

Title: How to Receive the Word

Text: Matthew 13:1-13; 18-23

I would like you to turn in your Bibles, if you would please, to the 13th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew chapter 13. I will be reading verses 1 thru 23. I invite you to follow along with me.... Matthew chapter 13 beginning at Vs 1. This is the parable of the sower. And the title of the message is: HOW TO RECEIVE THE WORD....

Matthew chapter 13. This is one of those sections of Matthew where Jesus is teaching about the kingdom of heaven. About its growth in the present age. And about the future that is soon to come to pass..

(Read Matthew 13:1-13; 18-23)

Let us take just a moment for a word of Prayer.....

In Matthew chapter 13, the Lord Jesus taught a series of Parables in which he taught about the kingdom of heaven and its growth in this present age and how it will conclude. In the parable that we have before us, we have the sower who went forth to sow. But, I would like you to see this in connection with the parables of this chapter.

The parables are called the parables of the kingdom. Jesus said in Vs 11: "that these were mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." They deal with the growth of the kingdom in this present age.

We have studied the Sermon on the mount. (Matthew 5-7). And if you will remember those principles we learned from the sermon on the mount about the kingdom...the future kingdom that will be established on earth, but they also refer to us today. Because the kingdom of God is more than the literal one thousand ~~year~~ reign of Christ.

Now, I want to make this point very clear to you once again. I do not want any misunderstanding.....The kingdom of God is referring to the one thousand year reign of Christ on the earth. But it refers to more than that. The kingdom of God is far broader than the thousand year reign of

Christ upon this earth. It will be that. Don't miss understand me. Jsus Christ will return in power and great glory and stand upon the Mt. of Dives in a bodily, visible form. He will set up a one thousand year reign upon this year. He will rule from the throne of David in the city of Jersulem. That is the Word of God. And that is still future.

But, the kingdom of God, according to Jesus as He taught Nicodemus, is entered by the new birth. The moment I receive Christ into my life, I am born of the spirit of God into the kingdom. I am a citizen of the kingdom. And that is very, very important to understand.

And these ^{parables} ~~principles~~ in Matthew referring to the kingdom, while they are spoken basical to Jewish people, while they in the broad sense refer to a future day, they also apply to us today. ~~They have no~~. Because the moment we receive Jesus as our personal Lord and Saviour, at that moment we enter the kingdom of God.

On one occassion Jesus taught the people this: He said, "the kingdom of God is within you." Now, literally translated he said: "the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." He wasn't referring to "them." He was referring to "himself." That the kingdom was in the person of the "king."

~~And that is true, also.....~~

^{Now} So, when I come to receive Christ I enter a new realm under a new king in a new kingdom. The kingdom of God.

^{So} Now, in Matthew 13, Jesus teaches the growth of that kingdom, now.... in this present age. He also has parables in this sereis that teach about the final conclusion of the kingdom in this age. ~~But~~ But it is the growth of the kingdom in this age that we are concerned with in this parable ^{The Parable of The Sower}

Now, there are two ways to look at this parable of the sower who went forth to sow... ^{you can apply it either to believers or non-believers. I want to apply this parable to both - But mainly to Believers -}

¹ You can except the fact that the sower is the same sower that is in the second parable, And I would like you to notice that carefully, Matthew 13 beginning at verse 24 is the parable of the wheat and the tares.

~~Now, this is the... the parable of the wheat and the tares~~

~~and~~, notice that the interpretation which Jesus gives to this parable down in Vs 37, He says that "he ~~that~~ sows the good seed is the Son of Man."...Jesus Christ....

In the parable of the wheat and tares the sower there, ^{is} the Son of Man, Jesus Christ.

Now, when Jesus gave the first parable, he did not say who the sower was... ^{not} I personally do not think that is the main emphases of the parable. But, if we accept the fact that the sower is Jesus, then you ^{can apply} are likely to ~~come out with a completely different interpretation of the parable then~~ ^{this parable, to believe} you might think.

