

# A Sower Went Forth

Matthew 13:3-9

**FOCAL Read Responsively** Matthew 13:3-9 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 a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.** {9} **Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.**

**"Jesus spoke many things to them in parables"**

A "parable" is a story or an illustration that explains a deeper spiritual truth. Jesus **spoke many things to them** - His listeners - **in parables**. A dear friend, also a pastor, once told me that Jesus spoke in parables because He wanted to make His message understandable to His hearers. Though I deeply respected the man who told me this, I also had to disagree with him. You see, Jesus tells us why He speaks in parables. His disciples came to Him and asked Him point blank:

**CONTEXT** Matthew 13:10 ... **Why speakest thou unto them in parables?**

Jesus replied:

**CONTEXT** Matthew 13:11 ... **Because it is given**



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**unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.**

God reserves certain great Biblical truths for His own children. Just as the King's children have access into the rooms behind the Throne, and the President's children have free access into the depths of the White House, the Children of God have access to deeper spiritual truths than do the unsaved, whoever they might be. The Bible tells us that:

**1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

The **natural** or unsaved man **cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God**. It does not matter how religious or educated you are. If you are not **born again** by faith in Jesus, **born to a second, Spiritual life** by the preaching and planting of the Good Word of God, then you will not be able to understand Spiritual things. **Spiritual things are only understood through the Holy Spirit Who lives and abides in the Christian**. As it is written:

**Romans 8:9 .... if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of {Christ's}.**

The New Birth is a supernatural event that causes a professor of Christ to be **born into the Kingdom of God**. Our Lord Jesus told **Nicodemus**, a religious and very educated Rabbi, "**unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God**" (John 3:3). The

*Amplified Bible* says it this way:

**John 3:3 Jesus answered him, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that unless a person is born again (anew, from above), he cannot ever see (know, be acquainted with, and experience) the kingdom of God.**<sup>amp</sup>

You **cannot experience deeper truths of God** until you're part of His family. You only become part of His family by **believing on the Lord Jesus Christ**. Jesus knew that there were *four categories of people* who were following Him around. These same *four categories of people* are around every meeting of the Church and around every Christian. Our Lord knew that He was going to send His disciples - that's you and I - out to sow the Good Word of God.

**In His earthly ministry Jesus knew that there were four types of people who followed Him and heard the preaching of the Gospel. He knew that these same types of people would follow His Children.**

Jesus wanted to prepare His disciples, to let them know that *not ever person who heard the Word of God would receive it*. **This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations (Matthew 24:14)**, but not everyone would receive it. Just as Jesus preached the Gospel of salvation to all people, we who are His by faith **go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark**

16:15), though not every creature will hear it. There are many **"people's hearts waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes are closed"** (Matthew 13:14). We who believe should not be discouraged. Remember this parable says **"a sower went forth to sow"**. This is **"a sower"** - you who believe are all to sow, to broadcast the **"seed"**. What is the **"seed"**? We are told in another place:

**Luke 8:11** Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God.**

You who are Christ's are to **sow or plant the Good Word of God**. This doesn't just apply to the Preacher, to the Pastor, to the Evangelist, but to every believer in Christ. If you have been born again **"it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven"**. God is your Father, Christ your Savior and your Lord Who commands you **"go into all the world, and teach all nations .... teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you"**. Will all receive? No, absolutely not! Yet nonetheless go, tell, and so broadcast that **Good Word of God, the Gospel of the Kingdom**. Some will be changed and others will not. **"But as many as received Jesus, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name"**.

### **1. Can Everyone Be Reached?**

**FOCAL** Matthew 13:3-9 ... **Behold, a sower went forth to sow;**

Can everyone be reached? No, they can't. **But everyone**

**can be told**. Consider the sentence, **"a sower went forth to sow"**.

Jesus didn't say that **"a preacher went forth to sow"**, nor does it say **"an evangelist went forth to sow"**. It says **"a sower"**. A sower is someone - a farmer - who broadcasts or casts seed on the soil.

In the ancient world - particularly in the area of Judea - farms were not walled off. Jesus used the properties of the field - symbolizing the world - to describe the different types of people who would be given the Word of God. Of the four types of "fields" or "people" described only one - **the good soil** - benefited by the preaching of the Word.

Dear Believer, you are not commanded to save anyone, but you are commanded to **sow**. Jesus said:

**Mark 4:14** **The sower soweth the Word.**

If you're concerned about the direction that America is taking these days then you're not alone. I share your concern. I was pleased to hear that California overwhelmingly approved a law called *Proposition 8* that purposely defines *marriage* as between **one man and one woman**. As soon as this law passed homosexual activists began marching and rioting. **Pastor Rick Warren**, an outspoken opponent of homosexual marriage, was mocked on network television, and protesters formed outside of **Saddleback Church**. Remember what Jesus said?

**CONTEXT** Matthew 13:11 ... **Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.**

It is **given unto God's people to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven**. We know why it is wrong to openly endorse *homosexual marriage*. We do not stand against this because we hate anyone. But we also know that such a lifestyle is destructive. It kills its host. The couple engaged in sexual sin turn away from God's best for them and turn to aberrations that harm them as well as others.

