



“Delivering the Goods” The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1-9

Getting Started . . .

Talk about a time you had a mishap with planting a garden, or planting something from seed.

For Discussion . . .

- 1) Why do you think Jesus spoke in a parable such as this one?
- 2) What does this parable tell us about Jesus' expectation of our lives?
- 3) What are some modern examples you've seen or experienced of each of these types of soil? What are some things today that cause people not to hear the word of God?
- 4) Once we've done the work of befriending someone (and sometimes even before!), opportunities will arise for us to share our faith. How are you doing at recognizing those opportunities?
- 5) When was the last time you shared your faith with someone? Describe what that was like. How else have people responded to you when you've shared your faith?
- 6) What type of soil are you during this season in your life? Is anything hindering you from hearing what God is saying to you?

Passage Summary . . .

As we prepare for the Weekend of Service (Oct. 17-18), we need to get wise as to how the ministry we render will be received. This parable is a good guide. Let me mention two soil types:

v. 4—some [seed] fell along the path. Rick Warren wrote: “There are two things true of a footpath. First, it's very hard. Second, it's narrow. Some people are like that, as well. They've got a hardening of the attitude: ‘Don't confuse me with the truth; my mind's made up!’ They won't give God a chance. They won't give God a chance to answer prayer because they won't pray. They won't give God a chance to grow spiritually because they won't trust Him.” They want to be towering oaks but won't let God do the hard, long work of developing deep roots. A hard heart is nothing more than a dinner plate for the Devil!

v. 7—Other seed fell among thorns. In v. 15 Jesus defined these thorns as “*the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth.*” John Piper said, “The greatest enemy of hunger for God is not poison but apple pie. It is not the banquet of the wicked that dulls our appetite for heaven, but the endless nibbling at the table of the world. For all the ill that Satan can do, when God describes what keeps us from the banquet table of his love, it is a piece of land, a yoke of oxen, and a spouse (Luke 14:18-20). The greatest adversary of love to God is not his enemies but his gifts. And the most deadly appetites are not for the poison of evil, but for the simple pleasures of earth. For when these replace an appetite for God himself, the idolatry is scarcely recognizable and almost incurable.”

One year our family discovered the wonders of caller ID. This nifty feature allows us to screen incoming phone calls. I can keep the phone solicitors and other undesirables (none from Windsor Road, of course) at bay. However, if you’re the one making the call, you’re thinking, “Pick up! Pick up! It’s me . . . pick up!”

That’s what Jesus is doing in the parable of the Sower. He’s saying, “Pick up!” It’s about picking up on what God is saying. It’s about listening and then doing more than just listening. It’s about putting God’s Word into play. It’s about being captured by the Gospel to the degree that it completely changes my life. Someone once said, “The only conversions that count in the kingdom are those confirmed by a life of discipleship.” Furthermore, “Churches should not be complicit in allowing people to think that an initial response unaccompanied by productive living is saving faith” (Snodgrass 2008, 176).

Pick up!

Notes:

Prayer . . .

Thank God for His helping you to hear His voice, even when we don’t seem to want to listen. Spend some time praying together as a group for people in your life that need to hear God’s word. Pray that He’d help you to hear His voice and that He would use you to help others hear His voice, too.