

# *Matthew 13:18-23*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/05/2011*

## **What Kind of Response Should We Expect to the Gospel?**

### **Prayer**

Father, what a wonderful, wonderful privilege it is to come together to sing about You and to sing about Your Son Jesus, to praise You for Your faithfulness, to praise You for Your love and grace and mercy. Father, we are so thankful. You are so kind that You poured out Your grace and mercy in sending Jesus to die for our sins, that we could be redeemed, that we could be forgiven. Father, I thank You for this morning, for a time to come together corporately and worship You and praise You and give You honor and glory. And I pray we would continue to worship You this morning as Your Word is declared. I pray You would take Your Word, use it for Your glory, use it in a way that would till the hearts of those here who do not know You, that they might receive Your Word implanted and be saved. And for those of us who do know You, may Your Word break down any sin, may it affect our hearts in a way that we would respond in a means and way which would bring You glory and honor. Thank You for Your Word; we just commit this time to You now, and we praise You, in Your Son's precious Name, amen.

### **Sermon**

Well, if you have been following the Lord Jesus Christ for a while, you are probably well aware there are those who identify with the Lord Jesus Christ. They come to church, they identify with Christ, they make the claim to follow Him. And unfortunately, there are those who will do that and be along the body of Christ for a while, and then they will walk away from Christ. We had a gentleman here who came and heard everything and identified with us, and left the church, and I hear he has left his wife, his kids, he is with another woman, he is basically doing very evil things; someone who would have come here and sang those songs but not from the heart, who would have identified with the body of Christ but now has turned away from Christ. And those things are difficult to understand, those things are difficult to comprehend why someone would do that. In 1 John, John encourages the church of those who are discouraged because they had a mass exodus. He encourages them that those who had left were not of them because if they were of them they would have stayed and fellowshiped with the body of Christ. And we saw that encouragement in the midst of some discouragement, and the reality is we cannot see people's hearts, but God sees the heart. We look on the outside, but God looks on the heart. And today, we are going to be looking at a passage that is going to help the disciples and then us discern and understand why and how people respond to the gospel.

The Lord Jesus Himself is going to unveil the heart conditions and the responses of those who respond to the gospel, and what their response indicates according to their hearts. So with that in mind, I would like you to turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 13. Matthew chapter 13, and we are studying the book of Matthew, and I believe we are going to see what we should expect when we share the gospel. And we are going to look at the Parable of the Sower explained. Last week, in the Parable of the Sower, we saw the explanation of why Jesus speaks in parables, but today, the parable is explained to His disciples.

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And for those of you who have not been with us in the book of Matthew, we are going through this wonderful book and this book is about King Jesus, the book of Matthew is about King Jesus, the one Who came. You will name His Name Jesus. The angels said, "*For he shall save His people from their sins.*" The name Jesus – Yeshua – means the Lord is salvation. The I AM, the God in human flesh, is salvation. Jesus, Yeshua. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, who came to His people, those who would name His Name. When the Lord Jesus came to the Jews, they were those who would say "we follow the Lord, we follow the God of Scripture." And He came to His own. Yet these same Jews were sitting in darkness, and God, being a gracious God, unveils their real condition as He shares His Word to them. After John the Baptist prepared the way, proclaiming repentance for the forgiveness of sins, that Jesus Christ was tempted, and He responded in His humanity with the Word of God, He was identified with sinful man, although not sinful, though being perfectly sinless, that He was baptized by John, and we heard "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him." And then in the book of Matthew, an encapsulation of the teaching of Christ. If you go to the end of chapter 4, you see that Jesus was teaching and preaching and healing, and if you go to the end of chapter 9, He was teaching and preaching and healing. That is what He was doing.

And chapters 5 through 7 include the teaching and preaching of Christ, and chapters 8 and 9 include those affirming miracles. And chapters 5 through 7, what we call the Sermon on the Mount, a gracious God came upon those in darkness and He revealed what a true kingdom citizen looked like. Those who are truly blessed; not who *will* be blessed, but *are* blessed. Those who mourn over their sin, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and all those evidences of a relationship with the living God. And the Lord Jesus confronting the false teaching and the traditions of the Pharisees, "You have heard it said but I say to you," the Great I AM says to you, this is what I say." And the Lord Jesus bringing it to a pinnacle where He says, "Enter by the narrow Gate," speaking of Himself. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, that no one comes to the Father but by Him. There is a broad road that leads to destruction but the narrow gate that is in Christ that leads to life. And we saw there were threats to the entrance to the Kingdom, "beware of the false prophets who come to you in shepherds garb and sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." And Jesus said, "you will know them by their fruits." Good trees do not produce bad fruit; bad trees do not produce good fruit. And the fruit of false teachers, the fruit of those to beware of, those who would come before the Lord, believing that they are saved, but are not saved, that is the fruit of false teaching. Those who would say "Lord Lord, didn't we do all this stuff in Your name?" And He says, "Depart from me, I never knew you, you who practice lawlessness." You are still in your sin. And we saw Jesus bring His teaching to a pinnacle when He compared two types of people; those who merely hear His Word and then those who hear His Word, and because they are changed, act upon His Word.

And then we moved into the affirming miracles in chapters eight and nine. Jesus has power over the natural sphere, He can calm the storm, He can calm the natural elements; Jesus had power over the super-natural, over the demonic sphere. Jesus had power over sickness and leprosy and those things. And He had power over sin and over death.

