

The First Sunday in Lent ~ Sunday, March 5, 2017

“Stories of the Saviour ~ The Parable of the Sower”

Matthew 13:1-23

“With many such parables he spoke the word to them—he did not speak to them except in parables.” (Mark 4:33)

Parable = *parabolay* =

It is a teaching that casts additional _____ by using an arresting or familiar _____. It is a story or illustration with a deeper, hidden _____.

Jesus often spoke in parables—He seemed to delight in using _____, everyday things to teach spiritual _____.

They force us to reflect on our everyday _____ and actions; to step outside of our traditional _____ and ways of being; and call us to a deeper level of _____ and commitment.

There can be no doubt that the sower in the story is _____. He was sowing seed for _____ as He travelled the countryside preaching the good news of the _____.

“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God.” (Luke 8:11)

God’s Word has great _____, but we must first provide the right kind of _____ for it to grow. The four soils in this parable represent different conditions of the human _____ in which God’s Word is planted. And Jesus is very clear: It’s the _____ of the soil that matters—neither the sower nor the seed can change the soil.

“You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not...That is why I use these parables, For they look, but they don’t really see. They hear, but they don’t really listen or understand.” (Matthew 13:13)

According to Jesus, there’s a difference between listening and _____.

Hearing is more _____ than listening—it’s _____ on the person and what they’re saying, instead of thinking about something else. It’s seeking to _____ their words and not thinking about what we’re going to say next. It’s _____ into our heart and mind the message that’s being shared and allowing that message to have it’s full _____.

4 DIFFERENT SOILS/ HEART ATTITUDES

#1: Seed along the path ~ a _____ heart ~ God’s Word is snatched away.

Someone who listens to the Word of God, but doesn’t _____ it—it goes in one ear and out the other. This person doesn’t consider themselves to be hard-hearted—they’re just not that _____ in God’s Word.

They may be listening to God’s Word—it may enter their ears, but it doesn’t penetrate their _____. They’re closed to new insights and unreceptive to God’s _____.

Just as the birds flew away with the seed as soon as it landed on the path, the Enemy stands ready to _____ the Word away from us as soon as we hear it.

Are there any hardened hearts here this morning?

#2: Seed on the rock ~ a _____ heart ~ God’s Word is heard but forgotten.

Someone who hears the Word, but then _____ it when they face the _____ of everyday living—when difficulty comes or the novelty wears off.

Jesus is warning to us of the danger of basing our faith solely on _____. Our faith also needs to connect with our _____. Because our emotions can _____ us.

Our faith needs to be based on more than just feeling—it needs to be based on the truths written in this book—it needs to be rooted in God’s _____.

Does this describe anyone here today? Did you have an emotional response to God’s Word some time ago, but have fallen away?

#3: Seed among thorns ~ a _____ heart ~ God’s Word is planted but choked out.

Someone who hears the Word, _____ it, and _____ it.

There is a genuine desire to be a deeply _____, maturing believer; however, somewhere along the way, this growth process is _____.

They are attracted to God’s Word, but never seem to get around to doing anything about it—and so they get _____ by other things and it gets choked out.

This type of hearer has a _____ heart—they receive the truth of God, but they welcome other _____ as well.

Are you attracted to God's Word or distracted today?

#4: Seed in good soil ~ a _____ heart ~ God's Word produces a harvest.

This person doesn't just listen, but _____ the Word of God, _____ it and _____ it to their life.

They are _____—one marks of _____.

“This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciple.” (John 15:8)

What is the fruit in your life?

Sometimes we mistakenly think that this parable is about four _____ people.

The question isn't which of these four people are you, but which soil best describes the _____ of your heart toward God's Word right now?

The only difference between the last soil and the first three is a _____ heart, there will be _____.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

3 WAYS THAT WE CAN BE A MORE FRUITFUL FOLLOWER

#1. Develop a _____ for God's Word.

“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.” (Psalm 119:103)

Do you have a voracious appetite for, and desire to, read and hear God's Word?

They understand that one's enjoyment of a meal is directly related to the intensity of their _____, and not necessarily the quality of the food.

We won't hunger for the Word of God, if we're already _____ of something else.

How hungry are you for God's Word?

#2. Weed out whatever _____ with God's Word.

“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.” (Matthew 13:22)

• _____
There are two kinds of trouble in life: Troubles you _____ do anything about (like the weather); and troubles you can _____ something about. If you can't do anything about your trouble, then why _____? And if you can do something, why worry? _____ something!

“Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.” (Matthew 6:31-34)

Scripture promises us that God is our _____ and will take care of us. And so, if you think about it, worry is an _____ to God

Jesus didn't say there was anything wrong with wealth; instead He mentioned “the _____ of wealth.” Wealth will _____ to us—it can give us a false sense of _____ and worth. It can deceive us into thinking that we control our own _____ and that we don't need God

What weeds are growing in your heart?

#3. Cultivate a lifestyle of _____ God's Word in others.

Only Jesus _____, however, we can plant seeds in the lives of others.

“I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plant, but God made you grow. It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the centre of this process but God, who makes things grow.” (2 Corinthians 3:6-7)

Another fruit of the Christian life is another _____.

Are you a sower? Are you actively planting God's Word in the lives of others?

How we respond to God and His word in our lives depends on the state of our _____. Like the seed in the parable of the sower, God's word can only take root in our lives if it falls into the right kind of _____.

What barriers have hindered spiritual growth in your life? If we did a spiritual CAT scan or MRI on you today, what would the test reveal?