2000 bushels per acre!!

While every human heart produces an individual kingdom harvest – every heart that is truly born again will produce a supernatural harvest beyond anything which could be explained by human work or genius!

So notice what Jesus is doing here in the shadow of Israel's rejection of the kingdom. He wants His disciples to know that even though the majority of people will ultimately reject His kingdom reign ...those whose hearts have been prepared by God's Spirit to receive the Gospel message and find life in Christ will bear such a supernatural abundance of fruit that that kingdom of God will keep growing throughout history.²⁰

And what encouragement this is for all kingdom workers today! Keep sowing the seed of the Gospel. Don't try to change the seed, and don't try to manipulate your audience... just faithfully represent Jesus and share the good news of salvation by faith in His death, resurrection, and ascension. Because here's what you have to understand,



God's gospel will either condemn or change you based on how it's received. The only variable that makes an eternal difference is whether or not God's Spirit has prepared your heart to receive the Gospel with true saving faith – and given you eyes to see the glories of God in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord.

So if we truly understand this parable we must,



Ask God to prepare your heart and produce spiritual fruit

Only God can give you a new heart!! Only the death of Christ offers eternal life! Listen to this good news church

²⁰ C.f. Matthew 16:18; Daniel 2:44-45

– Jesus died the death our sins deserved, so that we could be given the life that Jesus lived!²¹

Only God can transform and change your life from the inside out – all through His amazing grace. So receive the good news of God’s gospel!! Jesus loves you, and calls you to simply receive a perfect standing before God by trusting in His finished sacrifice on the cross. Today – will you ask God to give you a clean heart,²² and then to bring forth the spiritual fruit of His Spirit out of your life?

Of course, one of the harvest fruits of union with Christ is that you become His ambassador. A fisher of men. A disciple-maker. A sower of Gospel seeds in your home and neighborhood.

And so if God’s Spirit is assuring you of your personal relationship with Christ this morning through this message, may I urge you to live intentionally as a seed-sower for Jesus this week.

We have literally hundreds of lost neighbors living around us right now in our neighborhoods. It’s spiritual planting season, church.

God prepares the hearts...but God uses weak disciples like you and me to sow the life-giving seed of His gospel into those hearts. So be encouraged!! The Lord of the Harvest will never permit the faithful sowing of His Word to fail!²³

So will you join our church family this Thursday evening to better love our neighbors? We’re planning to meet at

²¹ 2 Corinthians 5:21

²² Psalm 51:10

6pm for one hour. Contact the church office for more information and let us know you’re coming so we can be ready to mobilize you for God’s greater glory in our community.

And may all who come after us look back on 2020 and see a great supernatural harvest of souls – as evidence that God Himself prepared our hearts and brought forth all the spiritual fruit for His glory.

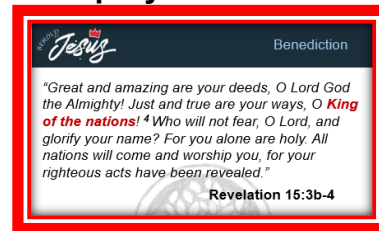


Let’s pray.

<<Great is Thy Faithfulness>>

Remember to take advantage of the online Downloads and links!

Let’s pray our benediction together as we dismiss.



Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.
Revelation 15:3b-4

²³ Isaiah 55:11

Recommended Resources on Think Like a Farmer:

- Isaiah 6:9-10
- Ezekiel 36:25-27
- Matthew 9:37-38; 13:34-35
- Luke 12:16-21; 18:26-27
- 2 Corinthians 4:1-6
- 1 Timothy 6:10
- James 5:7-8
- 1 Peter 1:10-12
- 1 John 2:15-16

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcj5G_4dwrl – “The 3 Circles in 3 Minutes that Could Change Your Life”

- *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, JI Packer
- *What is the Gospel?* Greg Gilbert
- *The Gospel According to Jesus*, John MacArthur

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Review Matthew 13:10-17 and 34-35. Why did Jesus use parables with His believing disciples? Why did Jesus use parables with the unbelieving Jews? How do parables both reveal and conceal God’s truth?
2. Review Matthew 13:3-9 and 18-23. Who is the sower? What is the seed? And what do the 4 different kinds of soils represent? How would you summarize the main point of this parable in one sentence?
3. Review Matthew 13:18-23. Honestly share with each other how would God describe the current condition of your heart? Hardened? Superficial? Divided? Or Fruitful? What evidences can you see for how your heart is changing over time?
4. Read James 5:7-8. Why is patience so important when assessing spiritual life? How does Jesus’ parable warn us against the dangers of “easy-believism”? What is the biblical basis for giving someone assurance that they are truly saved?
5. How does the parable of the sower influence your commitment to evangelism? What defines faithful sowing? Who determines the fruitfulness of the harvest at the judgment? How does Jesus’ teaching encourage you to stay faithful, even when you don’t see any fruit from your Gospel ministry presently?