

MATTHEW 13:16 – 23 OUR HEARTS ARE A FIELD

God loves gardens!

Last week we talked about why Jesus used parables. The long and short of it is that those who are interested, those who have been drawn to the Word will yearn for what Jesus is saying. They may not totally understand what they hear, but even then, they will continue to seek. Those who have no interest or even a waning interest will fall away. This may seem harsh, but we must understand that we are talking about a monumental shift in a person's worldview and life style.

Following Jesus is not one of those decisions one makes on a whim. Many people believe that marriage or buying a house are major decisions, and they are, but following Jesus - entering the kingdom is a decision on which eternity rests. That is the greatest decision of all. Therefore we need to be serious when dealing with the Holy Spirit or more correctly, when He deals with us.

In Jesus' next parable, that of the wheat and tares, Jesus speaks of those who are among the believers and even look a great deal like believers, but aren't truly believers. He says they will be sorted out at the judgment. But at this point, the Word does a sort of pre-sorting according to the condition of the soil (heart) of each individual. By doing things this way Jesus allows each person to maintain their freewill and therefore everyone chooses which path they take as opposed to forcing anyone into anything. We must see it this way as this parable as well as the use of parables sets the scene for the balance of the parables in this section.

Mt. 13:16,17

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.

The disciples were seeing and hearing about what the OT prophets had foretold, but didn't thoroughly understand. In this sense we are even ahead of the disciples because we have seen more that they have. We have seen the fruition of their work. We have seen the Gospel spread all over the world.

Now Jesus explains the parable.

Mat 13:18 "Therefore hear the parable of the sower:

Mat 13:19 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.

- One sower and one seed. Broadcasting without row-cropping.

wayside - a heavily traveled path that ran alongside or meandered through the field.

wicked one - Satan

Mat 13:20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

Mat 13:21 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.

stony ground - thin topsoil, and many rocks. Holds a little moisture and some heat. Seeds sprout quickly but can't grow long because a lack of soil to in which to root. It doesn't take much to stomp them down.

Persecution – tends to be more like peer-pressure nowadays in America.

Mat 13:22 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.

This is where many tend to be.

Cares of this world - getting ahead, our own agenda, too busy.

Deceitfulness of riches - not necessarily chasing money, but chasing things.

Thinking that things will make us happy or give us peace. Materialism can be a very addictive thing. This comes down to placing the wrong priority on the Word of God and a relationship with Jesus.

In this life there will always be things competing for the top spot in our lives. This is volitional. We have to set our priorities. Most weeds cannot bear a constant cutting.

Mat 13:23 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."

However those that make God first, bear much fruit. Different amounts. We all have different gifts and abilities. We won't all bear the same amount of fruit but the important thing is that we yield to God so we bear 100% of our potential yield. A thirty percent yield was considered to be a good yield in the arid climate and topography of Israel in Jesus' day.

fruit - The Bible specifies different types of fruit:

Gal. 5:22,23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

soul-winning **Rom 1:13** Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.

holiness - **Rom 6:21** What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death.

financial giving - **Rom 15:26** For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.

Rom 15:27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

Rom 15:28 Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.

good works - **Col 1:10** that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing

Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

praising God - **Heb 13:15** **Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.**

I would like for us to see that while Jesus has listed four types of soil/ hearts/ individuals, that we as individuals, most of us being believers, should see our hearts and lives as a field. And fields in general contain more than one type of soil. What I mean by this is that each of us has areas in our lives that contain sections of each type of these soils. We all have hard patches. We all have stony patches. We all have patches, which contain weeds, and as believers we all have "good" soil where the Word has produced fruit, though the yields are different for all of us.

How to make good dirt: composting and plowing.

CONCLUSION:

1. Do we want more of God or are we content to show up for Church and go home?
2. Have we checked our hearts?
3. What type of soil are we?
4. Are we willing to learn but not do?
5. Are we willing to do but not learn?
6. If Jesus were here speaking in parables would we be a hearing hearer or a no-hearer.
7. Would we be a seer or a non-seer?
8. The answer is up to each of us. All we have to do to change our soil-type is repent and surrender to God. Allow God to plow the hard ground in your life! Allow the Holy Spirit to weed your heart. Let the sower, the gardener into your heart/ field!
9. If you haven't, would you do that today?