

# Four Soils

## Sowing Seeds, Growing Gardens—part 1

September 10, 2017



Jesus loves people far and wide. He loves the ones who are far from Him, and loves the ones who are near. He has tasked His people with reaching the lost.

One of his most well-known parables is **the parable of the soils**. It is a metaphor for some of the dynamics that go on in trying to bring lost people to Him.

Today, we just introduce the parable.

(Scroll down)

## **DAY 1: The parable of the four soils**

*Matthew 13:3 ... A farmer went out to sow his seed.*

1. As you read through Matt. 13:4-7, look for four different places the seeds landed. Underline them.

*Matthew 13:4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.*

*Matthew 13:5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.*

*Matthew 13:7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.*

*Matthew 13:8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop--a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.*

2. Next to each of the four soils, jot down what happened to the seeds in each soil:

a. The path:

b. The rocky places:

c. Thorns:

d. Good soil:

3. Have you ever tried to plant seeds for vegetables or a flower garden? If yes:

a. How would you describe the soil of your garden?

b. How did your vegetables or flowers do?

4. What have you seen go wrong with gardens?

## DAY 2: The parable of the soils: The path

1. In the parable Jesus tells us several important bits of information:

- a. The farmer is you!
- b. The seed, in this parable, is God's word.
- c. The soils represent four different kinds of lost people.
- d. The soils also represent four different kinds of responses to God's word.

2. Today, we'll look at the soil called, "**the path**." We will also read Luke's writing of this parable where he includes a few added details.

*Luke 8:5 "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along **the path**; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up."*

3. What happened to the seed on the path?

*Luke 8:12 Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.*

4. When Jesus explains the parable He identifies "the birds." Who are the birds?

*Matthew 13:18 "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along **the path**."*

5. In Matthew 13, Jesus calls the seed "the message about the kingdom."

6. What does the evil one (the devil) do with the seed?

7. The "path" represents one kind of person and their response when they hear the gospel. How would you describe their response? Check any of the following, or add your own sense of their response:

\_\_\_ "Don't call me; I'll call you."

\_\_\_ "Who me need a savior? You've joking, right?"

\_\_\_ "Huh? What are you talking about?"

\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you ever tried to reach a person who seems to be "the path?" What did you learn?

### DAY 3: Parable of the soils: The rocks

*Matthew 13:20 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. <sup>21</sup> But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.*

1. We look at the seed that landed on the rocks. What is the person's initial response to hearing the gospel? (v. 20)

2. What happens to his response after "a short time?"

3. Jesus identifies two problems that dampers that initial response of joy. Why would each of these problems affect someone who seems to respond to Jesus, initially?

a. Trouble:

b. Persecution:

4. Jesus identifies the "root" of these problems in Matt. 13:20. What is it?

5. What do you think would have helped this person?

6. Luke adds a few details Matthew did not include:

*Luke 8:6 Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture.*

7. How do the details added by Luke add to your understanding of what Jesus is teaching about the person who is like the "rock?"

8. The "rocks soil" represents one kind of person and their response when they hear the gospel. How would you describe their response? Check any of the following, or add your own sense of their response:

\_\_\_ "My friends are turning against me."

\_\_\_ "I didn't expect there would still be problems."

\_\_\_ "This Christianity thing seems so hard."

\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## DAY 4: The thorns

*Matthew 13:22 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.*

1. We look at the third kind of man and third kind of response to the gospel: the seed that landed on the thorns.
  
2. These seeds were competing with thorns (weeds) for soil, water and sun.
  
3. To what does Jesus lay the blame for this seed becoming “unfruitful?”
  
4. Jesus identifies two kinds of things that choke out God’s word. Next to each one, give some examples:
  - a. The worries of this life:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. The deceitfulness of wealth:
  
5. How have you seen the “worries of this life” choke out God’s word in your life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How have you seen “deceitfulness of wealth” choke out God’s word in your life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. The “thorns” represents one kind of person and their response when they hear the gospel. How would you describe their response? Check any of the following, or add your own sense of their response:  
 “I miss the fun I used to have.”  
 “I don’t have time for spiritual things. I’m just interested in (pick one of more) a good time, making big bucks, my career, etc.”  
 “I’m sorry I can’t be more involved in church. I’ve just got too many things going on in my life right now.”  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DAY 5: The good soil**

*Matthew 13:23 "But the one who received the seed that fell on **good soil** is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."*

1. Jesus says that the response of the fourth kind of soil is very different than the other three! What is the response of this kind of "soil?" (Person)
  
2. Not only does this person respond to the word, but this person begins to become a "crop" or "garden." What was just a patch of soil is now a beautiful "garden," or a "crop" that feeds many.
  
3. What strikes you about the good soil?
  
4. What strikes you about the differences between the first three soils and the good soil?
  
5. Here is a summary of each kind of soil:
  - a. **Hard path**: God's seed sat atop the hard path. Before it could send down roots, birds (Satan) snatched it off the path. No fruit would come.
  - b. **Rocky soil**: The person at first receives the good news with joy. But it does not root itself in the soil. It's along for the ride. When trouble or persecution come, the person walks out the door.
  - c. **Thorns**: He hears the word. But other priorities take over. The worries and cares of this life, as well as the deceitfulness of wealth chokes out the word. It will not be fruitful.
  - d. **Good soil**: He hears God's word, and puts it into action. Over time it germinates, sprout, blooms and flowers. Fruitfulness!
  
6. God has likely put all four kinds of "soils" (people) around you.
  
7. His desire is to make you a sower of seed.
  
8. One day, you may look at some of the people around you and see a "garden" of the beauty of Christ formed in the lives of people you loved, prayed for, and shared with.