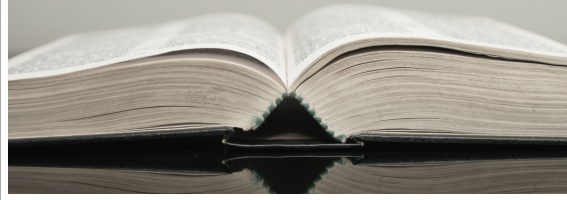


"And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."
Luke 9:23 ESV



Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.
Jacksonville, FL 32220

Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Study / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

www.mariettacoc.com



Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23

The message Jesus is delivering in the parable of the sower is the need for His followers to get out and spread God's message. A question we must ask ourselves is "are we spreading the gospel message as well as we should?" There needs to be a level of excitement when it comes to spreading God's word. Or do we make up excuses or rationalize ways to not do so to make ourselves feel better? There is no excuse for not spreading the gospel. But the emphasis of the parable Jesus is giving here is on those who receive the word, not the one who is teaching it. The different soils represent the different hearts and how each received the message when taught. The seed is representative of God's word, and the sower is the teacher.

Four types of soils (hearts) are described in this parable; the path, the rocky ground, among thorns, and the good soil. Before proceeding any further in the article, I would recommend reading verses 18-23 to see Jesus' explanation of how each heart received the word when it was delivered to them. What applications can be made from this parable by Jesus?

We must have an open heart. The message of this parable from Jesus is for all who hear God's word. From the non-Christian to the new convert, from the person who "grew up" in the church to the person who is hearing the gospel for the first time, to the person who has been a Christian for many years. ...

No matter where we are in our walk with Christ, we must have an open heart that is willing to receive the word of God. In the parable, what was holding back the seed from being able to grow? It wasn't the sower (teacher), and it wasn't the seed (message). It was the soil (heart) the seed was sown on. Only when the seed was sown on the good soil was it able to flourish.

What prevents a person from having a receptive heart? Some may have a difficult time understanding the message, not because God's word is too difficult to understand, or because the message has been hidden from them, but they have preconceived ideas that prevent them from receiving the gospel or seeing the value of it (2 Corinthians 4.3-4). Not viewing God's word as inspired or as absolute truth. They argue, "I'm a good person why do I need the gospel." "All religions are equal." "Baptism isn't necessary for salvation." These are all examples of ideas that keep people from receiving the gospel message.

Others may not have receptive hearts because they are simply not ready to follow Jesus. A life of discipleship and being a Christian requires full commitment. It is not a trial membership we test out for a period of time to see if we like it or not, although some may treat it as such. Being a disciple of Christ requires sacrifice, and many are not willing to give up certain things (job, friends, lifestyle, etc.) to be fully committed to Jesus (Luke 9.23).

It is not up to us to make disciples. This may seem counterintuitive to what has been said up to this point. We have it in our minds that we want to save as many people as possible and as much as we may want to at times, the Christian has no power in and of themselves when it comes to the making other people disciples. The farmer in the parable threw out the seed on the different soils. If he knew anything about farming, he would have known the seed wasn't going to grow on the "bad" soils, but he still threw it there. Our job as the sower (teacher) is to get the seed (God's word) out to as many people as we can. It is not up to us to discriminate or pick and choose who we think is worthy or who will be receptive to the message or not. The farmer throwing the seed on the different soils gave it an opportunity to produce wherever the seed landed.

Ezekiel was given the responsibility by God to be a watchman for the house of Israel (Ezekiel 33.1-9). As a watchman his responsibility was to warn the people of the coming danger. If the people failed to heed the warning it was on them, but if Ezekiel failed in his responsibility, the blood of the people would be on his hand. As Christians we play this role of the watchman today. Our job is to warn the people, and deliver the gospel message to them, it is their responsibility to respond or not.

Jesus told the apostles in Matthew 28.19 to "make disciples of all nations" but it is ultimately God and His word that convicts people and makes them disciples. Romans 1.16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (ESV). Hebrews 4.12, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (ESV). 1 Corinthians 3.6-7, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth" (ESV). Our job as the sower is to get the message of the gospel out there, throwing the seed wherever we can, and then let God and His word take care of the rest.

Written by; Derek Steen