Now, the other interpretation is: that the sower refers to anyone who is broadcasting the Word. And the soils represents the hearts of non-christians, unbelieving people who are receiving the Word ~~and seed~~

In other words, the parables ^{are} either talking about HOW TO GET INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD...OR...IT IS TALKING ABOUT ~~WHAT~~ WHAT THE SON OF MAN GIVES TO THE CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD TO SPREAD.

Now, this is important. There are really 8 parables in Matthew 13. 7 of them are in a series. The eighth one deals with the disciples' responsibility to the parables that they have now heard. You will find that parable about the householder in Vs 52. That is the final parable. But, there are 7 basic parables....Four of them are given to the general multitude. Three of them, the last three, are given to the disciples. You will find this in Vs 35 and 36....

Now, what about this parable? In this parable I believe it is possible to accept both interpretations. And whether you fall into the category of a believer or a non-believer there is some ^{thing} here for you. If you are a non-believer and you are reading this parable of the sower who went forth to sow. You would accept it like this:

The sower represents christians.....The seed represents the Word of the kingdom. That needs no interpretation. It is clearly defined by Jesus in Vs 19.....It is the word of the kingdom..... ^{That is the seed} ~~The seed is the word~~....

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Now, in Mark chapter 4 vs 14, which is Mark's account of this parable, it is simply the WORD. The seed is called "THE WORD."

And in Luke 8 verse 11, a parallel account again, it is called the word of God.

So, the word of the kingdom, the word, the Word of God...THE WORD....

We are talking about "The Word." It is the seed.

Now, if you are a non-believer and looking at this parable, then the sower is representing Christians who are sowing the seed of the Word. And the four kinds of soil represent individual responses to the Word of God. And I believe it can rightly be interpreted this way....If you will notice in Matthew 13:19, the last phrases of that verse says: "This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road." The soil is definitely taught by Jesus to be people. "THIS IS THE ONE"....

^{For} However, I ~~do not~~ believe that the primary interpretation of this parable is for the ~~un~~believer. ^{But} Now, everything I say, you will notice, has a two-fold application as we look at each of these soils. But, the primary interpretation **is** to believers. And what you have here is one of the finest soul-winning themes in all of the Bible. Because the primary interpretation would have to be that the sower is the son of God. ^{(vs) 37} It is Jesus Christ. And he is sowing seeds. He is talking about the growth of the ^{Kingdom} ~~Kingdom~~. HOW DOES IT GROW IN THIS PRESENT AGE?

To us, we are the soil

The sower gives his seed, the word, to soil....And the soil produces. Some of it is fruitful. And some of it is not. Some are reaping the harvest. And some are not. Some have fruitfulness in their soul-winning experience; and some do not. And Jesus teaches the responses of these soils and gets to the heart of the problem....WHY SOME PEOPLE ARE FRUITFUL AND WHY SOME PEOPLE ARE NOT.....That is the primary teaching....THE INSTRUMENT OF THE WORD OF GOD TO BELIEVERS BY JESUS CHRIST THAT WE MAY SPREAD IT THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE WORDD.....And we are the soil....How will we react to what Jesus Christ has given us.....The word of reconciliation has been committed to us...The message of the Gospel is ours to give.....HOW WILL WE RESPOND TO THAT CHALLENGE? THAT IS THE PRIMARY INTERPRETATION.....

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Now, let's take the first ~~soil~~ soil. The first kind of soil mentioned is called "WAY SIDE SOIL". Look at it in Vs 4: "and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and devoured them."

Now, in a parable every detail does not have to represent some particular thing...in our day or in that day. In a parable there is one ~~central~~ central truth that is being taught. That is the important thing in a parable.

But, often times the details of the parable are important. And here is a case in point. The sower went forth to sow. Because when Jesus interprets this, he uses the details and teaches us things about them.

Now, notice the interpretation down in Vs 18(Read 18-19).....

