

## MARK: The Parable of the Sower

4.13.08

“Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. <sup>2</sup> And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: <sup>3</sup> “Listen! A sower went out to sow <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. <sup>5</sup> Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup> And when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. <sup>8</sup> And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. <sup>9</sup> And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” <sup>10</sup> And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. <sup>11</sup> And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, <sup>12</sup> so that “they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.” <sup>13</sup> And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables <sup>14</sup> The sower sows the word. <sup>15</sup> And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. <sup>16</sup> And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup> And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. <sup>18</sup> And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, <sup>19</sup> but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. <sup>20</sup> But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

Mark 4:1-20 <sup>ESV</sup>

### Outline of the Text :

- Verse 1-9 Parable of the Sower.
- Verse 10-12 Short excursus on Jesus’ teaching through parables.
- Verse 13-20 Jesus’ explanation of the Parable.

### Facts About Parables:

1. Definition: “An earthly story with a heavenly meaning.”
2. Stories, examples, comparisons, etc. that use examples drawn from everyday life to drive home a moral or spiritual truth.
3. Jesus used parables to *reveal* truth to His followers and *conceal* truth from His enemies. His goal was not simply to inform but transform. Jesus’ parables required a response.

### Verses 1-12

“Again he began to teach beside the sea”	Picture this in your mind.
“parables”	Jesus’ primary teaching method.
“Listen!”	Key word in passage. Occurs 13x.
“the secret of the kingdom of God”	“Something concealed is now revealed.”
“so that “they may indeed see but not perceive...”	Ref. to Is. 6:9. Similarity.

### Hints for Rightly Interpreting Parables:

1. Usually have only one point. They lead up to it.
2. The context and characters are important and are carefully chosen.

- a. Eg. The Good Samaritan—the Samaritan hero was part of his point.

### Examining the Characters:

1. The Sower—God or Jesus. Sows generously, even where there won’t be fruit.
2. Seed—the Word or the Good News of the Kingdom, the Gospel.
3. Satan—the Seed Snatcher. The enemy of God who steals the Word.
4. The Soils— 4 different kinds of people & their experiences with the Gospel.
  - a. Ones along the path : Satan steals the Word.
  - b. Ones sown on rocky ground : fall away from trouble comes.
  - c. Ones sown among thorns : word is choked out and proves unfruitful.
    - i. “the cares of the world” distractions of life.
    - ii. “the deceitfulness of riches” lust for money and possessions.
    - iii. “the desires for other things” longing for what the world offers.
  - d. Ones sown on the good soil : hear the word, accept it, bear fruit.

### The Main Point of the Parable :

**We need to be ‘good soil’ and listen to Jesus and what He has to say about Himself and the Gospel of His Kingdom.**

### How well am I listening to Jesus today?

### Examining Ourselves:

1. *Are we one of the unfruitful kinds of soil?*
2. *Do we do what Jesus says?*
  - a. When it comes to listening to Jesus, listening means living.
3. *How much influence do the “Word Chokers” have in my life?*
  - i. “the cares of the world” distractions of life.
  - ii. “the deceitfulness of riches” lust for money and possessions.
  - iii. “the desires for other things” longing for what the world offers.
4. *Is my life bearing abundant fruit?*
  - a. What is holding me back?

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Visit [www.crossinglouisville.com](http://www.crossinglouisville.com) for more helpful resources, including study guides on Mark.

Works Consulted : Expositor’s Bible Commentary, , Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, Messages by Steve Hart, Jesus and the Gospels by Craig Blomberg, Jesus: God’s Servant by Massimo Lorenzini