

THE FOUR SOILS | MATT 13:3-9;18-23

I. THE WORD OF GOD IS POWERFUL, IF YOU WANT IT TO BE.

A. Our Parable: The Four Soils or The Parable of the Sower.

1. This is THE quintessential “parable”. Its one that was endured more than any of the other Parables Jesus taught. ***It's the only parable that appears in all 3 synoptic Gospels.***
2. **The Context:** Jesus is preaching to a crowd so large he has to stand in a boat to preach. The Parable in every case seems to be both about the people he has preached to, and the crowd in front of him. He is pointing out the four types of listeners in attendance.

B. Our Theme today: **The Word of God isn't about information, its about transformation.**

1. We don't read the Bible to know the Bible, we read the Bible to **know God.**
2. We too often put an emphasis on those who present the word to be impactful. Jesus **instead,** puts the **emphasis on the hearers of the Word to be receptive.**
3. We assume that because the speaker has the message, that the speaker controls the hearer. But Jesus says the parts are reversed; **The hearer is in control of the message.**
4. ***“A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't.”***— Charles H. Spurgeon
5. It is not enough to know God's Word. ***We have to be transformed by it.***

C. This morning's question: **Is God's word something we know? Or is it something we are transformed by?**

II. A GLANCE AT OUR PARABLE | MATTHEW 13:3

1. **The Sower sows generously and everywhere.** Sowers or farmers of that day were very skilled in casting seed so as not to waste it. A sower of that day wouldn't have been so careless as to cast on the path, the gravel, and the weeds. **God sows despite the quality of the ground.**
2. **The devil is a threat to the unreceptive, but we are the threat once its received.**
3. **These soils can change.** That is both good news and a warning. 1. Good news for those with weeds, Gravel or hardness in their hearts. 2. A warning to those with good soil. You must be ever vigilant to maintain it in God's grace.

III. HOW DON'T WE EXPERIENCE THE WORD OF GOD: THE SOILS

- A. Defining Experience: ***The Word bearing fruit in us and transforming how we live our lives.***
- B. **First Soil: *By doing nothing with it***
1. They hear the message, but it cannot penetrate their hearts or minds. Their ground is hard and needs to be softened and broken up before it can receive any of the sower's seeds.
 2. They do not "Understand it" Meaning they don't **Value it, treasure it, or nurture it.**
 3. Much like the Pharisee's of the time, their hearts were hard toward everything Jesus said, therefore they never received it, and therefore never experienced the fruit of the seed.
- C. **Second Soil: *By Making God's Word fit our ideas and lifestyles.***
1. These ones receive the Word with great joy, initially. They like it because it ***"scratches an itch"*** for them.
 2. ***For them its about how they feel.*** The Word makes them "feel better". So roll with it until they "feel" differently. Life does what it does and they move on when it no longer suits them.
 3. These ones keep the seeds they like and ***try to make the seeds they don't like fit around the ideas,*** or rocks their soil is cluttered with. The refuse to fully commit to the seed by making room for it in their soil by getting rid of the rocks.
 - a. ***"For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,"*** 2 Timothy 4:3
 - b. ***"The Bible is very easy to understand. But we Christians are a bunch of scheming swindlers. We pretend to be unable to understand it because we know very well that the minute we understand, we are obliged to act accordingly."***— Søren Kierkegaard
- D. **Third Soil: *By allowing negative emotions compete with the Word of God.***
1. Roots of un-forgiveness, fear, bitterness, the need for revenge. Comparison to each other, never feeling like we are enough, **ALL of these** are weeds that crowd our heart and choke the word from growing in us.
 2. Just ONE of these can choke the seed of God's word and truth from growing within us.

E. **The Fourth Soil: Being transformed by the Word of God.**

1. Our Question: **Is God's word something we know? Or is it something we are transformed by?**

a. Our answer here is simple: **We tend to the soil of our hearts and make our hearts (soil) able to receive the seed of His word.**

b. Jesus tells us how to tend to our hearts in His sermons:

(1) **Root out** behaviors that keep us from Him.

(a) ***"If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out."* Matt 5** His point is, do whatever you have to do to keep yourself from the things that crowd out your soil.

(b) ***"But in humility consider others more significant than yourselves."* Phil 2.** Humility isn't thinking less of yourself but thinking about yourself less. Humility clears out the rocks of pride from your garden.

(c) ***Blessed are those poor in spirit* Matt 5,** Those who admit their Spiritual and intellectual poverty create soil in their hearts that He is able to plant His truth in.

(2) **Water** your soil.

(a) ***Prayer and Fasting.*** Time spent drawing near to God and hearing His thoughts and opinions about you. This creates soil in your heart able to receive His word.

(b) ***Giving.*** Giving our money keeps the weeds of greed, pride, and our own effort to grow in our hearts. ***Generosity is the greatest weed prevention you can put in your heart.***

(c) ***Thankfulness.*** Gratefulness is worship. The acknowledgment of all that God has done gives us courage to continue to believe for all the things God said he'd do.

2. ***"I did not make it, no it is making me, It's the very truth of God not the invention of any man."*** – Rich Mullins.

IV. **GOD'S WORD ISNT ABOUT INFORMATION, BUT TRANSFORMATION.**

A. Don't just know His Word, be transformed by it.