~~Here~~ we have a very clear interpretation by Jesus Christ.. You will notice that this person "hears" the Word. You will notice, also, in Vs 20 that on rocky places "he hears" the word.

You will notice in Vs. 22 on thorny soil that "he hears" the word... All of these "hear" the word.....

This ought to remaind us that just hearing doesn't produce fruitfulness.

There are christians who
Many of ~~us~~ have sat in churches and local assemblies of believers and heard the teaching of the Word of God for years. But have never done anything about it. *They* are just listening with ~~our~~ *their* ears. And so to speak...it comes in one ear and goes out the other....

The problem in the first soil is ~~that he understands it not~~....You will notice if you look down at Vs 23 that *in* the good soil the man understands the word. *But* In ~~the~~ *the* first case, he does not understand. *But* The one who bears fruit understands. *Do you see?*

That this type of christian doesn't understand what he hears

Now, this word "understands" means "to set or bring together"...Often *ant* hustle things...~~bringing them together~~....

This is not just the common word for "knowing" or "knowledge"...It is a word of understanding so that you can bring facts together. It has this idea: I hear God say something. But in my heart I oppose it, or I don't want to do anything about it. When I really understand it, I bring those two things together....My opposition to what I hear God say....I bring that together and then God produces a change....Action is produced....

So, The word means far more than just gathering facts. And this first person in the way side soil doesn't understand. He can't bring it together. Either because of a failure in his own life, a lack of wanting to, or because he didn't get the message in the first place. He doesn't understand.

And this is the kind of person who is easy game for Satan, according to Jesus. Because he will come and immediately snatch away that which was sown.

Now wayside soil, if we were to demonstrate up here I believe the best explanation would be if we had a rock slab. And I would pour some loose dirt on top of that slab. And then I would pour some seeds on the dirt. You would say, "Pastor, you are absolutely crazy. The seed willn't grow. There is ~~is~~ solid rock underneath that little bit of dirt."

And you would be right. And that is wayside soil. The sower that is going along throwing his seed. He just sees the loose dirt. And for all he knows it is really good soil. But under neath there is hard rock. It is hard. And the seed just sits in the loose soil. It doesn't take root because there is no depth to the soil. And the birds of the air come and quickly devouures the seed. And the Bible says that is just like an individual who althrough he hears the Word, perhaps for many years, yet, if he does not understand it, he does not bring his life into comparison with that which he hears, if he does not line up with it, then the devil will take it away and he will forget it.

Now, I believe in the case of one who is outside of Christ and his heart and life is like this rock, we have the problem of the mind. Not an understanding what God is trying to say. And there is lack of real decision. And the temptation, of course, involves deciet.

But, now, in the case of the believer. How many times we have seen, we have heard, that we should bring forth the Gospel to the world. That we shaould take the message of Christ. That we have the message of reconciliation. We hear it...and we hear it...Every Sunday of theyear we talk about out reach. We emphaise it. The great need of going out to the world with the Gospel.

But we are much like the way-side soil. Either because we don't want to, or because we don't understand that this is the one task of the believer. We don't understand. And the devil quickly takes it away from our minds....

Evangelism

And we leave with no feeling of responsibility that the great task of ~~witness~~ is out. And that my friends, is the primary interpretation of this passage.

not The sower is sowing the seed. And many of us are like wide-side soil.

(2) *ok* Let's look at the second ~~one~~ *Soil on Rocky Soil* Vs 5:.....(Read 5-6)

Now, I would demonstrate this here today. I would take a few rocks and stake them up here in the pulpit. Then I would pour dirt over these rocks. Some of it would filter down in between the rocks.

And then the sower comes along and throws the seed on to the rocky ground. And because there is a measure of soil, yet, no depth, no deepness of earth, it does take root, you see. Something comes up between the rocks. But, what happens. When the sun comes out they are scorched because there is no roots or depth what so ever. And the little plant dies...

