

Parables of Jesus - Lesson 5 - Responding To God's Word

- When God's Word is shared, why is there a vastly different response?

Matthew 13:1-23 (NIV)

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. **2** Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. **3** Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. **4** As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. **5** Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. **6** But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. **7** Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. **8** Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. **9** Whoever has ears, let them hear."

10 The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?"

11 He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. **12** Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. **13** This is why I speak to them in parables:

"Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

"You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

15 For this people's heart has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.'

16 But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. **17** For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

18 “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: **19** When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. **20** The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. **21** But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. **22** The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. **23** But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

Context Verses: Isaiah 6:5-13, Matthew 12:22-37

Related Verses to Ponder: 1 Peter 5:8-9 (Alert / Satan), Hebrews 3:12-15 (Exhort One Another / Hard Hearted), 1 Peter 4:12-19 (Share in Christ’s Sufferings), Jude 1:3-4 (False Teachers), Matthew 6:19-24 (Treasures / Heart / Master), John 15:1-11 (Abiding in Christ / Bearing Fruit), Galatians 5:22-23 (Fruit of the Spirit), Proverbs 11:30 (Fruit of Righteousness), Philippians 1:22 (Fruitful Labor)

Questions to Ponder:

- How can people hear the same message from God’s Word and have different responses? What affects the reception of God’s Word?
- What does this parable reveal to you about your own walk with the Lord? What hinders a person from bearing fruit?
- What does this parable reveal to you about God’s Word and evangelism?
- How does this parable inform your disciple-making ministry? (Matthew 28:19-20)
- How does this parable show how we need to pray for others? Both believers and unbelievers?