

Harmony of the Gospels

Part 42

“Is Your Heart Ready?”

How many of you want to go to heaven when you die?

How many of you would like to go to Heaven this afternoon?

- ⊕ **Why did only a fraction** of the people who want to go to heaven when they die, want to go right now?
- ⊕ **Because we have not really prepared our self** for that day when our life is going to be over.

Last Sunday Morning we looked at the description by Jesus of 2 men who both die, one went into hell , the other a place of comfort...

Luke 16:19-31

19 “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.

20 But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate,
21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 “Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’

25 But Abraham said, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

26 And besides all this, **between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.**’

27 “Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house,
28 for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’

29 Abraham said to him, “**They have Moses and the prophets**; let them hear them.’

30 And he said, “No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

31 But he said to him, “**If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.**’ ”

If you would for just a moment, try to imagine yourself as the rich man who finds himself at his death, there in this place that he describes as being “**Tormented in this flame**”.

- ☞ **At that place in your existence**, what would you be willing to do, or to give, to have one more chance to make decisions that would change you being in this place of torment, to the place of comfort in the presence of the Lord? What would you be willing to do?
- ☞ **The rich man begs Abraham to help him**, but Abraham cannot help him, his eternal fate has been sealed already.
- ☞ **The decision he made** while alive, either for God’s Salvation or Against His Salvation, was sealed forever at his death

The rich man tells Abraham that “**Surely if someone comes back from the dead, and tells my family that hell is real**”, that his family will believe.

- ☞ **Abraham tells him** that if they do not hear what the Lord has to say in the Bible about heaven and hell, then neither will they believe it even if someone comes back from the dead.
- ☞ **The reality is** that Jesus descended into hell during the three days after He was crucified, and He rose from the dead, to testify that Heaven and Hell are real, and that He is the only way to Heaven.

Now, this study this morning is very important, because it talks about the real issues that will determine whether or not a person’s heart is ABLE to receive Jesus or Not and be saved.

In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus talks about the fact that human hearts are being prepared everyday. They are either being:

- ☞ **Hardened.**
- ☞ **Troubled.**
- ☞ **Busied**
- ☞ **Softened.**

By our actions and reactions each day, we are preparing our hearts in one of these 4 ways that Jesus is speaking of in Matthew chapter 13.

- ☞ **The first 3 types of heart;** the **Hard Soil, the Rocky, and the Thorny Soil**, These hearts have not been properly ploughed and weeded, to be prepared to receive Jesus.
- ☞ **In the Hard Soil**, If you have given yourself over to sin over and over, then the heart becomes hardened and it is very difficult sometimes to turn from that sin to Jesus, this is the soil on the wayside.

- ☞ **In the Rocky Soil**, If you have too many hurts from the past and present that effect you deeply enough, then you will not be able to turn to Jesus and then bear fruit for Jesus in your life.
- ☞ **In the thorny Soil**, If you are too busy pursuing the things that this world has to offer, then you may not be able to receive Jesus and bear the fruit for Him that the Lord desires for your life.
- ☞ **In the Good Soil**, if your heart has been broken up, it has had the sin, the hurts, the distractions removed, so that it can receive Jesus and produce much fruit.

The reality of this Parable of the 4 soils, is that:

Only 1 out of 4 people, or about 25% of everyone who hears about Jesus, will go on to live for Him and bear fruit for Him in their life?

- ☞ **Now before you say**, “*The Lord is not fair*”, consider this fact, if it was up to Jesus, 100% of everyone who hears about Him would be saved and bear fruit.
- ☞ **So who’s fault is it** that only 1 in 4 people who hear about Jesus Christ will make it to heaven?
- ☞ **The ones** who hear.
- ☞ **It depends** upon how their heart has been prepared...

Which kind of heart is yours?

1. A Hard Heart.
2. A Troubled Heart.
3. A Busy Heart.
4. A Ready Heart.

Depending on which one of these hearts that you have, will determine whether or not you are able to receive Jesus Christ, and be saved, and go on to bear fruit for him throughout your life.

This is the topic of our study this morning in the Book of Matthew Chapter 13

- ☞ **In this amazing study by Jesus**, we learn that at the same time that the true believers in Jesus Christ wheat are growing and are becoming Jesus Church, that **another kind of seed is also growing**, “*The Tares*”, that look and sound just like the true believers, but only seem to be believers in an outward way,
- ☞ **Inwardly** they are not true believers and are not saved.
- ☞ **The New Testament** gives us **many road signs** that tell us what true believers are like and what false believers are like.

