

The Parable of the Sower Matthew 13:1-23

by R.A. Torrey

R.A. Torrey's sermon on the Parable of the Sower explores the different responses to the Word of God and the importance of being good soil for spiritual growth.

Scripture: Matthew 13:1

Topics: "The Word of God", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

R.A. Torrey expounds on 'The Parable of the Sower' from Matthew 13:1-23, illustrating the different responses to God's Word as represented by various types of soil. He emphasizes the importance of being receptive to the Word, warning against distractions and superficial acceptance that can hinder spiritual growth. Torrey highlights the role of the sower and the necessity of deep roots in faith to withstand trials and tribulations. He encourages believers to cultivate their hearts to be good soil, capable of producing a fruitful harvest. The sermon concludes with a call to seek understanding and clarity in God's teachings, reminding listeners of the power of the Word to transform lives.

Transcript

(Compare Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15)

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

In what sort of a church was this parable uttered? Is there much justification in the Bible for open-air meetings? If we consider all open-air preachers cranks, whom do we condemn? What celebrated sermons were preached in the open air? Why did our Lord go to the seaside to teach? What thoughts should guide us in selecting a place to teach or preach? When did He speak? (Luke 8:4.) Was He in the habit of speaking only when a great multitude assembled? (John 3, 4.) Any other instances where multitudes came to hear Him? (Matt. 5:1; 15:32; Luke 8:45.)

Why did the great multitudes come? What did our Lord always see in a great multitude? (Matt. 9:36-38; Mark 2:2; 4:34.) From which sermon did the greater good come, that to great multitudes or that to one woman? (John 4:39.) What method of teaching did our Lord employ on this occasion? Had He ever employed it before (v. 10)? What was His purpose in using it now? (vv. 10-13; Mark 4:11, 12.) Whose fault was it that some of the people had these things spoken unto them in parables and not clearly?

If we want the truth clearly and not in parables, what must we do? (John 7:17.) What does God send to those who do not love and will not heed the truth? (2 Thess. 2:10-12.) From what sort of a pulpit did our Lord speak this parable? (Mark 4:1.) What picture does the parable present to us? Of what is the seed the symbol? (Luke 8:11.) Why is the Word of God likened unto a seed? (Col. 1:5, 6.) Is there any comfort in the thought that the Word is a seed? Who is the sower? Who can be sowers?

What promise is there in the Bible to all who earnestly sow it? (Ps. 126:6.) Where will the fullness of the harvest be seen? What did the sower do before he went out to sow? Why is it that so many would-be sowers get so scant a crop? How many kinds of soil are mentioned in the parable? What do these different soils represent? Who are represented by the wayside hearers (v. 19)? (Luke 8:12.) What becomes of the seed sown in such hearts? Who is the chief agent in taking away the seed sown in these hearts?

What is his purpose? (Luke 8:12.) What is the one thing, above all others, from which Satan wishes to keep men? What power is there in the truth if planted, believed and rooted in the heart? (Luke 8:12.) How do people get to be wayside hearers? Can a wayside hearer become a good soil hearer? Why did our Lord say that "the devil cometh and taketh away the Word"? Why did He not say the seed lay there and rotted, or the impression faded away? Is it an important part of Satan's work to take away the seed sown in human hearts?

How soon does Satan come? (Mark 4:15.) What became of the seed in the second case? Who are represented by the rocky ground hearers (v. 20)? (Luke 8:12.) Is there any response to the truth in this case? Upon what does it take hold? What is it that is rocky and impenetrable? Do these hearers give any promise? (Mark 4:16.) Is it always a good sign when any one responds very readily to the Word and receives it at once with gladness? How does a man who sees the real bearing of the truth and its solemn demands oftentimes receive it at first?

Which is better, a swift work or a deep work? What became of the seed in this case? What is symbolized by that (v. 21)? What was the cause of their falling away? If the seed were well rooted what would be the effect of the sun? If the Word is well rooted in a man's heart what will be the result of "temptation, tribulation and persecution because of the Word"? Have we any N. T. illustrations of rocky ground hearers? (Gal. 4:15; 5:7; 6:12.) What became of the seed in the third case?

Whom does this represent? Has there been any real attention to the Word here? Has it taken any hold on the will? Are they capable of bearing fruit? What is the trouble in their case? What is represented by the thorns? (Mark 4:18, 19; Luke 8:14.) What had been done with the thorns? What ought to have been done? What is the practical lesson? Have we any instance in the N. T. of one in whom the Word was in danger of being choked by "the cares of this world"? (Luke 10:41, 42; 14:18, 20.)

When may we know that the cares of this world are choking the Word? How can we keep from being anxious about anything? (Phil. 4:6, R. V.) What very solemn warning has our Lord given us in regard to the cares of this world? (Luke 21:34, 35.) What was the second thing that choked the Word? Are those who have riches the only ones in peril from them? (1 Tim. 6:9, R. V.) What is the third thing that choked the Word? What becomes of the seed? (Mark 4:7.) What will become of the unfruitful? (John 15:6; Matt. 3:10.)

Is this a danger in our churches today? Have we any N. T. illustrations? (2 Tim. 4:10; Rev. 3:14, 17, 18.) What became of the seed in the fourth case? Who are represented here? (5:23; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15.) In

how many instances did the seed come to nothing? In how many did it bear fruit? Did it pay then to sow it? Have we any of the fourth class today? If we are tempted to be discouraged because of the first, second and third, with what thought can we encourage our hearts? What promise have we to comfort us? (Is. 55:11.)

Are we to conclude that three-fourths of the seed came to nothing? At what stage in the growth of seed did the failure occur? What was the proof of the good soil? What is the test of genuine acceptance of the Word? (Jas. 2:18; John 15:5.) Have we any N. T. illustrations of the seed sown on good soil? (Acts 17:11, 12; Col. 1:6; 1 Thess. 1:2, 3.) Is the good soil all equally productive (v. 8)? What is the practical lesson of the parable (vv. 9, 24, 25)? (Luke 8:18.) Did the disciples understand the parable?

What did they do? (Luke 8:9.) When we don't understand any of Christ's teaching, what is the wisest thing for us to do? What prayer of the Bible ought every student of the Bible to have ever upon his lips? (Ps. 119:18.) Why didn't the others ask to have the parable explained? If they had, would our Lord have granted the request? (James 1:5.) What privilege did He say His true disciples had? Is that much of a privilege? How did they get this privilege, as something earned or a gift? Why had it been given to them and not to the rest (v. 12)?

CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. The Word

(1). Its power: to grow, 5-8; to bear fruit, 23; to save men (Luke 8:12).

(2). Its importance: in heedless hearts, 4, 19; in shallow hearts, 5, 20; in preoccupied hearts, 7, 22.

2. Hearers of the Word

(1). Foolish: hear but do not heed, 4, 19; heed but do not hold, 5, 20; hold but do not hoe out thorns, or hold with only half the heart, 7, 22.

(2). Wise: hear, understand, heed, accept, hold fast, pray for light, 9.

3. The Devil

His existence and reality, appreciation of the power of the Word, hatred of the Word, alertness, activity, malignity, power, 4, 19.

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