Now, look at the meaning in Vs 20:..."And the one ~~one~~ *on* whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the ~~man~~ man who hears the word".... Notice, they all hear the word...."and immediately receives it with joy:"

This fellow's problem is in his emotional nature....He is quick to be excited about what he hears. With joy he receives the Word. He is all excited Then Vs 21 says:..."yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises"..... *Now Notice what happens*

~~I might add, here, either because of unbelievers or believers....~~
"because ~~of the word~~, immediately he falls away."

Now, ~~again~~, in the case of the ~~unbeliever~~ unbeliever, it is a definite problem of the emotions. The area of testing and temptation is his own flesh. He is trusting his emotional response. Not putting his faith ~~on~~ the word of God. There is a lack of depth. There is no depth in his life.

And many times we see the ~~fake~~ fake plants. Much like the parabel of the wheat and the tares. The tares look like wheat. And there are a lot of people who make profession. And even outwardly show an emotional response. I have seen people who have cried in responses to an invitation. But there was never any faith in the heart. And as a result they do not last.



But, again, the primary interpretation is to believers. And the truth of this parable is that many believers have a problem with their emotional nature. They hear a challenging message. They hear of a new ministry, a new opportunity, and immediately become involved. And with joy. But when trials and difficulties come, they don't last. They ~~run~~ ^{burn} out... They go to another church. They get tired. The Bible teaches so much about this. "Let us not grow weary, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

Over and over again we read: "wait on the Lord for he shall strengthen your heart." "Wait I say on the Lord." ^{So many} ~~we~~ grow weary... ^{So many} ~~we~~ lack patience. ~~They~~ may be enthusiastic for awhile. ~~They~~ are like those who jump on every good program that comes along, but never see the ~~program~~ through to a conclusion. Oh, ~~They~~ may run for several weeks, but ~~They~~ can't keep at it. ~~We~~ give up.

Remember the sower ^{- Jesus} has intrusted the Word of the ^{Gospel} kingdom, the seed, to we who are the soil. ~~To~~ give out the word of the ^{Gospel} ~~kingdom~~ in this present age. It is our responsibility. And many ^{Christians} ~~of us~~ are like this emotional person. ~~They~~ ^{just don't} does not last. ~~He gets offended easily.~~ A LACK OF DEPTH in ^{their} ~~the~~ life

(3) Let's look at the third type of soil. Vs 7....(READ)....

You know, I have never liked thorns, or weeds... ~~And so far I have been very fortunate to have three boys who have kept the weeds out of my flower beds... The time is coming, however, when I will have to do it. I am not looking forward to that day.... Weeds.... I just wish they would grow... But that wish has never happened. They still grow....~~ ^{They get in} ~~would~~

But this teaches us something about the Christian life. If we think the weeds and thorns are not going to be there we are sadly mistaken. Jesus tells us what these thorns are.... Vs 22. "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears".... again, notice he hears.... "Who hears the word"... AND NOTICE, TWO THINGS ~~represents~~ represents the thorns. "the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful."

This is the only one about which it says "he becomes unfruitful".... And I take that to mean that ~~he~~ ^{he} was fruitfull, but he became unfruitfull...

WHY?....Because of the worries of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches .

The problem here is a matter of ~~our~~ our own will and desire. The temptation and testing ground is the world itself. And everyone of us are faced with this every day of our life. Whether we admit it or not.

And I believe the thorny ground represents a life that lack devotion. Real devotion. Something can come in ^{and capt} the way of our love of Jesus Christ.

{ I John 2:15 says "love not the world, not the things in the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world." "And the world is passing away, but the one who does the will of God abides forever."

Lack of devotion....Something else captures our love. The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. [And there may have been a day when we were fruitful. We were producing. God was using us. But no longer because the things of the world have captured our interest. And riches have captured our hearts. Oh, I am not talking about the millions of dollars that you might possible think you can obtain. I am talking about the simple fact that possessions are deceitful. For the word "riches" refers to any kind of wealth. Whether possessions of goods, or money. And they are deceitful...WHY?.... Because as John says it is passing away. It is only temporary.

