



## The Parable of the Sower

Mark 4: 1-20

### *Items Needed*

- ✓ Bible with marked scripture
- ✓ Crayons/Markers/Pencils
- ✓ Three containers (plastic, clay, or paper)
- ✓ Rocks, pebbles or marbles
- ✓ Weeds pulled from your yard
- ✓ Potting soil or good planting soil from your yard
- ✓ A packet of seeds for each student (any variety, may also use mustard or sesame seeds from your spice cabinet)
- ✓ Flashlight
- ✓ Copies of coloring sheet
- ✓ Copies of take home overview



## The Parable of the Sower

### Objective of Lesson

In the Bible, Our Lord Jesus Christ uses parables to teach us in simple illustration, how He saves His people from their sins.

### Scripture Reference

*Mark 4: 1-20 - "And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine, Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be*

*forgiven them. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."*

## Lesson Instructions

1. Today we are going to demonstrate a story told in the Bible called, "The Parable of the Sower." I will need everyone's help with this. Recorded in the Bible are many stories, called Parables, our Lord Jesus uses to teach a lesson to His people. Do you remember what a Parable is? It is a story that pictures or demonstrates how the Lord Jesus saves His people from their sins. The key to understanding a parable is to know it is always about Christ saving His people from their sins.
2. Our Lord Jesus began to teach beside a lake. He said, "Listen to this!" A farmer went out to scatter seeds. I need each of you to be a farmer. Here are your packets of seeds. The four containters in front of you is your field. As the farmer was scattering seeds, some fell on the path; (Have them put seed in the empty container) and the birds came and ate it. (Make a gesture with your hands like that of a bird flying over the box, seeing the seeds, swooping down, and eating them up)

3. Other seed fell on rocky ground where the soil was shallow. (Have them put seed in the container with the rocks) What do you think happened to the seeds here? Did they grow? Our Lord says they sprouted immediately but because the soil wasn't deep, when the sun came up (Shine the flashlight on the box like it was the sun) it scorched (burned up) the plants, and dried them up because they did not have deep roots in good soil.
4. Other seed fell among thorny plants. (Have them put the seed in the third container) What do you think happened here? Our Lord says the weeds and thorny plants grew and choked the seeds, and they produced nothing.
5. Other seed fell into good soil (Have them put the seed in the fourth container with the good potting soil) and bore fruit. This is good soil because it has been broken up, loosened, and minerals have been added to it. It has been specifically prepared to receive seed. The seed cast into this container grew up and it kept growing and increasing and it grew more and more and more fruit.
6. This is a really clear demonstration about how seed can grow, but how does it teach us about God? Did our Lord Jesus tell us this just to entertain us or to teach us something? A parable is always used to teach us something. Does our Lord make us guess as to what this means? No! He tells us!
7. The sower in this story is a preacher sent from God. Gospel preachers are like farmers, throwing out seed. (Make a throwing motion with your hands) What do you think the seed represents? (Hold up the seeds) I will give you a hint... what do preachers do? They preach! So the seed is the word of God. Preachers proclaim or cast the word of God onto the soil that God has prepared.
8. The soil in this story represents the hearts of men. When a preacher proclaims or casts out the gospel to the hearts of men, do we have any way of knowing in whose heart the word is going to grow? No, just like in our demonstration, sometimes a person's heart is like this barren path. (Point to the empty container) The heart is empty and barren. The seed does not

grow; they hear the words of the preacher and they are just snatched away. Sometimes a person's heart is like this stony soil, they hear the words of the preacher and looks like it is going to grow, but soon is burned up. Sometimes a person's heart is like this container of weeds; they hear the words of the preacher and seed can't grow for all the weeds.

9. Oh, but look at this last container! Sometimes, the Lord has prepared someone's heart and readied it for the seed. Their heart is just like this container of fertile soil. They hear the words of the preacher and not only does the seed grow, but it grows strong and fast and produces so much fruit, it is a miracle. Christ came to this earth and died to save His people from their sins. God prepares those peoples' hearts to receive that wonderful gospel truth, and when a preacher casts out that truth, the truth taught in this Bible, (Hold up the Bible) some of those hearts (Point to your heart) are prepared by God to receive it.

