

MARK 4:1-20 4 SOILS PART 1

REVIEW: MK. 3:31-35

INTRO: Read 4:1-20

- The context of the parable. Matt. 13:1 says the same day as ? (3:34, 35).
- Who is Jesus' family? Those who do the will of the Father.
- This is the first full parable of Jesus, this approach He chose now to use addressing the great crowds that attended His ministry.
- As Mark says later in this chapter, vs. 35, "without a parable He did not speak to them."
- Notice also the great multitude had gathered, what did Jesus see when He looked across the sea of faces. (20, 32)
- Hearts like soils.
- He gazed upon this vast multitude of souls and saw these different hearts, and longed to see fruit among them yet the reality He knew well, that few there be who find and walk the narrow way.
- Jesus knew what was in the heart of each. He knew all men and knew what was in them. (Jn. 2:24, 25)
- This is the parable of the "Soils" not much said about the sower.
- The Sower is Christ or the servant of Christ sowing the word of God.
- The seed is the word of God.
- The soil is the heart of man.
- In this parable there are 4 different kinds of soils/hearts which Jesus describes. These 4 respond differently to the word.
- These 4 soils or hearts and especially the first 3 which were unfruitful hearts, which lay beyond the faces of the men and women Jesus looked upon.
- Today as we listen and contemplate the word of Christ in this parable, Jesus looks at us and see the soil of our hearts, again and again this parable is lived out in our lives.
- How am I hearing? What am I yielding?
- And as this parable makes clear, as soon as the word is spoken the enemy will come and rob us and Christ of a harvest.
- It may be a hard heart, or the trial and testing of the word, or the distractions and competition that come and challenge God's rightful place in our hearts, but be sure the thief will come...
- This is why our hearts must be softened, tilled deep by the Spirit of God and His providence.
- Our minds must be ready, alert to hear His word and our wills engaged to do of His will and obedient to His direction.
- We must be careful of idle, dead hearing, of the over familiarization of the word.

- Fruit bearing is not just having knowledge of the word, there must be a receiving deep into our hearts, an acceptance a responsibility and application with practice of that which we hear. (Jn. 15:
- The urgency of His message is seen by His introduction saying "Listen, Behold." Both attention getting commands. (VS3)

THE PARABLE:

- **Parable:** Para-bello. Alongside & to place or lay. So to place or lay alongside something else, for the purpose of comparison, to illustrate.
- Luke adds that when Jesus finished the parable He "CRIED" if anyone has ears to hear.... Thus showing urgency.
- This parable does not give us an specific doctrine of scripture, but rather how to receive the scripture and bear fruit.
- The parable teaches us the purpose and the process of the preaching of Jesus. All that He speaks is the word of God and His kingdom, and then what is happening when this word is spoken.
- The battle within the heart and for the heart of man. There is a war for man soul and the word that can save that soul.
- Jesus says in vs. 13 that if we do not understand this parable, the purpose, the process, and opposition, then how will we understand any of the parables.
- Each parable was spoken that the hearers would hear and bear fruit also warning the hearers that opposition against God's word would come.
- The parable is information on receiving the Christian life. How to grow and bear fruit for the glory of God and the blessing of man.
- It is an outline/blue print on the method of Christ's preaching , its goal and its opposition. B.I.B.L.E.

THE PURPOSE OF USING PARABLES: VS. 10-12,

- A parable is like a painting with a message beyond the obvious.
- Those who have been wakened by grace will not only see the parable, but see past it, through its surface and go deeper and into its real intended meaning.
- While those who have grown dull, and closed their eyes who are not truly hungry for truth and God, will simply look at the picture and not go any deeper. (Stained Glass Window)
- They are satisfied with the story, the shallowness and sensation of surfacy things.
- They will not gaze and go beyond the obvious and pursue the true meaning.
- Let's look at **Mt. 13:10-15** a warning of judgment for heart hardness., **See also, Mt. 25:29**

THE WAYSIDE HEART: VS. 3, 15

- This soil is trampled down and made hard from the traffic of life and the world running through it.
- The soil was hard because it had too much traffic trampled over it. It has recklessly opened itself to all kinds of lesser influences.
 - Prov. 4:23; Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it *spring* the issues of life.
- The world packs down this heart with its insensitivity to the word, its self-willed and worldly pursuits, busying itself in lesser things with a careless attitude.. No concerns about God and His word.
- This soil has the world running through it. There is nowhere for the word to germinate, it is trampled and the soil hardened.
- So Satan comes “immediately” and plucks up the word.
- Matt. 13:19 adds this heart does not understand, thus it is thoughtless, uninterested.
- Luke likens Satan’s’ work as birds devouring the word and also adds the seed is trampled and packed underfoot. (8:5)
- Hard hearts must be softened by the plow of God breaking up the hard resistant heart.
 - Jer. 4:3; For thus says the LORD: “Break up your untilled ground, And do not sow among thorns.

THE SHALLOW HEART: VS. 5, 6, 16, 17

- The shallow emotional hearer. Always meaning well, but no follow through.
- This is lived out as trials come to test the word, or trials come in life and because they have no depth or root they wither and dry up.
- This soil is soft and loose on top so they seem to receive the word with joy but just under the surface is the layer of rock.
- Shallow and undisciplined in life and heart, the word has not, cannot take deep root for underneath the heart is hardened.
- They did not believe the Christian life would come with trials, so when trials and testings come they stumble and fall away.
- It is a surfacey heart and life.
- Luke adds in VS 6 that the seed sowed in the shallow heart is neglected, it was not watered.
- This heart also does not understand the heavenly process. It does not understand the cost that must be paid to become a genuine, Christ like believer.
- To him the trials have caused the emotional feelings to evaporate so there is no weathering the storm for him.