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Then we came to chapter 10, where the Lord Jesus, after looking out and seeing the multitudes of those who were perishing, exhorted His disciples to exhort the Lord of the Harvest to send workers, and the Lord Himself sending His own disciples as He trains them and shares to them His instructions in chapter 10.

Then chapter 11, the Lord Jesus began to address the response of those who have rejected Him, those who rejected John the Baptist, those who rejected Him, those who were like little children playing games with God, and they did not like the way God was playing. And then Jesus gave a very firm condemnation to those cities that saw the most miracles, and obviously the miracles affirmed by His teaching and preaching. And He gave them the woes concerning that because they saw so much and they did not repent. God was in their midst, the Holy One was in their midst, explaining graciously and lovingly and righteously His truth, and they would not repent so He shared His condemnation concerning them.

And then in chapter 12, the Pharisees trying to set up Jesus, trying to get Him to fit within their view point, to break the Sabbath. We saw that Jesus was not the one who was evil; He was the one that was doing good, and it was the Pharisees that had evil hearts, who ultimately were plotting their evil on the Sabbath to actually kill the Lord Jesus Christ. And then we saw the Lord Jesus as a dumb and blind man is brought to Him who demon possessed, and He casts out the demon, and this blind man sees and speaks. These Pharisees blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ, in their midst, did this miraculous by the power of the Spirit, and they attributed it to Satan. An unforgivable sin, to be convicted by the Spirit of God concerning Christ, and to speak against that rather than to believe. They committed that unforgivable sin, and then they demanded another sign, and Jesus shared the only sign that they would have would be the sign of Jonah, that just like Jonah was in the belly of the great sea monster for three days and three nights, so would the son of man be in the ground for three days and three nights. And we saw Jesus' response to their demand for a sign to their unbelief, calling them an evil and adulterous generation. This is the turning point in chapter 12 in the book of Matthew, where those who had heard His Word where He freely and openly preached, have rejected it now and just want more and more and more proof because they do not believe. And then their culpability in judgment was great.

And that moved us to chapter 13, where the Lord Jesus sharing in parables. We saw the Lord Jesus Christ sharing to the multitudes now in parables, something He had not done before, and his disciples come to Him and ask, "Why are you doing this?" And we will look at this in a moment, and He explains to them why He shares in parables. And then in our passage today, the actual parable explained to the disciples.

So let's take a look at that in Matthew chapter 13, and we will be looking at verse 18 to start. The Lord Jesus Christ says, "Hear then the Parable of the Sower." God in human flesh saying, "Hear then the Parable of the Sower." On a side note, lots of people like to give this different names, like the Parable of the Soils and things like that, and I like to use the name that Jesus uses. "Hear the Parable of the Sower." He says in verse 19:

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**<sup>18</sup> "Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup>"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; <sup>21</sup>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. <sup>22</sup>"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. <sup>23</sup>"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. [Matthew 13:18-23]**

Folks, this is a marvelous passage, and I was so blessed as I studied it and I pray you will be blessed as you look into our Lord's words here. Now, I want to remind you, though, of the direct context to which we saw this. We have seen the overall context of the book of Matthew. But what is the direct context in which we see this portion? Remember back in chapter 13 verse 1 we saw this statement,

**<sup>1</sup> On that day Jesus went out of the house, and was sitting by the sea. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And He spoke many things to them in parables... [Matthew 13:1-3a]**

Well, what day is that, that He spoke these things? We have already seen it, it was the day in which He condemned the multitudes for their unbelief; it was on that day when Jesus condemned them for being an evil and adulterous generation; it was on that day when He condemned the Pharisees concerning their unforgivable sin that they had committed against the Spirit of God concerning Christ. On that day He spoke to the multitudes in parables. We saw very clearly before this time, the Lord Jesus was speaking freely the things of the kingdom. John the Baptist had come to prepare the way, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And, therefore, the King came, the Lord Jesus, He was at hand. And on that day He spoke many things to them in parables.

Folks, this was a sad day for the Jews. It was a sad day, because, as we will see, the Lord God began to veil His saving truth from those who had rejected Him. It is a sad day when God begins to veil His truth from you when you do not respond to the clear teaching of the gospel. And we see from this point in the book of Matthew the Lord Jesus does not really clearly teach the multitudes anymore; He speaks in parables.

You see no parables up to this point, and from this point, you see parables, and that leads to the question, "What is a parable?" In the Greek language, *para* means alongside, *bole* means to throw. It is

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when you throw something alongside, and it came to mean throwing alongside something you want to explain. It was an argument to help someone to understand something. So, if I had some type of a concept I wanted to explain, I would throw alongside that conceptualizes this teaching, and it would help explain that. And the Lord Jesus was speaking in parables, but as we saw, the parable without the explanation is really worthless. Let's take a look at the actual parable in verse three of chapter 13.