We will look at a couple of those Road signs this morning in this study.

- ☞ **Can you tell the difference** between a true and a false believer?
- ☞ **I bet** that you cannot.

- ☞ **Because** outwardly they **do and say** all the things a true believer says and does.
- ☞ **It is in the heart** that the false is seen, and this false confession of Jesus Christ is manifested in certain things that they do in the church.

[Matthew 7](#)

15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in **sheep’s clothing**, but **inwardly they are ravenous wolves**.

16 You will know them by their fruits....

What kinds of fruits do the Tares bear?

[1 Corinthians 3:3](#)

for you are still carnal. For where there are **envy, strife, and divisions** among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men

[Matthew 24:10](#)

And then many will be offended, will **betray one another**, and will **hate one another**

Whereas the true followers of Jesus Christ:

[John 13:35](#)

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you **have love for one another**.

[Romans 14:19](#)

Therefore let us **pursue the things which make for peace** and the things by which one may **edify another**

So let’s go with Jesus to the Parable of the Sower, found in Matthew chapter 13:

[MATTHEW 13:1-52](#)

1 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.

2 And **great multitudes** were gathered together to Him, so that **He got into a boat** and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

Wherever Jesus went to teach the people these “**Great crowds**” followed him, this time there were so many people that He was pressed up against the shore of the sea of Galilee.

Picture of Jesus at the Sea of Galilee

- ☞ **Jesus gets into a small boat** and floats out into the water just off shore and begins to teach:

[Matthew 13](#)

3 Then He spoke many things to them **in parables**, saying: "Behold, **a sower** went out to sow.

4 "And as he sowed, some seed fell by **the wayside**; and **the birds** came and devoured them.

5 "Some fell **on stony places**, where they **did not have much earth**; and they immediately sprang up because **they had no depth** of earth.

6 "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.

7 "And some fell **among thorns**, and the thorns sprang up and **choked them**.

8 "But others fell on **good ground** and yielded a crop: some a **hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty**.

Jesus was the most effective Bible teacher that has ever taught the Word Of God, because He taught in simplicity.

- ⊕ **The parables** or illustrations that He used were short stories that used familiar scenes and everyday objects to explain deep spiritual truths.
- ⊕ **As people heard the stories** they were compelled to really think about the meaning of the story.
- ⊕ **Jesus never asks us** to take a "Leap Of Faith" when it comes to believing in him.
- ⊕ **Jesus life, death and resurrection** are the best documented events in all of human history.
- ⊕ **Any sincere seeker of truth**, once they have examined the facts as recorded in history, will come to the logical conclusion that Jesus did raise from the dead.

Jesus begins his illustration in verse 3 by using a familiar event, the process of planting a crop.

- ⊕ **The idea behind this illustration** is that the amount crop produced depends upon the condition of the soil.
- ⊕ **As the farmer would walk** through the field he would scatter the seeds by hand from a large bag slung over his shoulders, broadcasting the seed over the ground.

Picture of the Sower:

Matthew 13

4 "And as he sowed, some seed fell by **the wayside**; and **the birds** came and devoured them.

During this time they did not use the current method of sowing the seeds in straight rows.

- ⊕ **As the farmer** threw the seed into the field, some of the seed would land upon the "**Wayside**" which were the paths or roads that went right through the middle of the fields.
- ⊕ **The paths** were well traveled, hard and compacted from the traffic that went over them.
- ⊕ **The seeds** could not penetrate the hard ground, so the birds that flew overhead would see the seeds and come down to eat them before the seed ever had a chance to put down roots into the soil.

Picture of Hard Path:

Matthew 13

5 "Some fell **on stony places**, where they **did not have much earth**; and they immediately sprang up because **they had no depth** of earth.

6 "But when the sun was up **they were scorched**, and because they had no root **they withered away**.

Other seeds would land in the rocks that had been removed from the fields and were gathered up along the sides of the fields.

- ☞ **Between the rocks** there was good soil where the seeds could take root, but because of all of **the obstacles** that the rocks created, the plant would twist and turn through the rocks, causing them to become **thin and weak**, and **easy to be pulled out**.
- ☞ **Because the plant** was so close to the rocks, as they became **heated** from the afternoon sun the heat of the rocks would cause the plants **to wither and collapse**.

Picture of Seed in Rocks:

Matthew 13

7 "And some fell **among thorns**, and the thorns sprang up and **choked them**.

Also along the edges of the field were hedges of thorns, that were there to protect the field from predators.