And this kind of person has let these temporary things come between ^{himself} ~~be~~ and his lord. He was fruitful once. But now he is unfruitful.

And if there is one over all basic reason for not ^{sharing the Gospel} ~~being involved in~~ ^{a month either to church} world wide evangelism, it is that something has taken the place of our love ~~to~~ for Jesus Christ.

That outstanding motive for all christian service in 2 Corinthians 5:14 "For the love of Christ controls us".....And if something else captures our hearts...the worries of the world, or the deceitfulness of riches, it will choke the Word and we will be unfruitful. We will be soil that produces for a while. But, the thorns and weeds began to show up....And dear friends, the time to do something about it is when they first appear...Oh, how I have learned that lesson.....

Do something about it. If the thorns are there, dig them up, get rid of them. So that your life may continue to grow and blossom and be fruitful for the glory of Christ.

It is sad when this happens in the life of a believer. WHAT IS THE CARE OF THIS WORLD? THE DECEIFULNESS OF RICHEST....

I believe the riches are explained in the fact that many believe it will bring happiness. We are deceived in believing that things count with God. When they don't. They have nothing to do with eternal value.

The "worries of the World" simple means to be anxious about this age. To be so involved in personal goals that you have no time for God. And thus the desires for things has taken over the first place in our life. We are more concerned about making money then we are about the Lord. We are more concerned about our financial security then we are about the Lord. And this whole age has literally wriped itself around us and has choked what God really wants to do in our lives. Oh, it is so hard. We can find so many reasons for not being involved.

(4) Then we come to the fourth soil. Here is the kind of soil that Jesus wants in us. Vs 8 says "And others fell on the good soil, and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

And the interpretation is found in Vs 23.. "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good ground, this is the man who hears the Word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

In other words, when God speaks to his heart, he doesn't run away from his responsibility. He cannot flee from the fact that the Great Commission is for every believer. That the task of world evangelism and local evangelism is his task, as well as that missionary on the foreign field, or that pastor in the local church. He recognizes this. And he brings his life together with this great fact. And he bears fruit. He wins people to Christ. And he grows spiritually. And the Chruch grows because he is bringing people into the body of Christ.

Now, dear friends, I don't know what all of this means to you. But, it means to me that I have one task. I am not talking about my job as Pastor. But, my responsibility as a Christian. I have one task. The Master gave it to me. AND THAT IS TO TAKE THE GOSPEL TO EVERY SINGLE PERSON. That is my task. And that is your task.

If you have not, yet, let that capture your heart, if it does nothing to you, if it never motivates you to do anything for Christ, may I suggest that there is something that has come between you and your love for Christ. For we have not on our hearts what is on the heart of Jesus. For He is the good shepherd who has a concern for the one sheep that is lost and away from the fold. WHAT KIND OF SOIL ARE YOU!

LET US CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Father, we thank you for your Word and the message it has for us. Lord, when we read about these soils we recognize how easily we fit into these categories. Father, I pray for all here today who have never received Christ as Lord and Saviour. And dear Lord, if they can see themselves in one of these soils, Oh, I pray, that you would implant it upon their hearts. That you would help them to accept the Word of God. And help them to bring their life into agreement with your Word. That we are sinners and we cannot save ourselves. That we cannot continue to listen to the word with an outward profession and no inward confession. Father, I pray, that you would help that one who has never made that greatest of all decisions in life to receive Christ, to accept him, to open the door of their life, right now, and to invite Jesus to come in.

And Father, I Pray, that those of us who are believers might recognize what is the primary interpretation of this parable. That we may see that the Son of God has entrusted the Word of the Gospel to our hands. And Father, I pray, that we might be the good ground. We might recognize what is our task. And we might share the Gospel of Christ with others.

And I ask this in the name of Jesus.....Amen.