**<sup>3</sup> And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow; <sup>4</sup> and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup> "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. <sup>6</sup> "But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> "And others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. <sup>8</sup> "And others fell on the good soil, and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. <sup>9</sup> "He who has ears, let him hear." [Matthew 13:3-9]**

You see, that portion by itself does not help us understand anything about the Lord God. We can surmise and assume what He might be saying, but without the explanation the parable is really basically worthless concerning the concepts that God would want us to know. And the Lord Jesus is now speaking in parables to the multitudes, and what do His disciples do? Verse 10:

**<sup>10</sup> And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?' (this was perplexing to them; He had been teaching clearly and plainly to the multitudes and now He is veiling His teaching. "Why do you do this?" And I won't get into this, we saw it in depth last week, but I will just review it, but we see very clearly why. Verse 11) <sup>11</sup>"And He answered and said to them, "To you it has been granted (or given, to know, to have relational knowledge), to know the mysteries (or those hidden things in the past) of the kingdom of heaven, but to them (that is the multitudes) it has not been granted. <sup>12</sup>"For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. [Matthew 13:10-12]**

And we saw very clearly that God is sovereign; that there were the haves and the have-nots. There were those who have, who have responded to the truth, and they will have more relational truth concerning Christ; but those who have not responded do not have anything, and what they do have, which was that initial truth they heard, will be taken away from them. Use the principle here that God is sovereign and He chooses when He retracts His truth from you. He is a gracious God, He uses His Spirit to convict the world of sin and of righteousness, but there is a time, as we see here, where He will retract that and allow you to go your way, as we see, into judgment. And so the Lord, a gracious God, says, "do not harden your hearts if you hear His voice." You see, verse 13, He continues to explain:

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<sup>13</sup> **Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.** <sup>14</sup>**“And in their case (That is the multitudes, those Jews who had not responded) the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE (and here is the reason why this generation fulfills this prophecy, verse 15); “FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL... [Matthew 13:13-15]**

We looked at that word, that word “dull.” It means impenetrable, it speaks of hard. Here is why you are not going to understand anymore; because your hearts have become dull. Here is why I am going to veil my truth from you; because your hearts have become dull.

<sup>15</sup> **And it says also, “AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY (or with difficulty) HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES (they closed their eyes), LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN (or literally, repent), AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.’(or Mark says in Mark 4:12, “Or be forgiven.”) [Matthew 13:15]**

You see, the responsibility falls upon the hearer who closes his heart to the truth. God is a gracious God who will freely bring forth His Word, His glorious gospel, but if you close your heart to Him, He will allow your heart to be hardened, and He will allow you to continue to fulfill His Word on to judgment. We saw that in John chapter 13, as Bob read that, these statements that it appears that God wants people to go to judgment. Well, if you read them in their context, it is only after they have rejected Him that He hardens and allows them to go, and Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled.

Now, was this only happening while the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth? We see this same principle right now with the Church. 2 Corinthians chapter 4, and I will share this if you want to turn there for a minute. The Lord God is sharing through the Apostle Paul, the Apostle Paul is speaking to the Corinthian church. They have kind of deserted the Apostle Paul, and thus the teaching of the Word of God. The Apostle Paul loves them, he is concerned for them. They have unequally yoked themselves with false apostles, chapters 6 and 7, and then chapter 11. And the Apostle Paul is sharing and addressing some of those accusations that might have been hurled his way by those false apostles. 2 Corinthians 4,

<sup>3</sup> **“And even if our gospel is veiled, (the accusation was most likely, “Hey! No one is receiving Paul’s gospel! It is almost like it is veiled!” And Paul says, “Well, if that is the case,”) it is veiled to those who are perishing, <sup>4</sup> in whose case the god of this world (that is Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” [2 Corinthians 4:3-4]**

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You see, God allows Satan to blind the minds of those who rejected Him, and who do not believe, and it is a scary thought. Friend, it is not God's fault that anyone leaves this life unforgiven. It is not God's fault. God is a gracious God who convicts of sin and reveals His Son, Jesus Christ the Savior. And if you reject that, whether you are apathetic to it, or whether you have put it on hold, or whatever it is – outright rejection – if you reject that, God will reject you and allow you to go to judgment.

Now, we do not know that time when He starts to veil His truth or allows Satan to veil your hearts and minds, but the principle is true and real here. The point is, God gives man over to judgment at a specific time, when man rejects the clear truth concerning Christ. So why is the Lord speaking in parables? These Jews have had so much truth – they had Jesus Christ in their midst, they saw the miraculous, they heard the teaching – and they still rejected it; they wanted more proof. God was in their midst, and they still rejected it, so God is now beginning to reject them. *"He came to His own, but they did not receive Him. But as many as receive Him, to them He gave the power to become the sons of God"* as we see in the book of John. It is all about our reception of the truth concerning Christ and thus Christ Himself. But lastly, we saw when we finished up, that those who had open eyes and ears unstopped, those who had been saved, the disciples that Jesus was pointing to, barring Judas, the one He knew would betray Him, He says in Matthew 13:16-17,

***<sup>16</sup> "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. <sup>17</sup> "For truly 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. [Matthew 13:16-17]***

Those prophets and righteous men, those Old Testament saints, they yearned to see what these people were seeing! They yearned to see what the disciples were seeing; God in their midst, and they did not get to see it. But blessed were these disciples' eyes and ears, and brother and sister, if you are a true believer, how blessed are our spiritual eyes and ears because we can now see the glory of Christ in the Word of God, so much more expanded than even the disciples had at that time. Blessed.

So at this point now, the Lord Jesus comes to the portion that we are going to see today where He explains the parable to His disciples – not to those outside, but to His disciples, those who are saved. He is concealing truth from those who have rejected Him and He is revealing truth to those who have accepted Him.

***<sup>18</sup> Hear then (verse 18) the Parable of the Sower."*** ("Hear then," we are commanded. Listen now to the Parable of the Sower. God in flesh say: "Hear then the Parable of the Sower) ***<sup>19</sup>"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. <sup>20</sup>"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; <sup>21</sup>yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or***

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***persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup>“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. <sup>23</sup>“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. [Matthew 13:18-23]***

So the Lord Jesus begins to explain the parable, and before we start, I want to make some observations concerning the parable before we get into the specific explanation, some basic observations that we can have that will help us interpret the parable as we look at it. I think, first of all, we need to recognize there are obviously four types of soil which represent four types of hearers of the Word, which represent four conditions of the heart. Four conditions of the heart. Also, we need to recognize that the issue at hand in this parable is salvation. The issue is salvation, that is what this parable is about; the saving gospel and the response to it, that is what the parable is about.