## Lesson Activities

- Prepare four containers. The first container is empty. This will represent the barren path. The second container, fill the bottom with mostly rocks mixed with a little soil. The third container, fill the bottom with a nest of weeds. The fourth and final container, fill the bottom with good dark potting soil. Use these containers to demonstrate as you teach the lesson.
- Coloring Sheet

# Take Home Lesson Overview



## The Parable of the Sower

### Scripture Reference:

Mark 4: 1-20 - "And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine, Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness: And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

## Lesson Overview:

The sower in this story is a preacher sent from God. Gospel preachers are like farmers, throwing out seed. They proclaim or cast the word of God onto the soil that God has prepared.

The soil in this story represents the hearts of men. When a preacher proclaims or casts out the gospel to the hearts of men, do we have any way of knowing in whose heart the word is going to grow? No, just like in our demonstration, sometimes a person's heart is like a barren path. The seed does not grow, it is just snatched away. Sometimes a person's heart is like stony soil, the seed looks like it is going to grow but soon is burned up. Sometimes a person's heart is like weeds. The seed can't grow for all the weeds. This last ground is fertile ground! Sometimes, the Lord has prepared someone's heart and readied it for the seed. Their heart is just like fertile soil. Not only does the seed grow, but it grows strong and fast and produces so much fruit, it is a miracle. Christ came to this earth and died to save His people from their sins. God prepares those peoples' hearts to receive that wonderful news of His death and salvation, and when a Gospel preacher casts out that truth, some of those hearts are prepared by God to receive it.





Sermon #14

Series: Mark

Title:       **THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER**  
Text:        Mark 4:1-20  
Readings: *Office: Buddy Daugherty Auditorium: Merle Hart*  
Subject:    *False Faith and True*  
Date:        Sunday Evening - March 2, 1997  
Tape #       T-48

Introduction:

Our subject tonight is **THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER**. Of all the parables spoken by our Lord during his earthly ministry, none is so widely known and so little heeded as the parable of the sower. The parable itself is easily comprehended. Everyone is familiar with the work of a farmer. He plows his fields, sows his seeds, tends his plants, and gathers in his crop. And every farmer knows that much of the seed sown is lost forever, bears no fruit, and is profitable for nothing. Yet, very few people appear to understand the spiritual implications of this well-known parable.

This parable is of universal application. So long as the Kingdom of God is in this world, so long as there are assemblies of saints like this one, so long as sinners gather to worship God in hope of grace and eternal life in Christ, this parable will be applicable. Let's read it together.

**Mark 4:1-20** "And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. (2) And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine, (3) Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: (4) And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. (5) And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: (6) But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. (7) And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. (8) And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. (9) And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. (10) And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. (11) And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables: (12) That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them. (13) And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all

parables? (14) The sower soweth the word. (15) And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. (16) And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; (17) And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. (18) And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, (19) And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. (20) And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

**Proposition:** In this parable, our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us plainly that the vast majority of those who hear the gospel of the grace of God preached, even the vast majority of those who profess faith in him after hearing the gospel, are unregenerate, lost, and perish under the wrath of God.

*"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"* the parable of the sower.

## **I. THE SOWER IS THE GOSPEL PREACHER.**

Gospel preachers are like farmers sowing wheat. They broadcast the Word of God upon the ground, upon the hearts of eternity bound men and women. This is not a careless, thoughtless process. The preacher, if he is indeed a faithful, gospel preacher, has his heart in his work. He is not indifferent to those to whom he preaches, or indifferent to their response. Oh, no. God's servants care deeply for the souls of men. They sow in hope of harvest.

**Psalms 126:5** "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

**Ecclesiastes 11:1** "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

**Isaiah 55:11** "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it."

The sower is the servant of God, the who faithfully sows the seed of the gospel in hope of a great harvest.