### **The sower soweth the Word.**

When **Nicodemus** came to Jesus by night the Lord **sowed the Word**. He told Nicodemus:

**John 3:11 .... We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.**

We who are believers *know* the joy of receiving the Word of God. We who are believers *once lived our lives* much as those who are without Christ around us lived their lives. We do not speak against sin because we are *self righteous*.

We do not hate the homosexual or the adulterer, we do not despise the drunkard or the drug addict. **But we speak what we know**. We are like the young man who, being blind from birth, was asked by the Pharisees **"is this Man Jesus a sinner or not?" (John 9:24)**. The

young man wisely answered:

**John 9:25 ... .... one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.**

The **good Word of God** was preached to me just as it was preached to you. I can give you a *theological explanation* as to what happened on the day I was saved. Yet I can also tell you *I do not understand all of it*. I know this, just as every believer who has ever lived knows this: **"I once was blind, but now I see"**.

### **"The sower soweth the Word"**

It takes no great skill to sow the Word of God. Just as a farmer takes a handful of seed and scatters it, we who are believers take a handful of God's Word and scatter it.

To sow is to cast to the wind, trusting the seed will find good soil. To sow the Word of God is to cast to the Spirit of God, trusting that God will do His part in planting that seed. **The Sower does not make the seed, but faithfully Sows the Seed.**

**1 Corinthians 4:2 ... it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.**

A **steward** is to carefully supervise that which he has been given. **You who are Christians are stewards of the Word of God**. We cannot change our society apart from sowing the Word of God. The Bible tells us that God's Israel was first given God's Word. But Israel

turned from sowing God's Word. They became entrapped in traditions and humanism and liberalism, and their worldview became colored by - not the Word of God but the word of man. The Lord said of His Israel:

**Matthew 15:7-9** Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, {8} **This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. {9} But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.** (quoted from Isaiah 29:13)

Israel turned from sowing the Word of God. Thus Jesus said to them:

**Matthew 21:43** ... **The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.**

God took the Good Word, the Seed, and chose other Sowers. He came to the Gentiles, the Church of Jesus Christ, and passed that Seed on to us.

We are to be diligent in carry the Word of God from this place. We are to preach the Word, sow the Word, scatter it where ever we go. God never condemns Egypt for failing to heed His Word. The Lord sad through Isaiah:

**Isaiah 30:1-3** **Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: {2} That walk to go down into**

**Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! {3} Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.**

The strength of God's people is the Word of God. The power of Christ's Church is in the many Sowers that,

**Luke 8:15** ... **on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.**

Keep doing the right thing. Keep on sowing the Word. Sow the Word to your families. Sow the Word to your friends. Sow the Word in the marketplace, and in the workplace. Sow the Word on the Internet, and Sow it in the hospitals. If America is going to be lost, it will be lost because God's people either *sowed that which was not God's Word*, or else *in apathy did not sow the Word*. In either case America's failure will be the fault of the Sower!

## **2. What Stops People From Being Reached?**

It is not the Christian's job to plow the field. It is the Christian's job to sow.

If you're saved by faith in Christ then you are a Sower. If you are a Sower you have several *soil types* that will not benefit by sowing. In the ancient world fields were not fenced off. Though the farmer prepared his field he did

so by using oxen or mules. Though the farmer did his best to clear the field there were certain things - rocky outcrops or pathways - that kept sown seed from growing.

**FOCAL Matthew 13:4** **And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:**

Some Seed are sown, but they **fall by the wayside**. Around and through many ancient fields there were *footpaths*, places where the general public walked. We read in **Luke 6:1** (and following) that **Jesus and His disciples went through the corn fields, and plucked ears of corn to eat them**. This was a common practice in the ancient world. God wanted no one to go hungry, so it was permissible to walk down footpaths near cornfields and pluck ears of corn for immediate eating. **The Seed of the Sower fell on these footpaths**. Jesus explains this parable:

**CONTEXT Matthew 13:19** **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.**

The **wayside hearers** are those who have perhaps come to Church looking for an answer. Perhaps they are family or friends that have heard you speak about Jesus. But when they **understand it not**, Jesus says, **the Wicked One catcheth away that which was sown in his heart**. In another place we read:

**PARALLEL Mark 4:15** **And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.**

The Devil - Satan - is alive and well, and working on people near you. The Seed Sown:

**John 14:6 ... Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

And the Devil counters, "really? **Hath God really said that? How do we know that Jesus said He was the Only Way? That's terrible prejudiced of Him, isn't it?**" or some such nonsense. The devil comes and, with the Word preached, plucks that Word from the Wayside Heart, making the sowing of no effect. The devil has many ministers who twist and turn the Word of God, using it for his own evil intent. Every preacher, teacher, and servant of God has had to encounter Satan's nullification of the sowing. The Apostle said that this is

**2 Corinthians 11:14-15 ... no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. {15} Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.**

The devil's day will come. In the meantime, **Sower go forth sowing the Word**. Trust God for the results.