This parable is also found in Mark chapter 4 and Luke chapter 8, and if you look in Luke chapter 8, you might want to put your fingers there in Luke chapter 8 because we are going to go back and forth there. Luke 8:12, we'll see, very clearly, the issue is salvation. Let me read this for you, Luke 8:11, the Lord Jesus says, Luke 8:11, "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. <sup>12</sup> "And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart (now listen to this), so that they may not believe (and what?) and be saved." [Luke 8:11-12] The parable is about salvation; it is about responses to the gospel. And the Lord Jesus is sharing this with His disciples, eleven who are saved, one in whom is the Son of Perdition. He is sharing with them what they should expect in the responses to the gospel, so primarily, this applies to the Body of Christ, although if you do not know Christ it applies to you because it will show you what your heart is like. Primarily, about salvation, if we keep that in mind we will not get side-tracked by a lot of the discussion about this parable that takes us away from the issue at hand, which is, as Luke says, believing and being saved.

Okay, secondly, we need to recognize that the Word sown, as we read in Luke, is the Word of God. Look at verse 19 back in Matthew 13, "When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom," Luke says the Word of God. It is the Word of the King, it is the Word of King Jesus. Middle of verse 20, "this is the man who hears the Word." Middle of 22, "this is the man who hears the Word." And then, it says, "and the worry of the world, deceiving of riches, and riches choke the Word." Middle of 23, "this is the man who hears the Word." The issue is hearing the Word of God. The issue has to do with the Word of God, it is the Word of God which is sown. The explanation here, the seeds that are going out, that is the Word of God, it is the gospel. Matthew says it is the Word of the kingdom. It is God's truth concerning His kingdom, His sphere of reign, and its King, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is God's truth concerning entrance to the kingdom. Clearly we see in Scripture that God uses His Word to bring about repentance and faith in Christ. It is the means in which the Spirit of God changes the heart so the people can be saved. No one is saved apart from the saving truth of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And let me share a couple passages. Notice the illustration also, 1 Peter 1:23:

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<sup>23</sup> ***For you have been born again*** (speaking to believers) ***not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.*** (It is the truth from the living God that brought about your new birth, that truth concerning Christ. He says,) <sup>24</sup>***For, "All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, <sup>25</sup>But the word of the Lord abides forever." And this is the word which was preached to you. [1 Peter 1:23-25]***

James 1, we see it also in James 1:18:

<sup>18</sup> ***In the exercise of His will*** (speaking of God) ***He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures. [James 1:18]***

James 1:21:

<sup>21</sup> ***Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains*** (repent of your sin, therefore, doing that in humility) ***of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. [James 1:21]***

We are going to see right now that if you do not repent, you do not have a broken and tilled heart concerning your sin, if the way is not prepared, you will not receive the truth concerning the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We see in Romans chapter 10:

<sup>17</sup> ***So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. [Romans 10:17]***

Romans 1:16:

<sup>16</sup> ***For I am not ashamed of the gospel (the Apostle Paul says), for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes... [Romans 1:16a]***

Jesus clearly preached as John the Baptist did, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Now, it is important to understand as we look at this parable, the Word being sown is an accurate gospel and the responses are to an accurate gospel, not a false gospel. We need to know that. This parable is about the Word being sown in each chase, and it is in accurate gospel, it is not a false gospel. There are all kinds of false gospels being thrown out there, with all kinds of false converts, but what Jesus is speaking of here is responses to the true, genuine, accurate, gospel. We need to remember that. So then, we see very clearly it is about salvation, it is the Word of God sown that they hear.

And notice it reaches the heart, we see it in verse 19, "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it (this is even the one that does not understand it), the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart." [Matthew 13:19] That is the inner man, it is our

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thinking, it is related to our mind, it is our inner man; it is who we really are. "From out of the heart speaks forth. As a man thinks so he is." It is sown in the heart, even to those who reject it. Now the issue we will see is the condition of the heart in a little bit. The issue is whether it penetrates and is understood and produces fruit, saving fruit. Another observation, all four hear the Word, all four responded it different manners. I believe the first three are not saved, and the last one is. And there is an interesting observation that I looked at when I was studying this, that out of the four different soils and the four different responses, one is never identified with true believers, outright rejection. Two identify without being saved, and one is saved. Also, I thought it was interesting that the two that identify in the middle, one make-believer actually apostatizes, turns away from Christ. The other one actually stays, but still is not saved. We have a picture of responses to the gospel here. And lastly, I believe we will see very clearly that fruit of the Word in the heart is genuine evidence of saving faith. Fruit is the evidence of saving faith. Verse 23, "and the one in whom seed was sown in the good soil, this is the man who hears the Word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit."

Okay, so with the initial observations out of the way, notice what the Lord Jesus says to them back in verse 18, "Hear then the parable of the sower." You who have ears to hear, you who are blessed, who can understand; hear then, it is a command. It is actually an imperative command. God is commanding His disciples here to hear the Parable of the Sower, and by virtue of the fact that His Word is for us, we are commanded to also, we need to listen to His Word.