## **II. THE SEED SOWN IS THE WORD OF GOD, THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD REVEALED IN THE WORD.**

**Mark 4:14** "The sower soweth the word."

- We recognize, preach, and rejoice in the glorious sovereignty of our God. I take a back seat to no one in preaching God's absolute sovereignty in all things, and especially in the salvation of his elect. Yet, we recognize that God almighty has chosen to use specific means for the accomplishment of his purposes. *"It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."* *"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."* That is Bible language. **God declares that he saves sinners through the utility of the Word.**

**James 1:18** "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

**1 Peter 1:23-25** "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (24) For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: (25) But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

**A. God saves chosen sinners only through, or by means of, the faithful exposition of the Scriptures.**

**B. The Word of God is faithfully expounded and preached only when the gospel of Christ is faithfully expounded and preached.**

*Rolland Hill* was exactly right when he said, "Any sermon that does not contain the `Three R's' (Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by the Blood, and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit) ought never to have been preached."

God's servants are not just preachers. They are gospel preachers. They do not just preach. They preach the gospel.

The sower is the gospel preacher. The seed sown is the Word of God, the gospel of Christ.

### **III. THE RESULTS OF GOSPEL PREACHING ARE ALWAYS EXACTLY ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE OF GOD.**

We randomly preach the gospel to all who will hear us. But the results are not random. When God almighty sends forth his Word, his Word always accomplishes his purpose. It either produces life and faith in Christ, or it produces judicial blindness and hardness of heart.

**Mark 4:11-12** "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of

the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables: (12) That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them."

The Lord is quoting from the prophecy of Isaiah.

**Isaiah 6:9-10** "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. (10) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."

The apostle Paul argues in much the same way, declaring that man's unbelief does not in any way, or to even the slightest degree alter the purpose of God. Rather, even the willful unbelief of the reprobate fulfills God's sovereign purpose

**Romans 3:3-4** "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? (4) God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

**2 Corinthians 2:14-16** "Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. (15) For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: (16) To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?"

### **A. Faith in Christ is the gift of God.**

The seeing eye, the hearing ear, and the believing heart are from the Lord. Faith is not something men muster from within. Faith is the gift and operation of God's free grace in Christ. If you believe, it is because "*unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ to believe on his name.*"

### **B. To those who will not believe, the Word of God is both blinding and binding.**

None are so blind as those who will not see. And none are so hardened as those who are gospel hardened. When men and women willfully despise the gospel of the grace of God, when they resolutely harden themselves to the Word preached, the very Word which they despise becomes the instrument by which they are bound over to everlasting judgment.

#### **IV. SOME WHO HEAR THE GOSPEL RECEIVE IT AS SEED SOWN BY THE WAYSIDE.**

**Mark 4:15** "And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts."

Some of you have come here tonight with no concern for your souls, glory of God, or eternity. You come to church because you have to, or because it is the respectable thing to do, or because you think it is your duty to do so. But you really have no interest in what is going on here. You try your best not to hear a word I say, or at least not to be bothered by what I say. All the time I am preaching, you try to think about something else. Unless God intervenes and does something for you, the gospel you have heard today will profit you nothing. Before you get out the door the old black crow of hell will have snatched away the seed from your hard heart.

#### **V. SOME ARE DESCRIBED AS STONY GROUND HEARERS.**

**Mark 4:16-17** "And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; (17) And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended."

There are many stony ground hearers. The preaching of the gospel makes very quick, but only temporary impressions upon them. Their religion is all superficial, just a flash in the pan, nothing else. Like burning briars in a fire, they may crackle and pop, and make a lot of noise, but they produce nothing. They appear enthusiastic. They talk a good game. They are sometimes moved to tears. They may even speak about inward conflicts, hopes, desires, struggles, and fears. But they lack one thing. They have no root. The root of the matter is not in them. Like seed sown in unprepared soil, the Word of God takes no root in them because there is no work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

- No Conviction!
- No Repentance!
- No Faith!

