



### Matthew 13:1-9

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. 3 Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 9 He who has ears, let him hear."

### Matthew 13:18-23

18 "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. 22 The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. 23 But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

## The parable

### ▲ The Sower scattered the seed

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13:18 "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom

- ▼ The seed represents the message about the kingdom of God — this is the gospel message in its entirety as taught by Jesus and his apostles.
- ▼ The sower is the messenger who brings the gospel — first Jesus himself (Matthew 13:37) — then those who preach/teach under Jesus' authority (Romans 10:14-15).
- ▼ By divine design (Genesis 8:22), a seed is intended to produce a harvest. The gospel, like a seed, is intended to produce fruit (life-change) in the life of the hearer.
- ▼ 1 Peter 1:23 declares, "You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God."

### ▲ The seed was scattered onto soil

13:4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path — 5 Some fell on rocky places, — 7 Other seed fell among thorns — 8 Still other seed fell on good soil,

- ▼ The soil is the human hearer of the gospel message (19/20/22/23). As soil varies in its fertility, so does the heart/spirit/mind of the hearer of the gospel.
- ▼ Note that the seed in this parable is all the same — and note that the sower is not at fault — the difference in the harvest is determined by the quality of the soil.

### ▲ Some seeds were snatched

13:4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

13:19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

- ▼ Here is the first example of crop failure — produced by a lack of understanding the message, a lack of understanding taken advantage of by "the evil one."
- ▼ "The evil one" is Satan (Matthew 5:37; 6:13; 13:19; 13:38; John 17:15; Ephesians 6:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 John 2:13-14; 3:12; 5:18) — he is enemy to the process.
- ▼ Spiritual understanding is critical and is enabled by the work of the Holy Spirit, who is the agent of salvation (consider 1 Corinthians 2:12-13-14).
- ▼ 1 Timothy 2:3-4 says, "God our Savior...wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."
- ▼ Acts 16:14 says of Lydia at Philippi, "One of those listening was a woman named Lydia... The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message."

### ▲ Some seeds were scorched

13:5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

13:20 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.

- ▼ The second example of crop failure is even more troubling — this seed actually produced briefly before the small seedling was scorched and its life withered.
- ▼ This early spiritual death was the result of not getting rooted deeply enough to withstand trouble and persecution which comes "because of the word."
- ▼ Remember that Jesus clearly warned about counting the cost before committing to being his disciple.
- ▼ And the Apostle Paul warned the brand new Galatian believers in Acts 14:22, "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."

### ▲ Some seeds were strangled

13:7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

13:22 The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.

- ▼ The third case of crop failure also involved an apparent birth, but the young plant was choked by worldly distractions and deceptions, making it unfruitful.
- ▼ The culprits here were "the worries of life" and the "deceitfulness of wealth" — all focused on the worldly rather than on seeking first the kingdom of God.
- ▼ Both the scorched and the strangled seeds illustrate this startling truth as it pertains to our salvation: *To start is not necessarily to finish.*

### ▲ Some seeds survived and succeeded supernaturally

13:8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

13:23 But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

- ▼ The spiritual success story is saved for the conclusion of the parable — the soil was good — the hearer of the word received it and understood it.
- ▼ As a result of the right receiving of the implanted seed, a harvest of salvation is born — fruit is abundant — and a life begins to thrive in the blessing of God.

## The priorities

► **Prize the seed** ► **Plant the seed** ► **Protect the seed** ► **Possess the produce** ► **Praise the Sower**