And then we have the explanation, and I believe the first soil we are going to see, very clearly, are hearers with unrepentant hardened hearts who do not understand the Word and then Satan snatches it away. "Behold, the sower went out to sow (this is back in verse 3) <sup>4</sup>and as he sowed, some *seeds* fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up." That is the parable. And now our explanation by the Lord Jesus in verse 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." We already talked about the fact that this parable is about hearing the Word of God, it is about salvation, and notice He says, "he hears," or anyone hears, "the Word of the kingdom, that is the gospel concerning Christ the King, and does not understand it," the Word understanding here speaks of literally the joining of two rivers. It is the "I got it" moment; it is this coming together in your mind, in your thinking. "I understand!" He says, "When someone hears it and does not understand it, here is what happens." But before we look at that, we need to remember what type of soil this is thrown upon. Remember it was seeds sown beside the road. And in the original parable, the seed was just lying on top of the road and the birds came down and plucked up the seeds and flew away. What is the point that the Lord is making here? That this soil, it is the same soil, all the soils, but this soil here is compacted and hardened. The Word does not penetrate the hard heart. Very clearly, this person has a hard heart.

And let me remind you that God, in His Word, warns us not to harden our hearts. But we saw like with these Jews that they chose not to hear, they chose to close their eyes, they chose to harden their hearts to the Word of God. You see, concerning God's general revelation, man hardens his heart, he suppresses

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the truth in unrighteousness, Romans 1, “<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.” You can see through this marvelous creation, and within the creation ourselves, that there is a creation, and man hardens his heart and suppresses that truth, but we also see God sharing very clearly that in His special revelation, that truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, that man hardens his heart also. Again look back at verse 13 of chapter 13.

**<sup>13</sup> Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup>And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, "YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; <sup>15</sup>FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL..." [Matthew 13:13-15a]**

The heart of this people has become dull, or, literally, impenetrable. It has become hard, and I believe that is this person in whom seed is thrown, they have hardened their hearts.

And what is it that hardens our hearts? Hebrews chapter 3, if you want to turn there with me, we see very clearly the Lord Jesus beckoning these Hebrews not to harden their hearts. Hebrews 3, they were those who were identifying with the church but yet weren't saved, and they were being warned not to harden their hearts to the truth of Christ and then not to turn away from it. Hebrews 3:7:

**<sup>7</sup> Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, <sup>8</sup> Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, As in the day of trial in the wilderness, <sup>9</sup> Where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, And saw My works for forty years. <sup>10</sup> "Therefore I was angry with this generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart; And they did not know My ways'; <sup>11</sup> As I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest (that is the same discipline, they saw the truth concerning the Lord and they rejected it and God said they are not going to enter His rest).'<sup>12</sup> Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. <sup>13</sup> But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. [Hebrews 3:7-13]**

Our sin hardens our hearts. We need the ground tilled up, and the Lord Jesus had his forerunner go before him, John the Baptist, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” He was sharing His truth to till the ground that they would see their wickedness before God and their culpability before God for their sin, but instead of softening, being tilled, they were hardened to the truth, and that is like this first person who hears the gospel. They are hard to the truth because of sin.

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And notice what happens when your heart is like this. This is for the disciples to understand what the responses are going to be like, but notice what happens, 13:19, “when anyone hears the Word of the kingdom and does not understand it, (that is the one on the hard road) the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one in whom seed was sown beside the road.” The evil one is speaking of Satan, it is speaking of the devil. He forcibly grabs – *harpazo* – it is the same word, we see it translated, or we call it rapture. Satan comes and forcibly grabs away the truth because it is right on the top, it has not penetrated the heart. Now how does Satan do this? Well, obviously, I think he does it multiple ways. If you have a hard heart because of sin, you are unwilling to come to Christ when someone shares the gospel with you, you do not understand it, and Satan comes along because he is the god of this world, and he uses worldly philosophies, I believe, that contradict the truth, and he steals away the word. Also, Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11, very clearly, and so do his workers. He disguises, he steals it away through false teaching, whatever it might be. But the bottom line is the evil one comes along because it did not penetrate your heart, and he steals it away because you have got a hard heart, it is very serious. If you have a hard and unrepentant heart, someone can share the gospel to you and you are not going to understand it, and Satan is going to steal that truth.

Ultimately, you are at the mercy of Satan when you have a hard heart. Look again at Luke 8:11-12, Luke chapter 8, this is a parallel portion. “Now the parable is this, the seed is the Word of God, and those who are 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.” You see, the issue is not necessarily Satan taking away the Word; the issue is the ground is compacted, that is why the Word does not penetrate, and Satan can freely manipulate and take it away so that you will not believe. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; you need to have a soft, tilled heart, a heart that is broken over sin; “What must I do to be saved, Lord God?” And then His Word can penetrate that hard heart. If you are sitting here today and you do not understand the gospel, the truth that Jesus Christ died for your sins according to the Scriptures, that He will judge you, that you are accountable for your sin, that if you do not respond to the call to repent of your sins, then you will be judged. If you have a hard heart, you will not understand the gospel and Satan will pull it away. Folks, repentance paves the way for genuine faith in Christ. If you have a hard, unrepentant heart, you are not going to receive the truth and the evil one is going to take away, you are not going to be saved.

