



**Matthew 13:3–23;
Mark 4:3–25; Luke 8:5–18**

Summary of the Parable

- Jesus tells us about a sower who scatters seed, seed which falls in four different places, or in four different types of soil.
- Some fell on the wayside, some on stony ground, some among thorns, and some on good ground.

And here's what happened...

- The seed on the **wayside** was devoured by birds.
- The seed on **stony ground** sprang up immediately, but soon withered from the heat of the sun, because it had no root and thus lacked moisture.
- The seed among the **thorns** bore no crop because what came up was choked by the thorns.
- The seed on the **good ground** yielded a crop, in some cases a hundredfold, in some sixty, and in some thirty.

The Seed and the Soils?

- “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11).
- The four different soils represent four different types of hearts.
- What we have pictured, then, in this parable is the word of God being planted in different types of hearts.

Four soils...four hearts

- **Wayside:** Those who hear the word of God, but don't understand it. The devil takes away the word from their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved (Matt. 13:19; Mk. 4:15; Lk. 8:12).
- **Stony ground:** Those who receive the word with joy, but have no root. In time of temptation, persecution, tribulation, etc., they fall away (Matt. 13:20–21; Mk. 4:16–17; Lk. 8:13).

Four soils...four hearts

- **Thorns:** Those who receive the word, but never grow to maturity. The word is choked by the cares and pleasures of this world, the desires for other things, the deceitfulness of riches (Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14).
- **Good ground:** Those who hear the word of God with a noble and good heart, understand it, and keep on bearing fruit (Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15).

Lesson #1

- There can't be a harvest without sowing the seed.
 - Among friends, neighbors, family members, etc.
 - “Born again, not of corruptible **seed** but incorruptible, through the word of God...”
(1 Peter 1:23).
 - “Will your sheaves be many, will you garner any, for the gathering at the harvest home?”

Lesson #2

- We should be sad, but not surprised when even those who respond enthusiastically to the gospel fall away.
 - But we don't have to resign ourselves to this, as if it's inevitable.
 - We need to help them grow, put down roots, develop conviction (emotion only goes so far).
 - Colossians 2:6–7; 1 Thessalonians 3:1–5.

Lesson #3

- Neither should we be surprised when some Christians never come to maturity, or become unfruitful.
 - It happens when “desires for other things” (Mark 4:19) overpower the desires for spiritual things.
 - It happens when we quit choosing the “good part” (Lk. 10:42), when we stop seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt. 6:33).

Lesson #4

- Forget others for now—what about ME?
 - Do I have a “noble (honest) and good heart”? The kind of heart in which the word of God can flourish?
 - Have I prepared my heart the way Ezra did? (Ezra 7:9–10).
 - Have I rooted out the things which can choke the word? James 1:21; 1 Peter 2:1–3.
 - Do I understand that “the world is passing away and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:17)?