

Puzzling Parables

Sower, Seed, and Soil

Part 3 – September 11, 2016

Welcome to where we're opening our heart to the only One who can open our eyes.



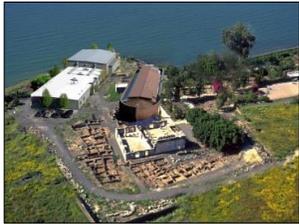
We're following Jesus' from baptism to resurrection and ascension.

And, having just covered those last two, we now return (a couple years in Jesus' timeline), to just after He chose His twelve, cured a Centurion's servant, raised a widow's son, healed a leper, and came to His home office in Capernaum, a parking lot size village, crushed by crowds in the tens of thousands. (Mk 3:8; Jn 6:23-24)



And here, He delivers a man who was blind, but now sees; deaf, but now hears; mute, but now speaks; and demon-possessed, but is now free.¹

The *astonished* crowd asks the religious rulers if He meets the Messianic requirements as the Son of David. (Mat 12:23)



And, though they know He does, (Is 29:18; 35:4-6) they say His powers are *not messianic*, but *satanic*. (Mat 12:24; Mk 3:22)



Jesus publically calls 'em out and calls 'em evil sons of toxic snakes, full of darkness and demons; adulterous, blasphemous, enemies of God's Spirit and condemned to hell. (Mt 12:30-45; Mk 3:23-29; Lk 11:34-35)

His family thinks He's "out of His mind" and tries to take Him by force, before He gets Himself killed; but they can't get near Him. (Mk 3:21; Luke 8:19)



The snakes ask Him to brunch. He goes. Doesn't wash (after healing the diseased). Shares their food. And says they're too focused on the *outside* of the dish, and serves up *Six Woes*. (Luke 11:37-54)



Again **That same day** Jesus went out of the house began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. **Then he told them many things in parables and in his teaching said:** "Listen! – Matthew 13:1-3; Mark 4:13 NIV

"The Sower and the Soils" video is available at: RedChairables.com

¹ "... a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, [*kophos: deaf; mute*] and Jesus healed him" (Mat 12:22)

He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times." Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. ... Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? The farmer sows the word. Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept [retain] it, and [by persevering] produce a crop — thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown." - Mark 4: 2-10; 13-20 NIV



What is the seed? God's Word spread in the world.

So, what are we? The soil that receives the Word.

Makes sense, since Adam was *formed from the ground*, and we are *dust*. (Gen 2:7; 3:19)



Farmers would cast seed on the ground, and scratch it in to even it out. **Jesus places His listeners into four categories** by simply and brilliantly portraying them as soils. And in so doing, **simultaneously reveals Satan's three weapons against our reception.**

"Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown."

Paths are trampled on and become hardened, which prevents the Seed from even sinking in. **They either don't comprehend, or just mistrust, the idea of grace and goodness freely given.**



- 1. Our soil might be impenetrable.**

Closed mind. Calloused heart. Noncompliant will. Concrete path. **The result of our past, our pride, and even misguided self-protection.**

When the Lord calls us to open up in a deeper way to His Word and our growth, Satan will peck away at our fear and pride.

“Don’t you fear what God will demand that you change?”

“What will others think if you admit your faults and flaws?”

“Aren’t you angry with God for all the hurt you’ve suffered?”

Peck. Peck. Peck.

See it for what it is: the tactic used on a hardened heart.

Whatever the cause of a compacted heart, our enemy doesn’t care; he’ll take advantage of whatever opportunity you afford him.

Don’t fall into the enemy’s hands ... *or beak.* Peck. Peck. Peck.

Trust God. Humble yourself. And, forgive *whatever* needs forgiveness.



[If you want to be the good soil, you must] ... humbly accept the word planted in you ... – James 1:21b NIV

Open your mind. Soften your heart. And, surrender your will.

Or, you’ll be robbed of all that could’ve been.

“Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time.”



It was common for shallow soil to conceal the limestone just beneath the surface.

This dirt held the heat, causing the seed to sprout quicker, water to evaporate quicker, and the plants to wither quicker.



These are those who emotionally, impulsively, welcome God’s Word but with short-lived enthusiasm.

2. Our soil might be shallow.

Truth sinks in a *little*; but, it never really takes root.

That’s why those first to *germinate* are generally first to *terminate*!

Know how to tell how deep you’re roots reach? *Turn up the heat!*

Our roots are revealed by how we respond when the heat is on.

“When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.”

If faith is based on feelings, not rooted in His Word, then, just as the same heat that germinates, terminates the plant, so too, the troubles that drove us to God can drive us from God.

When desire conflicts with faith, which do you ditch?

We must train our roots to reach for Truth under all conditions.

Cultivate your faith. Increase your depth. Extend your roots.

Or, you’ll die on the vine right when you’re meant to blossom.



“Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.”

They don’t *lose* their faith; it’s just squeezed and choked till it’s *unfruitful*. So, **beware of the busyness of the briar patch.**

3. Our soil might be smothered.

Daily pressures, preoccupations, and problems will always tempt us to supplant what’s truly important with what’s loudly urgent.

Wealth isn’t bad, just distracting. As are families, hobbies, and sports.

They *bless* ... *unless* they crowd out and take over.



Remember making a land-line call and getting the dreaded: *“We’re sorry, all circuits are busy. Please try your call again, later.”* Aren’t you glad *that’s* a thing of the past?!

God still gets that recording. *From you* ... *if* He doesn’t have a personally assigned high priority private line.

Do you need to pull some briars from your life?

Do you need to soften your heart or sink your roots in deeper?

Beware the peck, peck, peck that keeps His Word from sinking in.

And, prepare for the scorching heat of hard times by digging in.

And, declare His rule over all the competing thorns that are creeping in.