Folks, for those of us who share the gospel, we need to remember if we share that Jesus Christ died for your sins, that is true, but if the person is not broken down, repentant, having their heart tilled by the spirit of God through the Word of God, it is just going to be on the surface and it is going to be snatched and grabbed away. But friend, if you have a hard heart concerning your sin, God can break the heart of stone. He can give you a new, soft heart that is receptive to the truth of Christ. Ezekiel 36, speaking of the nation of Israel, which is hard toward God, which eventually will be saved. He has to change their heart. Ezekiel 36:26, “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you, I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” If you have a hardened heart, you do not understand the gospel, I would come before the Lord God and say, “Lord God, break my

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heart up, make me sensitive to sin; help me understand the truth concerning the Savior, Jesus Christ.” So that is the first parable portion, the first soil.

What about the second soil? I believe we see here unrepentant, superficial hearts. Look at the original parable back in verse 5 in chapter 13, and then we will go the explanation. Verse 5 in chapter 13, “and others fell upon rocky places where they did not have much soil,” that is really important, “did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up because they had not depth of soil.” Okay, so the seed in this illustration of this parable falls on rocky soil, there is not much soil at all, it is all rocks, basically. Very little soil, very little depth. It sprouts up very quickly, then look what happens in verse 6, “but when the sun had risen they were scorched because they had not root, they withered away.” And then the analogy, the explanation verse, 20, “and the one whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word (it is about the gospel) and immediately receives it with joy, (*“Praise the Lord!” The person receives it with joy!*) Yet has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary. And when affliction and persecution arises because of the Word, immediately he falls away.”

This is another type of heart the disciples would come across, and we, true believers, will come across. It is another example of those who are not repentant and their response to the gospel. There are three responses to the gospel from the unrepentant, hardened hearts, and this is the second one. He says, “that fell on rocky places, with no depth of soil.” That is the description of a heart, it is hard, the soil is not deep; it is shallow. And I want you to notice the word where He says, “immediately receives it with joy,” the word “receive” here is *lambano*, and that is a word that speaks of an outward reception, not *dechomai*, which speaks of an inward welcome. There is an external acceptance of the gospel with joy, but yet, these who believe do not believe.

You say, “What do you mean? How can someone who believes not believe?” They come to an external acceptance of the facts, they rejoice over it immediately, they believe, but yet, I believe because they have not truly repented, their hearts are still hard, rocky. So how can someone quote-on-quote believe and not be saved? You see, folks, there is a genuine saving faith and there are faiths that do not save, they are not real faiths. But it is the only way we can describe it. There is saving faith and there is a bogus faith. James chapter 2, let’s turn there and we will see this. James chapter 2, and if you do a study of believing in the book of John, you will see there were many who believed externally but they really did not believe internally, and they were not saved, they turned away from Christ. You see, this is very dangerous, you can have a hard heart and you can receive it with joy and yet, as we will see, not be saved. James chapter 2, let’s look at verse 14:

**<sup>14</sup> What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? (Can a faith that does not produce something genuine, produce the life of Christ, can that save him, can that type of faith save him?) <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? (There is no love for the body of Christ.) <sup>17</sup> Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. <sup>18</sup> But someone may well say, “You have faith,**

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**and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. <sup>20</sup> But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? [James 2:14-20]**

This bogus non-saving faith is not real faith at all because it does not produce any fruit, it is worthless. The parallel passage, Luke chapter 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 (and listen to this); they believe for a while..." Luke says. They have this outward resemblance of faith; they believe for a while, but it did not pierce their hearts because they did not repent. They rejoice, they raised their hands, "I believe the gospel! I believe Jesus died for my sins!" They ascend to the truth but they are not saved because their hearts are still hard "They believe for a while and then in temptation, fall away." This second example says in verse 21, back in Matthew 13, "yet, he has no firm root in himself, but it is only temporary." He immediately receives it with joy, yet has not firm root. The NASB translators have added the word "firm." It is in italics, they want to help you understand it, but I believe it does not help us in this case. You could literally say "yet he has no root." There is no root. It did not penetrate the heart. It appears to have penetrated the heart, that is the illustration, but it did not, but it is only temporary. As Luke says, "They believe for a while." It is not genuine, saving faith. And you know how I know that? Keep reading, middle of verse 21, "and when affliction and persecution arises because of the Word, immediately he falls away." This is temporal, bogus faith, and when affliction and persecution arises because of the Word of God, because of their identification with the body of Christ and with His Word, they receive it with joy, they say, "Yes! I believe it! I am there!" but then when they start to obey it externally, they will be persecuted, they will come into affliction because of the Word, and immediately, he falls away, and the word *falls away* is *skandalizo*, we get our word *scandal* from it. It referred to a stick in which bait was put on, and the trap was placed, and when the careless animal touches the stick, the bait and the trap shuts. That is the idea of something that would impede, block, or stumble someone. The make-believer who temporarily accepts the external truth with joy, when affliction and persecution comes because of the Word, immediately they are tripped up, and they fall. Now, the same word translated *falls away* is a different word in Luke chapter 8, and I am going to read it again like I said to have your fingers there. Luke chapter 8, he says in the middle of verse 18, "they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away." And the Greek word translated there is *aphistemi*, it is where we get our word *apostasy*. They are apostates. The word *apostasy* means they have turned away from Christ, they no longer name His Name, they have rejected Christ. They had this immediate joy, and they rejoiced over it because they never had their hearts pierced because they were still in their sins. Once they started to suffer for this external faith they were now following, they immediately turned away and left. That is what we can expect when someone is unrepentant. It is another soil. Another soil. When you follow Christ, you are going to be afflicted; you are going to be persecuted. Even if you do not have a genuine relationship, you obey the truth externally, you are going to suffer, and when that comes, if you do not know Christ, it is immediate – Boom – with this kind of soil.

