



19 Minutes With the Messiah

The Sower

(Mark 4:3-9, 14-20)

Jesus' Body as the Temple
The Living Water
New Cloth
New Wine in Old Wineskins
The Salt of the Earth
The Light of the World
The House Built on the Rock
The Two Debtors

The Sower

The Weeds
The Growing Seed
The Mustard Seed
The Yeast
The Hidden Treasure
The Fine Pearl
The Net
I AM the Bread of Life
Becoming Childlike
The Unmerciful Servant
I AM the Light of the World
I AM the Gate
I AM the Good Shepherd
The Good Samaritan
The Friend at Midnight
The Rich Fool
The Wise Servant
The Barren Fig Tree
The Great Banquet
The Lost Sheep
The Lost Coin
The Lost Son
The Shrewd Manager
The Rich Man and Lazarus
The Unworthy Servants
I AM the Resurrection and the Life
The Persistent Widow
The Pharisee and
the Tax Collector
The Workers in the Vineyard
The Ten Minas
The Two Sons
The Wicked Tenants
The Wedding Feast
The Fig Tree
The Householder
The Ten Virgins
The Talents
The Sheep and the Goats
A Lesson About Foot Washing
I AM the Way
I AM the True Vine
The Woman in Labor
I AM the Alpha and the Omega

³[Jesus said,] "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times."

⁹Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

¹⁴[Later Jesus explained:] "The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. ¹⁶Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ¹⁸Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²⁰Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

1. In his parable (verses 3-8), Jesus describes four different results when a farmer sows his seed. What are the four different results?

a.

b.

c.

d.

2. In the parable, whom does the farmer represent?

What does the seed represent?

What (or who) is the soil?

3. In Jesus' explanation of the parable (verses 14-20), he tells us the four different ways in which the Word of God is received. Describe those four different ways.

a.

b.

c.

d.

4. Give examples of "trouble or persecution" and "the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things." How can each destroy a Christian's faith?
5. What kind of result does Jesus want when people hear God's Word? The main point of Jesus' parable, therefore, comes in the form of an encouragement. What is it?
6. Explain the varying sizes of crops produced among believers (verse 20).
7. How can we become more and more like good soil?

For Further Study

8. Agree or disagree with the following statements:
 - The four different types of soil describe each of us.
 - Evangelism efforts should be focused on those whose hearts are receptive to the Word.
 - Most people who stray from the church can be identified as "thorny" soil.
9. How might this parable encourage us and help us to understand what happens as we reach out with God's Word to our friends, family members, coworkers, and neighbors?

Helps: (1) a. Seed falls on the path, is trampled and eaten by the birds. b. Seed falls on rocky soil and springs up quickly, but without root it quickly withers. c. Seed falls among thorns and springs up but then is choked out by thorns. d. Seed falls on good soil, springs up, grows, and produces a large crop. (2) Jesus, as well as all Christians who spread the seed of God's Word, is the farmer. The soil is people. (3) a. Some hear the Word with hardened hearts. Satan attacks, and they do not believe. b. Some hear and believe with an emotional joy but fall away in time of temptation. c. Some hear and believe, but then their faith is choked out by the cares, worries, and pleasures of life. d. Some hear the Word, believe it, and produce fruits of faith. (4) Examples of each are numerous. These are used as tools by Satan, our sinful flesh, and an unbelieving world to destroy saving faith. (5) Jesus wants the fourth result. He therefore issues the encouragement of verse 9. (6) The level of faith varies among believers; the stronger one's faith, the larger the crop. In addition, God gives different and varying degrees of talents and abilities to his people. Faith and its fruits are from God alone. He calls for faithfulness. (7) God's Word alone has the power to make our hearts into good soil. When the plant of faith continues to hear the seed of the gospel, it will produce an ever larger crop. (8) Christians can be characterized by the four types of soil (hardened at times to the truth of God's Word, listening to it in a shallow sort of way, allowing it to get crowded out of our lives, or, by God's grace alone, receiving it in faith). The Bible does not indicate that evangelism efforts should focus on a certain people, nor does it say that some hearts are more receptive to the gospel than others; in fact, just the opposite. (See Ephesians 2:1 and 1 Corinthians 12:3.) A 1991 study by the Wisconsin Synod indicated that 72 percent of those who stray from the church do so because of "personal issues" (personal and family problems, job and leisure interests, apathy, health, transportation, etc.). (9) Some will reject God's Word. Others will receive it in a superficial or unfruitful way. Yet, encouraged by God's promise of a fruitful crop through the spreading of his Word, Christians continue to reach out with the gospel.

Prayer

"Almighty God, your Word is cast
Like seed into the ground;
Now let the dew of heav'n
descend
And righteous fruits abound.

Whene'er the precious seed
is sown,
Life-giving grace bestow
That all whose souls the truth
receive
Its saving pow'r may know."
Amen. (CW 324:1,4)