- ☞ **As some of the seed fell into these hedges** of Thorns they would find soil but because of the thorns, they would not be able to get adequate light, moisture and nutrients, and they would be choked by the thorns.

Matthew 13

8 "But others fell on **good ground** and yielded a crop: some a **hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty**.

The final type of soil described by Jesus is where the soil has been deeply cultivated, the rocks have been removed, the thorns are not present, the ground is broken up and ready to receive the seed.

- ☞ **The results are** that the seeds take deep root, they go down deep into the nutrients and moisture of good soil where they produce tremendous results.

A farmer would be very happy if his seed yielded **10 times** the crop as the amount of seed he put into the ground.

Here Jesus shows that if the soil was just right you could get up to 100 times the return from the seed that was planted.

Matthew 13

9 "He who **has ears** to hear, let him hear!"

There is a big difference between hearing words and understanding the meaning behind them.

- ☞ **Sometimes** we call this "**Selective Hearing**".
- ☞ **Ladies**, this is the kind of hearing that your husbands have when you talk to them...
- ☞ **They only hear** the words they want to hear.

When my oldest son Robert was about 12 or 13, very often I could tell that he wasn't listening to me when I was instructing him in something he needed to do.

I would say to him "**Rob You are not listening to me...**"

He would reply, "**Dad, I heard you but I don't know what you said...**"

- ☞ **This was a characteristic** of many of the people who would hear the words of Jesus they hear the words but were not really interested in the deeper meaning behind them.

This is the reason that Jesus used Parables to illustrate what He was teaching.

- ☞ **The person** who was a sincere seeker of God, would dig for the deeper meaning of what Jesus was saying.
- ☞ **The person who was not really interested** in spiritual things, would listen to Jesus and walk away scratching their heads, saying, "*I don't get it*".

Jeremiah 29:13

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart

Matthew 13:13

Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

If you really want to know God, you have to dig deep, search him out, look for Him with all of your heart...

But, we must also have our hearts properly prepared to know the Lord, and a continuous action of keeping our hearts prepared, if we want to continue to bear fruit for Jesus...

This is the purpose of the Parable of the Sower.

Matthew 13

12 "For **whoever has**, to him **more will be given**, and he will have abundance; but whoever **does not have**, even what he has **will be taken away** from him.

The idea here is that every human being has been give a certain amount of “light”, a knowledge that God exists.

- ⊖ **The Lord created us**, “*Hardwired*” us with a knowledge that God exists.
- ⊖ **Then it is up to us** to exercise our free will and search for Him our self.
- ⊖ **The Lord holds us accountable** with what we do with this first light, this hardwired knowledge of Him.
- ⊖ **Then He holds us accountable** with further light that we gain from Him, as to what we do with that knowledge.

Romans 1:20-21

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood **by the things that are made**, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that **they are without excuse**,

21 because, although **they knew God**, they did not glorify Him as God,

Luke 12:48

But he **who did not know**, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone **to whom much is given, from him much will be required**; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

James 3:1

My brethren, let not many of you become **teachers**, knowing that **we shall receive a stricter judgment**.

So, this morning you and I are being given more light than we had when we came in here. **We are accountable to the Lord, with what we do with that Light...**

Matthew 13

18 "Therefore **hear the parable of the sower**:

The first type of soil is: “**The Wayside**”.

- ⊖ **The key** to understanding what this first soil is all about is to notice that the “*Evil one*” comes on this path and snatches away what was sown in their heart by the Word of God.

What made this heart hard? What kinds of things harden a human heart to the Word of God?

- ⊖ **Sin**.
- ⊖ **Either your own sin**, or someone else’s sin against you can harden your heart.
- ⊖ **If we continue** to go against our conscience, do things we know are wrong, **over and over**, it has the same effect on our heart, as that of trampling on a path over and over.
- ⊖ **It becomes** hardened.

- ☞ **Or if people continually sin against you**, hurt you, use you and betray you, your heart becomes trampled and hard.

Then when the Word of God is sown in this heart, it cannot take root and bear fruit.

There is only one thing that can break up the hardness of the human heart...The Lord working through His Word in your heart...

- ☞ **Only the Lord** can change your heart from a heart of stone, to a heart of flesh.

Pictures of Heart of Stone to a Heart of Flesh:

Ezekiel 11:19

Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh,

Jeremiah 4:3

3 The Lord is saying to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, "Plow up the hardness of your hearts; otherwise the good seed will be wasted among the thorns. (TLB)

How is the heart softened?