Jesus went on to say:

**FOCAL Matthew 13:5** ... Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

When we sow the Word of God sometime it will land on stony places. These are areas where there are large stone covered with earth, but the earth is not very deep. Jesus said:

**CONTEXT Matthew 13:20-21** 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 endureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

Oh, there are many like this clustered about the local Churches. They hear the Gospel message. They hear that:

**Romans 3:23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

and,

**Romans 5:12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

They realize that they're lost and undone. They hear that:

**Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: {9} Not of works, lest any man should boast.

and halfway give themselves to God. "I'll try this Jesus. I'll not forsake everything as He said. I'll come to Him and give Him the parts of my life that I don't want. These hearers will not do as Jesus decreed, saying:

**Luke 14:26-27** If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. {27} And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Like Nicodemus the stony hearer comes to Jesus by night. They do not surrender all of their life to Jesus, but keep stone just below the surface.

They do not **repent** - turn away from sin and toward the Savior - though Jesus Christ Himself preached repentance:

**Matthew 4:17** From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

These are those who *use the Word of God and the Church of Christ to feed their bellies, but will not surrender their souls to Jesus. Like the crowds that followed Jesus, they will make Him a King while He*

feeds their bellies (John 6:15). Like Judas Iscariot they will follow Jesus while they are financially blessed. But let the trials come, let

**CONTEXT** Matthew 13:21 ... tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

There is no staying power. Dear friends,

a Christian is a Sower of the Word. If you will only Sow the Word until it is popular then you may be stony ground. Those who reject the Seed when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of that Word is not a Sower, but is an impostor!

Jesus put it this way in another place, saying that they

**Mark 4:17 ... have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.**

The local Church that backs away from God's Word - the Seed - because it is unpopular is not a Church but a clubhouse. The professed Christian who is ashamed of Christ's Word - the Seed - is no Christian but is stony ground who yet needs to be saved. Then we see the third ground mentioned:

**FOCAL** Matthew 13:7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

What is the thorns. Again Jesus tells us:

**CONTEXT** Matthew 13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

There are those hearers who are thorny ground. When God cursed Adam He told him:

**Genesis 3:17-18 ... Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the {forbidden} tree, ... cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; {18} Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;**

**Thorns** are the things of this world, prickly and sharp. They look good, just as a rose looks good, but when you pick it it tears at the flesh. The **thorny ground** is the person who is consumed by the things of this life. He is like the farmer who, when given great blessing from God, said:

**Luke 12:18 ... This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.**

To him the Lord said:

**Luke 12:20-21 ... Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be,**

**which thou hast provided?** {21} So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul? (Matthew 16:26). Yet there are many who, hearing the Word of God, are **thorny ground**.

The thorny ground hears the Word week after week, but are not profited by it, for they **love their lives, but lose their eternal life**. They will not repent and turn to Jesus.

### 3. What Is God Saying To My Heart?

What is God saying to your heart? He is asking you "What ground are you?" If you are **good ground**, then you should be bringing forth fruit.

**FOCAL** Matthew 13:8 ... But **other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.**

The **good ground brought forth fruit**. Jesus described this as:

**CONTEXT** Matthew 13:23 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 a hundredfold some sixty, some thirty.**

The **good ground** is the person who **receives the seed, the Word of God**. Sowers do not make the seed, nor do Christians make the Word of God. We take what we're given and sow it. We are faithful in sowing that Word.

The Bible tells us:

**Galatians 6:7-9 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. {8} For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. {9} And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.**

"In due season we shall reap, if we do not faint". We shall reap souls to Christ, if we do not become apathetic or sloppy in our faith. We who believe are Sowers - Sow the Word.

The three other grounds - **thorny, stony, and wayside** - all had one thing in common: they were not broken up. The farmer must break up the soil before it can receive the seed. He must clear off the thorns before he can sow the seed. He must remove the rock before he can expect a good return on his sowing.

If trials have come your way, they are like the blade to the field. The Lord is preparing you for the good seed of His Word. Praise Him for the trial and cling to Jesus!

Have you given your life to Christ? Are you good soil?  
Then sow. Are you being broken up? Then heed the  
Good Word of the Gospel as it is being preached. Turn  
from Satan, turn from the world, and turn wholeheartedly  
to Jesus and be ye saved!



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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**Matthew 13:10-11 ; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Romans 8:9; John 3:3; Matthew 24:14; Mark 16:15; Matthew 13:14; Luke 8:11** \_\_\_\_\_  
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### **1. Can Everyone Be Reached?**

**Matthew 13:3-9 ; Mark 4:14; Matthew 13:11 ; John 3:11; John 9:24; John 9:25; 1 Corinthians 4:2; Matthew 15:7-9; Matthew 21:43; Isaiah 30:1-3; Luke 8:15** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Matthew 13:8 ; Matthew 13:23 ; Galatians 6:7-9** \_\_\_\_\_  
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