

THE SOWER AND THE SEED

BIBLE TEXT : Matthew 13:1-23

LESSON 75 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Matthew 13:1-23

- ¹ The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.
- ² And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.
- ³ And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;
- ⁴ And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:
- ⁵ Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:
- ⁶ And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.
- ⁷ And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:
- ⁸ But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.
- ⁹ Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.
- ¹⁰ And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?
- ¹¹ He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.
- ¹² For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

A Boat as Pulpit

Many people gathered to listen to the words of Jesus. The things He taught were different from anything they had ever heard before; and many curious people came, as well as those who were really hungry for the truth. So many came that sometimes there was not room for them in the house. But Jesus wanted everyone to hear the words He spoke, so He went down to the seashore and sat in a boat a little way from the land in order that all could see Him and hear His words of life.

Jesus often went to the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath to preach to the people, but His sermons did not have to wait for a church setting to be proclaimed. Everywhere Jesus went He taught the people — on the hillsides, in the market place, at the seashore. He preached to large groups, to the great congregation who heard His Sermon on the Mount; or He preached to one person, as, for example, when He preached to the woman at the well of Samaria. He never let an opportunity pass to tell someone how to get to Heaven.

Daily Christian Living

Do we wait until we get to church on Sunday morning to practice our religion? Do the 'children you go to school with know that you are a Christian by the life you live during the week? We should ever be ready to speak a word for our Savior, but "better than telling is living a life ever faithful and true." A person who has the love of God shining out of his life will not be among strangers long until someone will ask him about his religion. The world quickly recognizes the true child of God. If no one notices your religion there must be something wrong with the way you live it.

The Reason for Parables

When the people had settled down to listen to Jesus He spoke to them in a parable. A parable has been defined as an earthly saying with a heavenly meaning. Jesus wanted everyone to understand the message He had to bring, but He knew some of them would not open their hearts to His truths; so He explained to His disciples, by the means of a parable, why everyone would not be saved.

Jesus spoke to the people about things in their everyday life, things they could understand. You remember the time He drew their attention to the wild lily. Their interest grew in the lily as they wondered at its perfect coloring, its beauty of design, its fine texture which Jesus told them was even greater than all the glory of King Solomon's rich robes. Jesus pointed out that the lily did not work for a living, neither did it worry about what it would eat or what it would wear. and yet how beautifully God had clothed it "If God so clothe the grass of the field . . . shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" was the lesson the Savior taught through the lily.

Planting Seeds

At this time Jesus spoke the parable of the Sower and the

even that he hath.

¹³ Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

¹⁴ And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

¹⁵ For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

¹⁶ But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

¹⁷ For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

¹⁸ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

¹⁹ When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

²⁰ But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

²¹ Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

²² He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of

Seed. No doubt many who heard Him had gone out with a bag of grain under one arm and had tossed the seed with a wide swing of the other as they planted their crops. If they were near the edge of the field undoubtedly some would be scattered on the road or among the thorns, and they had all seen the birds come to pick up what grain they could get. Jesus had a spiritual lesson to teach through this parable to all who would understand, but to many of the people it was only a story of a man planting his crop.

The Closed Heart

Later, when Jesus and His disciples were alone, they asked why He spoke in such a manner that some people would not realize the spiritual truth in the story. Jesus answered that they all could understand if they would, but some people closed their hearts to the message of salvation; and for that reason their ears were dull of understanding and their eyes were closed.

The Lord has made His plan of salvation so plain that Isaiah said of it: "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8). God wants all men to come to Him in repentance, and has sent that true Light. "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). But Jesus will not save anyone against his will. If a man hardens his heart against God the message of salvation is foolishness to him.

Revealed to Us

What a wonderful opportunity we have since Jesus came, to understand the way of salvation if we will but turn to Him. Jesus told His disciples, "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." We can all be His disciples and know those mysteries if we want to be saved.

Do we realize and appreciate how much that means? Peter tells us that the prophets have inquired and searched diligently into it, and prophesied of the grace that should come when Jesus came; and even the angels desired to look into it (**1 Peter 1:10-12** ¹⁰Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: ¹¹Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. ¹²Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into). From them it was withheld. but the mystery of godliness has been revealed in the dispensation of grace — unto us who will listen attentively to the Word of God.

The Seed from Heaven

Jesus then explained the parable of the Sower and the Seed. He Himself or His Spirit-filled ministers are scattering the heavenly seeds of the Gospel. The seed was all the same — all came from Heaven. Why did some of it bear much fruit while some of it did not bear any? It was because of the soil. Jesus explained that the soil represented the different hearers, the people who listened to the message of salvation.

Some of the seed fell by the wayside and was eaten by the birds: It never had a chance to grow. He compared that to people who consider the message of salvation as foolishness, and who never let the Word get into their heart. The enemy of their soul causes them to forget it at once.

Some of the seed had fallen on stony ground. You know that the tender roots of tiny plants cannot penetrate rocks. This seed started to grow in the little topsoil there was, but when the roots struck the rock they could get no moisture nor food, and the plants dried up. Jesus compared this planting

riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

²³ But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

with the people who listen to the Gospel message and think it wonderful. They see the happy faces of true Christians, and the harmony among the congregation of Christ, and they think they want that happiness, too. But they have not considered what it means to live for Christ. There will be times when they will have to suffer persecution for the Gospel's sake; there will be times when they will have to lean hard by faith on the promises of God. When such times come, those who think the Christian life will be easy, give up and go back into the world.

There was some seed which fell among the thorns. The seed grew, but when the plants were grown they were crowded out because of the weeds *Jesus* said those plants were like the people who are saved and serve God faithfully for a while, but later they become interested in other things and let the Spirit of God slip from their lives. They really planned to serve God, but through carelessness and neglect, and being too busy with the cares of their homes or their business, they did not have time to serve *Jesus*; so He had to go away.

Fruit

But there was also good ground. There was soil that wanted the seed, and had all the elements the seed needed to grow. Such are the hearts that are hungry for the Words of life, and who are willing to take the sunshine and the rain, the storms and the calm — everything that will make them good Christians. Such people bear fruit in the Gospel, some more and some less, according to their abilities — but all spiritual fruit. *Jesus* will not be disappointed when He comes to that kind of people looking for fruit, because it will be there — golden sheaves, not faded leaves.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What is a parable?
- 2 Why did *Jesus* speak to the people in parables?
- 3 Why did not all people understand the parables He spoke?
- 4 What did the seed represent? Was all the seed good seed?
- 5 Why didn't all the seed grow and bear fruit?
- 6 Which seed did bear fruit? What kind of people was that likened to?