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We see apostasy in Scripture, and you can read it on your own time, we see it in Hebrews 6, very clearly, Hebrews 6:4-6, I am going to read that, Hebrews 6. "For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup> and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, <sup>6</sup> and *then* have fallen away (or apostatized), it is impossible to renew them again to repentance..." (they have fallen away from the only saving faith)" [Hebrews 6:4-6a] I mentioned this in the beginning of the message, 1 John 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not really of us, for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but e they went out, in order that it might be shown they are not of us." [1 John 2:19] When someone leaves like this gentleman who has reproached Christ through his action, left the body of Christ, totally accepted everything joyfully but left, this shows us that they are not of us, that they have turned away, which is an evidence the heart never was really penetrated; they did not truly repent, it was not broken up, it was not good soil, they were not broken over their sin when they came to Jesus Christ.

Some of you here may have an external, superficial faith, you have rejoiced, but the day when you start to suffer for actually following Christ, if you have not repented of your sin, you are in terrible danger. You are in terrible danger because you will turn away from the only thing that can save you: The Lord Jesus Christ. The key is the soil needs to be tilled up, the heart needs to be broken over sin before God, and only God can do that, and ask Him, "Oh Lord God, I have a superficial faith here that is just on the outside, Lord God, break up my heart so that I would really be saved." Ask the Lord to take stony heart, the rocky heart, and make it a heart of flesh.

Well, thirdly, we see the third type of soil in verse 22, "and the one in whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the Word and the worry of the world and deceitfulness of riches choke the word and it becomes unfruitful." These are hearers with unrepentant, divided hearts. They came to faith in Christ externally, but they never renounced in their heart of hearts their worldliness, they never were broken over their sinfulness concerning the world. They have got divided hearts. He says here, "The one the seed was sown among thorns," the seed went in the thorny ground, those thorns are there, the heart is full of thorns, worldly thorns, it is not broken down.

And notice what it says, "and the worry of the world (or the worry of the age, the worry of the age), and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word." Just like a little tiny plant would be choked by the weeds. It is choked out of your heart, it does not penetrate because you never repented of your worldliness, your love of the world! You never really repented of sin, that is part of it. I don't have to say those words, "I repent of the world," it is just my love of self, my love of everything apart from Christ. And notice what He says this, "and it becomes unfruitful." This is the one that stays in the body of Christ, but never produces fruit. This word actually literally can be translated, "is continually without fruit," not becomes as though it had been fruitful, it never, ever had any fruit. The Word of God never bore fruit, never. True believers bear fruit. The gospel changes their hearts, Christ changes them, He changes our desires, He makes us mourn over our sin and hunger and thirst for righteousness rather than be caught up in the worries and cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. When the Word comes upon a repentant heart there is a change, there is a change. It is through the instrumentality of the Word of

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God that He brings about salvation, but if your heart is hard, if your heart is hard, if you are worldly, you have not repented of your sin, it does not penetrate. You just sit in church and you never bear any fruit because you are not saved. Let me share a few passages about the reality of fruit-bearing. There are some that say "Hey, that person is saved, but he never bears any fruit." I say absolutely not; a good tree produces good fruit, and if you truly come to Christ, it will change your life, you will have different desires, you will not live the way you used to live, and if you start to live that way you will be convicted about it, and you will be disciplined.

Let me share a couple passages. Remember back in Matthew chapter 3? Matthew 3:7, this was when the Pharisees and Sadducees wanted to play the spiritual games. John the Baptist, he was popular, the people liked him, so the Pharisees and the leaders said "Hey, let's go do this baptism thing, let's do this external thing, let's identify with this," but they were not repentant. Matthew 3:7:

**<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees (this is John the Baptist) coming for baptism, he said to them (This is not very nice, by the way), 'You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' <sup>8</sup> "Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance; <sup>9</sup> (he says) and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves (this is on the inside), 'We have Abraham for our father'; (do not believe that you can be saved by that, 'bring forth fruit.' And he says) for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>10</sup> 'And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. [Matthew 3:7-10]**

The fruitless are not saved. We see it in Luke 6:43, I'll read it to you,

**<sup>43</sup>For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit; nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. <sup>44</sup> 'For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. <sup>45</sup>'The good man out of the good treasure of his heart (it is a changed heart) brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure (implying of his heart) brings forth what is evil (and then He says); for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart. <sup>46</sup> 'And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?' [Luke 6:43-46]**

Part of that fruit of being changed is obedience to Christ. And then we see it in Acts 26, and I don't have time to read it, you can read it later, Acts 26:19-20, Paul says that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. When you truly get saved, you will start doing what is right. If you are not truly saved, you do not have the power to do it, you cannot produce good fruit. These people who are still worldly are fruitless. Fruitless.

The third type of soil speaks of a divided, worldly heart. They love the world, they love the things of this world; their heart is thorny. What does John say in 1 John 2? "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." [John 2:15] The world is just

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the paradigm in which God is ignored and I fulfill my own will. I live according to my will rather than God's will. That is worldliness. I focus on the things that I can do or not do, and I realize I cannot do some things so I worry about it, or I seek the things I want. It is all about me, and it has to do, often, with the cares and the deceitfulness of riches. What did Jesus say in Matthew 6?

