

JAAL Sunday The sower Mark 4:10-20

A **parable** is a comparison. “One thing is like another...”

- Something on earth is compared with something in heaven. That heavenly truth may be the better grasped by using an earthly illustration.
- So, what many of us learned in Sunday School, is very true. *A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.*
- Jesus used them. **To be simple, direct, and teach!**
- Jesus knew that the surest way to awaken people’s interest was to tell them a **story**. And Jesus was the master story-teller. So, he told the story of the **sower**. He ended with the challenge *He, who has ears to hear, let him hear! (9).*

The trouble was that the disciples did not quite understand the story. So, Jesus took them apart and they asked about the meaning.

- 13 *Don’t you understand this parable? The farmer sows the word.*
- Every detail would be real to the hearers of Jesus, because it came from everyday life.
- The seed is the **Word**. The hearers are the **soil** in which the seed will take root and grow.

1. Four kinds of soil are mentioned.

▪ **The hard ground at the side of the road**

The fields were long narrow strips. The paths alongside were rights of way. They became beaten and hard. Some seed fell there. It had not a chance to grow. The birds came and ate it up! 15 *Satan comes and takes the word away.* The hardness of heart. The word finds no entry. Some people are not so much hostile to the word, but they are indifferent. For them it is irrelevant and they think they can get through life without the truth.

▪ **The rocky ground**

This is a ground full of rocks. A thin strip of soil over solid rock. Shallow soil. The seed germinated here, but the soil was shallow. No moisture; too much sun and heat; the sprouting seed withered and died. Many begin but they fall by the wayside. They are like the rings of Saturn. They are attracted, but never get right into the center of things! There must be total yieldedness to Christ.

▪ **The ground full of thorns**

Perhaps the farmer was lazy. He cut heads off the weeds, but did not dig them up by the root. The weeds grew with such rapidity that they choked the life out of the growing seed. Jesus said 19 but *the worries of this life, the*

deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things come in and choke the word and it becomes unfruitful. The more complicated life becomes, the more necessity there is to see that our priorities are right. There are so many things which seek to shoulder Christ out of the most significant place in our lives and affections.

▪ **The good clean deep soil**

They hear the Word, accept it, and produce a crop.

2. If we are to benefit from the message of the Word, we must do three things.

▪ **We must hear it**

We cannot hear unless we listen. So often we are so busy talking that we have no time to listen. We are so busy arguing that we do not listen. So busy airing our opinions that we do not listen to others. So much on the move that we do not listen to Jesus.

▪ **We must receive it**

Whenever the mind hears something that it does not want to hear it automatically closes its door and forgets! It is not enough to listen, but also to accept the word. C.f. Lady and her daughter!

▪ **We must put it into action.**

The yield in the parable was thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold. Our Christianity must emerge in action. We are not called to **speculate**, but to **act**.

3. What is the point of the parable?

- All of this was told and at that time not written down. As we saw last time, we need to remember that the listeners would not take it all in. So, what was the point of this earthly story with a heavenly meaning? What is the meaning for us today?
- The message surely is this: *although part of the seed never grew, the fact remained that at the end of the day there was a harvest!*
- This is the parable to end despair. It may seem that much of our effort achieves no result. It may seem that much of our effort is wasted. Our labour may seem to have no result.
- That was how the disciples must have felt about Jesus’ work. His message seemed to have failed. They were dispirited and downhearted.
- This parable is saying to us as it said to them “Patience! Do your work. Sow the seed. Leave the rest to God. The harvest is sure”.