

## The Heart of Man Mk. 4:1-9

*Thesis: To show the different attitudes that men have concerning the word of God.*

### Introduction:

- A. This parable is also told in Mt. 13 and Lk. 8.
- B. The main purpose of this parable is to show us the different conditions of our heart when it comes to being receptive to the word of God.
- C. We have to be careful that we do not read too much into the parables of Jesus, especially when He tells us the meaning of them (4:13-20).
  - 1. For example, Jesus is not telling us that only 25% of men will be receptive to the word of God (3 types of soil are not receptive, only 1 is receptive).
  - 2. If we were to draw this analogy out, we would easily understand that well over 95% of the seed would fall onto the good soil (no sower would intentionally cast his seed onto the rocky or thorny ground).
- D. Notice an overview of the parable of the Sower (Mk. 4:1-9).

### I. "Some seed fell by the wayside" (4:4).

#### A. The wayside is a terrible place to plant seed.

- 1. The wayside is also known as the pathway.
- 2. The ground on the pathway would be very hard because people would constantly walk on it.
- 3. Because the seed could not penetrate the soil, the birds would come and devour it.

#### B. Jesus tells us exactly what He means (4:15).

- 1. Mk. 4:15 - *And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.*
- 2. Because their heart is hard, they do not respond to the gospel even though they hear it.

#### C. Notice some examples of this type of soil.

- 1. Ex. 8 – Pharaoh “hardened his heart” and would not allow the children of Israel to depart from Egypt.
- 2. Rom. 2:5 (Those that harden their heart will be eternally punished) - *But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,*
- 3. The Jewish leaders hardened their hearts and even persecuted the early church (we read of it throughout the book of Acts).
- 4. Many of us have known those who have hardened their hearts to the gospel.

- a. Most of us have talked to certain friends or family members who blatantly refused to hear the gospel.
- b. When such happens, Satan comes and takes away that word so that they cannot obey it.

## II. "Some fell on stony ground" (4:5-6).

### A. The stony ground is an area that is not good for planting seed.

1. All fields have places, especially around the edges and roadways, which are filled with rocky areas.
2. These areas are unsuitable for planting because, as the plant grows, it has no place for its roots to bury into the ground.
3. When the sun becomes hot, they wither.

### B. Again, Jesus tells us exactly what He means (4:16-17).

1. **Mk. 4:16-17** - These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; {17} and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.
2. These are Christians who are great workers when they first believe.
3. They want to be at every event and be an involved member of the body of Christ.
4. However, their enthusiasm fades.
  - a. As trouble comes their way because of the word of God, they fade away.
  - b. They do not survive because they have no depth in the word of God.

### C. Notice some examples of this type of soil.

1. The early church was under immense persecution.
  - a. **Acts 4** – Peter and John were arrested.
  - b. **Acts 5** – The apostles were arrested and beaten.
  - c. **Acts 7** – Stephen was killed.
  - d. **Acts 8** – Saul persecutes the church so that they separate.
  - e. **Acts 12** – Herod arrest James and Peter (he beheads James).
  - f. Undoubtedly, when some of these persecutions arose, there were those who lost their faith.
2. We have all known people who have turned from God when bad things began to happen to them.
  - a. Perhaps it was when they lost a job.
  - b. Perhaps it was when a child or close loved one passed away.
  - c. It may have even happened when their friends made fun of their religion.
3. **II Pet. 2:20-21** (Peter warns against falling away) - For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. {21} For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of

righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

### III. "Some fell among thorns" (4:7).

A. As with the other two types of soil, the thorny ground is not ideal for planting seed.

1. While the seed will grow, it will soon be choked by the thorns that are also growing.
2. Just as the other two types of ground, the thorny ground will yield no crop.

B. Once again, Jesus tells us exactly what He means by the soil with thorns (4:18-19).

1. **Mk. 4:18-19** - Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, {19} and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.
2. Notice that there are three things that will draw these away from the word.
  - a. "The cares of this world"
    - 1) They care more about the world than Christ.
    - 2) They want the things that the world says will make you happy.
    - 3) **I Jn. 2:15-16** - Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} For all that is in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world.
  - b. "The deceitfulness of riches"
    - 1) These are trapped by the false security that riches provide.
    - 2) The Bible warns us constantly about "the deceitfulness of riches."
      - a) **Mt. 6:19** - Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;
      - b) **I Tim. 6:6-10** - Now godliness with contentment is great gain. {7} For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. {8} And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. {9} But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. {10} For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

- c. “The desires for other things”
  - 1) This is a very general condemnation from Jesus.
  - 2) If we put anything in front of Him, our faith has been choked out by the things of this world.

C. Notice some examples of this type of soil.

- 1. Acts 8:18-23 - And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, {19} saying, “Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” {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.”
- 2. II Tim. 4:10 - for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica.
- 3. We have all known of those who sacrificed their faith because of the things of this world.
  - a. Their family may have pulled them away from Christ.
  - b. Their desire to make money has caused them to lose their faith.
  - c. Their love for sports (playing and watching) or recreational activities has caused them to forsake the assembly of our Lord.

IV. There was only one kind of soil that was receptive to the seed (4:8).

A. The seed that “fell on good ground...yielded a crop.”

- 1. The entire purpose of a sower sowing his seed was to produce a crop.
- 2. He would naturally spread as much seed in this type of soil as possible.

B. When one’s heart is right, he will “hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit” (4:20).

- 1. The way we can know that we are faithful to God is to produce fruit.
- 2. When we understand that we are living in sin we will change our lives.
- 3. When we see that God wants us to do something we will do it without objection or excuse.
- 4. Gal. 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, {23} gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Conclusion:

- A. The heart of man will determine what kind of soil he has; which will in turn determine his eternal destination.
- B. In order to please God, we must hear His “word, accept it, and bear fruit.”