***<sup>19</sup> Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; <sup>21</sup> for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. <sup>22</sup> The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! <sup>24</sup> No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (That is money). [Matthew 6:19-24]***

You cannot serve Christ if you are focused on your finances! The love of money is the root of all sorts of evil. It is not saying money is bad; it is the love of it, it is worldliness, how and what my day is centered around. How am I going to take care of these issues rather than obeying Christ? What is the best example in Scripture of this? Someone who hung out with Christ, who was focused on riches? It is Judas. He hung out, he looked like he was saved, but was there any fruit in his life? No. I hate to think that some of you here might have hearts that are corrupted by worldliness, who never truly saw the wickedness of your own desires, you never had your heart tilled up and broken up. The Lord Jesus can do that; break up your heart, till your heart. If it is not tilled, if it is not broken up, you will be like this person who never bears fruit, you will be in the church never bearing fruit and you will be burned up in the punishment because you are still in your sins.

These are responses to the gospel, three types of soil so far: The unrepentant, outright unrepentant, outright rejects hard heart; another hard heart, receives it with joy yet turns away when the going gets tough, and this worldly heart, have never repented of their love for their own desires and worldliness, they made a profession of faith, they are hanging out; then lastly, there is the good soil. Verse 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 (indeed bears fruit), and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

The Word of God concerning Christ bore fruit in their lives, they were saved, they were born again to the living and abiding Word of God. And when your heart has been tilled, you recognize your sinfulness, you are in a wretched state, you need to be saved. When your heart is broken up and you come before the living God, you receive that truth, then you can be saved, and it bears forth fruit. The word "good" here is the word *kalos*, it speaks not of not only internally good, but beautiful, you could look at the soil, it is good, you can see it! And folks, there are times where I have looked at people's lives externally, where you can see they are broken over their sin. It is good soil. It is broken up, they realize "I have sinned

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against the Lord God! I am in a terrible state! I am a wicked man! I am a wicked woman! My thoughts are awful! I have disobeyed God!" The soil is good, it is broke up. It is ready to receive the truth. Those are those who receive it and indeed understand and bear fruit.

I think the missing element to our gospels these days is the preparation of the heart, and I think that is the lesson here for these disciples. I think we often share it so flippantly we do not share the truth of men's sinfulness. So then, those with genuine, repentant hearts, the way prepared. Those hearts that God has broken up, humble hearts, received the Word and bear fruit. It is God's Word which performs its work.

Let me close and share one portion, let's turn to John 15 together. True believers bear fruit, and these numbers are out of the park! For farming to bear a hundredfold, sixtyfold, some thirty, that is way beyond what you would actually get in a farming situation. You would get maybe eight times. That is why I am always grieved when someone says "I wonder if so and so is saved." If you can't see any fruit, I would share the parable with them.

John 15:1, Jesus says,

**<sup>1</sup> "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> "You are already clean (he is speaking of salvation there, by the way. They have been cleansed of their sins. Back in chapter 13) **because of the word which I have spoken to you** (you see, they were cleansed by the Word of God. He says). <sup>4</sup> "**Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.** (When someone is not genuinely saved, they cannot abide in Christ, they cannot bear real fruit, all right. He says) <sup>5</sup> "**I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup> "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. [John 15:1-8]****

Hear then, the parable of the sower. Listen to the parable, Jesus says. So then, in a relationship, God shares here very clearly that it is the condition of the heart that brings forth the response to the gospel. It is totally related to it, wherever the heart is, that is where the response will come. Let me ask you today, which one of these soils refers to you? Which one? I shared the gospel with you today; how did you receive it? Have you humbled your heart before Him? If you have not, you are not going to understand; the Word is not going to penetrate. God will allow Satan to steal it away and you will walk away and you will not understand. I beg you on behalf of Christ, ask God to break your heart up, that you might receive the Word implanted.

# *Matthew 13:18-23*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/05/2011*

There are some here today who have shallow, hard hearts. You have rejoiced when you heard the gospel, but yet you never were saved. When things get difficult, you will turn from Christ, and there is no coming back, at least from Hebrews. He is the only way to be saved. I would be fearing right now, if that speaks of you. If you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.

And some of you been in the church for a long time, yet you are worldly; you have never not been worldly. You have never produced any fruit at all. Christ is never been manifest in your life. His righteousness, never, as you abided in Him, because you cannot. I beg you to repent. I beg you to come before the Lord, say Lord God I confess my worldliness, a wretched man, I am a wretched woman. I really do not know you. I was fooling myself." Receive the Word and be saved.

And lastly, brother and sister, genuine believers, praise God He broke up our hearts! He prepared the soil and made it good, that we would receive the Word and respond and bear forth fruit. Which one of these soils refers to you? Hear, then the Parable of the Sower.

## **Prayer**

Father, thank You for Your Word. I praise You for Your Word, that You were so gracious You would not let anyone not hear this truth here today. That you have brought forth the responses of the heart which we cannot see. I pray for anyone here who has one of those first three soils. I pray for those who have not repented, who are hard. I pray that You would break their hearts down that they would be broken before You about their sinfulness. I pray for those who have those rocky, shallow hearts. I pray they would turn and that they would believe and truly be saved. And God, I pray for the worldly here, who identify with Christ, yet bear no fruit because they are worldly, seeking the things of the world rather than Christ. I pray they would examine themselves to see if they are in the faith. I pray for those of us who are truly saved, that we would be graciously bold with those around us, that we would not presume upon Your Word to say so and so is saved, so in so is not, apart from what Your Word says. That we would share Your Word with those we care for. And Lord, thank you for those of us who are saved, how blessed we are that our ears can hear and our eyes can see the truth of Christ. Thank you now. In His precious Name, amen.

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