

Receiving the Word on Good Soil

Matthew 13:1-23

After teaching plainly and directly for some time, Jesus begins to use parables to get his point across to his disciples. The parables of Jesus are both a window into the Kingdom of heaven and a mirror in which you can see your true self. They are descriptive, not prescriptive, and both reveal and conceal. In Matthew 13, Jesus explains for his people his reason for talking in parables and tells the story of the soil, revealing how they might receive the Word of God.

Application

1. Jesus describes four types of soils that represent us as we receive him and his Word. Which soil are you?
 - a. Hard soil (arrogance prevents the seed from taking root in your life; it bounces and is taken away because of a hardened heart)
 - b. Shallow soil (deceptive, looks impressive, emotive, not much below the surface)
 - c. Crowded soil (distracted with the worries and the cares of this world, and with the lure of the opportunities wealth can bring)
 - d. Prepared soil (turned therefore soft, weeded so there is no competition, and rock broken up and removed—then the good seed of the gospel will produce an unpredictable and disproportionate harvest)
2. The gospel seed will produce fruit. We know which soil we are not by our own opinion or of others but by the fruit we produce. What fruit do you see in your life? Where have you seen life change in yourself in the past year? Where do you need to turn the soil over and make it softer?
3. As a church, we tend to lean towards the “crowded soil”. We are distracted. What is distracting you? What do you need to remove from your life so that you are less distracted and the seed can take deeper root?
4. Jesus wants us to understand that most of the soil will not sustain the gospel and that means we should expect to be in the minority in our culture and in the world. How does this idea comfort you?

Key Points

- Parables are a window into another world—the Kingdom of heaven, a mirror to see ourselves, descriptive not prescriptive, and both revealing and concealing.
- When we don't know the Word, it's because we don't want to know—not because of a lack of information.
- Jesus loves us enough to tell us we have to receive him the way he offers himself—on his terms, not ours. If we continue to harden our heart against Scripture, there is a point at which we lose our ability to respond ([Matthew 13:10-17](#)).
- It is possible to get yourself in such a position that God's Word can no longer be a benefit to you and that the gospel brings judgement rather than blessing to you.
- While the power and the progress of the Kingdom is unstoppable and victorious, in our hearts it is a fragile, delicate thing that can easily be choked out by petty things that are passing away.
- Jesus wants his disciples to see that as his followers we will be alone. We are the minority. While our country values autonomy, we know the opposite to be true as Jesus says in his Word, "deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me" ([Matthew 16:24-26](#)).

Scripture References

[Matthew 4:17](#)

[Romans 1:19-20](#)