

WELCOME

Our Mission is to . . .

- Connect you to Jesus
- Connect you to His community for discipleship
- Connect you to your mission and purpose in life

We are not here to tell you what to wear, eat, listen to, vote for, or even believe. These are things you must determine for yourself if you want to have real faith.

Life is too short to be shallow. In fact, you can't really do life without developing a strong foundation and becoming a person of substance.

FHNew - Our mission as a church is to do everything we can to help you grow your faith. If you would like to get to know us a little better, or begin or continue your journey of faith, text **FHNew** to **53123** and we will send you a link to a few short videos about Foothills Church, or stop by the Connection booth.

FHBaptism - One important step in your faith journey is being baptized. For more information on Believer's Baptism, text **FHBaptism** to **53123** and we will send you the teaching on Believers' Baptism.

Introduction

The parables are one of the most significant ways in which we understand the Kingdom of God. The vast majority of parables begin with "*The kingdom of God is like . . .*"

Parable of the Sower - Matthew 13 (NASB)

Vs 1-9: On that day Jesus had gone out of the house and was sitting by the sea. 2 And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach.

3 And He told them many things in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow; 4 and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and they sprang up immediately, because they had no depth of soil. 6 But after the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. 8 But others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times as much. 9 The one who has ears, let him hear."

Vs 18-23: "Listen then to the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown with seed beside the road. 20 The one sown with seed on the rocky places, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he

has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he falls away. 22 And the one sown with seed among the thorns, this is the one who hears the word, and the anxiety of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 23 But the one sown with seed on the good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times as much.

What is Jesus saying in this parable?

1. Jesus compares the Word of God to a seed

- The Word is a propositional truth. We can never forget that Jesus is truth. Our goal is to know Him and follow Him -- the living, resurrected, Jesus
- It is in knowing Him -- knowing Him as the truth -- that we are set free

2. The seed is sown

- The seed must be sown -- it must be spread among soils
- Paul says in Romans 19:14-17, *“How then are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed? How are they to believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? 15 But how are they to preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things! 16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”*
- Do you remember when you first heard? When you first started to believe? The beginning of your faith?
- The seed is the Word of God, and Jesus was sent to us to proclaim that He is the Word. Therefore, if we want to follow Jesus, to know Jesus, to walk with Jesus, then we must be a part of sowing the seed, spreading the seed, which is preaching the gospel

3. It falls on different types of soil and the condition of the soil determines its fruitfulness.

This is a difficult truth: people are the soils. The condition of the soil determines whether or not the seed takes root and grows

- **The road soil (Matt. 13:19)** *“When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown with seed beside the road.*
 - When you share the seed of the gospel, you must be aware that some people will not understand it. Satan uses this opportunity to snatch it away.

- **The rocky soil (Matt. 13:20-21)**, *“The one sown with seed on the rocky places, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he falls away.”*
 - 2 key points Jesus makes about this type of soil:
 1. It is shallow -- there is no depth to it so the seed cannot grow strong roots
 2. The sun represents suffering in life **because** of the seed
- **The weedy or thorny soil (Matt. 13:22)**, *“And the one sown with seed among the thorns, this is the one who hears the word, and the anxiety of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”*
 - Notice how this is different from the road soil or the rocky soil: a person can hear the word, understand it, and start to grow in it but something chokes it out: weeds
 - Jesus says the weeds of life create anxiety. How does anxiety choke out our faith?
 - Jesus says the deceitfulness of riches are a weed that chokes out our faith. What is deceitful about wealth? Or things of this world?
- **The good soil (Matt. 13:23)**, *“But the one sown with seed on the good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times as much.”*
 - Notice that Jesus uses what the soil produces as the key marker in determining if the soil is good
 - Jesus said, *“For each tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush.”* Luke 6:44
 1. One of the greatest questions to ask yourself is: “What fruit is my life producing?”
 2. Am I becoming who I want to become? Am I growing in the direction of my best self?

Conclusion

One reason I want to grow in the right direction is because soil changes. You can turn rocky soil into good soil by removing the rocks. You can turn weedy soil into good soil by removing the weeds. You can turn road soil into good soil by tilling it and adding a tremendous amount of manure.

Removing rocks is a labor-intensive job and a very loud job. Have you ever heard a farmer running a rock picker or rock hound through his field? It will make you go deaf with all the banging.

Removing weeds today is about using Roundup -- you need to kill those things dead.

The hard soil can be the most painful. First, you need to break it up by tilling it. Then you need to replace all the nutrients by adding fertilizers, primarily manure. Nothing like being broken and then having a bunch of manure dumped into your life.

Some of the strongest proclaimers of the Gospel have come from the most difficult backgrounds, like the women who wept on the feet of Jesus. She was ridiculed. Jesus replied, “. . . *her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.*” (Luke 7:47)

Final Challenge

This is why Foothills is a church that focuses on being in community and discipleship. We work on our soil so that the gospel grows in it and produces fruit.

Discussion Questions

1. What kind of soil are you?
2. What actions differentiate between good and bad soil?
3. Are there any specific steps you can take to better your reception of the Gospel? What are they?