- ☞ **First** an Acknowledgment that the heart has become hardened.
- ☞ **Second**, as an act of your will, you make the decision to **turn from the sin to the Lord** and hear Him, and let Him soften your heart through His Word, it is just that simple.
- ☞ **If your heart has been hardened** by someone else's sin, you must confess that to the Lord, willingly forgive, and then ask the Lord to soften your heart.

Prayer for hardened heart...

Matthew 13

5 "Some fell **on stony places**, where they **did not have much earth**; and they immediately sprang up because **they had no depth** of earth.

6 "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.

Next, The person receiving the word on the stony places.

- ☞ **In order** to have a heart that is the good soil, it will be necessary **to remove the rocks** that have been scattered in the field.
- ☞ **The Rocks Represent** Trials, Troubles, disappointments and failures in your life.
- ☞ **If they are not dealt with** properly, they can **hinder the growth** of the Word of God in your life and prevent you from bearing fruit.
- ☞ **To properly understand** that trials are for growth, not for punishment, will prevent rocks from hindering your growth.

- ⊕ **To correctly place hurts** and failures **in the Lord** and not on yourself, will prevent rocks from hindering your growth.
- ⊕ **To realize in trials**, failures and disappointments, that all you really need is Jesus, that is the purpose of those trials, to bring you to an end of self sufficiency.

“You don’t realize that Jesus is all that we need until He is all that you have...”

Matthew 13

22 "Now he who received **seed among the thorns** is he who hears the word, and **the cares** of this world and **the deceitfulness of riches** **choke the word**, and he becomes unfruitful.

How many of you this morning are worried and concerned over the things that are happening in your life?

How many of you are so busy in your life right now, that it is hard to even make it to church on Sunday or Wednesday?

- ⊕ **These are** “*The Thorns*” that choke the word of God in your life.
- ⊕ **We can spend so much time** trying to get things that we don’t really need, that we just don’t have time for the Lord or spiritual things.
- ⊕ **This is the lie of the enemy**, that if we get some of these things, they will make us happier.
- ⊕ **Those of us** who have tried that, will testify that pursuing them is more fun than getting them, because when you get these things that you think that you need, they are a tremendous disappointment.
- ⊕ **They are fun for awhile**, but very quickly lose their shine and excitement.
- ⊕ **More importantly**, they will choke off the Word of God in your life and prevent you from bearing fruit to the Lord.

Matthew 6:32-34

32 "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 "But seek **first the kingdom of God and His righteousness**, and all these things shall be added to you.

34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

The promise by Jesus is that if we will seek Him first in our lives, then all of the other things that we need will be provided by him.

Matthew 13

23 "But he who received **seed on the good ground** is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

The last person that Jesus describes, is the one **who has a heart that is ready to receive from the Lord**, when they hear Him speak.

In Acts chapter 8, there is a man by the name of Simon the Sorcerer.

- ⊕ **Simon has seen Peter** pray for people and they are able to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- ⊕ **Simon wants** this power for himself.
- ⊕ **Listen** to what Peter tells him:

Acts 8:20-23

20 But Peter said to him, “Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!

21 You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for **your heart is not right** in the sight of God.

22 **Repent** therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.

23 For I see that you are poisoned by **bitterness** and bound by **iniquity.**”

Bitterness and iniquity are the **Hard soil heart**, and the **Rocky soil heart**.

- ⊕ **What was** the answer for Simon?
- ⊕ **“Repent”**, turn from the sin, and receive forgiveness.
- ⊕ **Hurts in his life** had made **his rocky heart bitter**, but by a confession of this bitterness, he could be made well.

The Heart that has the Good soil, is one that has had the Hardness, Rockiness, and Thorniness, removed.

- ⊕ **These things were there**, but they have been removed.
- ⊕ **It happened as an act of the will** of the person with these conditions.
- ⊕ **Once a confession is made** of these conditions and a willingness to turn away from them, then the Lord can come and take them away and heal the person.

This heart with the Good soil will go on to bear 100 fold for the Lord...

Every person here this morning has

- ⊕ **A hardened heart** because of **your own past sin** or the past sins of other against you.
- ⊕ **Rocky soil** of never properly handling trials, disappointments and failures.
- ⊕ **Thorny Soil** of too much to do, too much pursuing of things we don't really need, too many worries and concerns...

If you pray to the Lord this morning and make a decision to remove these things from your life and heart, you can plough up your heart and it will be ready to receive all of the things the Lord has for you and you will go on and bear much fruit