These stony ground hearers endure for a while; but they will not last. Their religion is like Jonah's gourd. It springs up in a night and is gone in a night. They are like cut flowers. They look pretty and smell nice for a while; but soon wither

and die. They have no root. Christ is not in them and they are not in Christ.

**A. A little trial, affliction, or temptation will be too great for the stony ground hearer to endure.**

**B. Any persecution or opposition because of the offense of the gospel will destroy them.**

## **VI. OTHERS ARE DESCRIBED IN THIS PARABLE AS THORNY GROUND HEARERS.**

**Mark 4:18-19** "And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, (19) And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

The wayside hearer has no interest at all in the things of God. He could care less who Christ is and what he did. The stony ground hearer is somewhat impressive. He makes a big splash, but does not last very long. The thorny ground hearer is something else.

The thorny ground hearer assents to the gospel, approves of it, and is moved by it. He makes a good start and goes a long way in religion. He feels much, experiences much, and may even do much that appears to be truly spiritual; but he has a basic, fundamental, underlying problem. It is a problem that may lie under the surface, hidden from every eye but God's. It may even be hidden from his own eyes. But it will eventually destroy him. The problem is worldliness. The world still holds his heart. He loves the world.

### **A. Beware of religion without Christ!**

You may think, "All is well with my soul. No one could ever feel what I feel and experience what I have experienced and yet be lost." You ought to think again! False faith is a strong delusion, a delusion by which, in this parable, **one in four** who profess faith in Christ are dragged down to hell!

1. False faith may be greatly enlightened and knowledgeable of the gospel (Heb. 6:4).
2. False faith may greatly reform the outward life. - The Pharisees!
3. False faith may speak very well of Christ. - The Jews!
4. False faith may confess personal sins like Saul.
5. False faith may humble itself in sackcloth and ashes with Ahab.
6. False faith may repent in tears with Esau and Judas.
7. False faith may diligently perform religious works with the Jews.
8. False faith may be very generous and charitable, like Ananias and Sapphira.

9. False faith may tremble under the Word with Felix.
10. False faith may experience great things in religion (Heb. 6:1-4).
11. False faith may enjoy great religious privileges with Lot's wife.
12. False faith may preach, perform miracles, and cast out devils, like those mentioned by our Lord.
13. False faith may attain high office in the church like Diotrephes.
14. False faith may walk with great preachers like Demas.
15. May even be peaceful and carnally secure like the five foolish virgins.

**B. Yet, it is written, “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15)**

Sooner or later those who love the world will choose the world. The sad fact is that though they willfully choose the world and turn from Christ, they are so thoroughly justified in their own minds that what they are doing is right that they never even realize they have done it, until they wake up in hell.

If you are one of these thorny ground hearers, the Lord Jesus plainly warns you that one of these three things will eventually destroy your soul.

1. “The Cares Of This World” - Legitimate Cares.
2. “The Deceitfulness Of Riches” - Materialism.
3. “The Lusts Of Other Things” - Fame - Acceptance - Position - Power - Sensuality - Pleasure.

## **VII. THE TRUE BELIEVER IS THAT PERSON WHO RECEIVES THE GOSPEL AS SEED SOWN IN GOOD GROUND.**

**Mark 4:20** "And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

**The good ground is a regenerate heart**, a heart prepared by God the Holy Spirit to receive the Word of grace. The fallow ground of the heart has been broken up by the deep cutting, sharp plow of the law. The hard clods have been broken by the heavy harrow of conviction, beaten to pieces by the thunderous rain of God's wrath, and at last softened by the sweet dew of heaven.

The Word of God sown in the regenerate heart, the heart prepared by the grace and power of God to receive it, brings forth fruit unto God. Some bear fruit more rapidly and more plentifully than others; but all bear fruit from God. The fruit they bear is the fruit of the Spirit.

**Galatians 5:22-23** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,

gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

**Application:** You have heard the Word of God tonight. What kind of hearer are you?

1. Wayside Hearer?
2. A Stony Ground Hearer?
3. A Thorny Ground Hearer?
4. A Good Ground Hearer?