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Does God Waste the Seeds of the Gospel?

Mark 4:3: (NASB) *Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow;*

As a Christian, we look at Jesus not only as our Lord and Savior, not only as the Ransom given for the sins of the world, but as a great teacher as well. One can spend a lifetime learning from him. One of the unique aspects of Jesus' teaching is the fact that he taught in parables - stories - lots of stories. Stay with us as we will look at one of those stories and see some remarkably clear lessons about life and the challenges of following Christ. First, here is the story: (Also found in [Mark 4:1-9](#), [Luke 8:4-8](#))



Matthew 13:3-9: (NASB) ³And he spoke many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went out to sow; ⁴and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. ⁸And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. ⁹He who has ears, let him hear.


 Let's go to an expert on sowing...Farmer DeMint is an 80-year old lifetime tiller of the ground: **Sowing Seeds Introduction, Modern Parables, Farmer DeMint**

Matthew 13:10-17: There is an obvious separation here between followers and non-followers. Included is a quote from [Isaiah 6:9-10](#). It appears that Jesus did not want people to understand...why? Jesus is clearly saying that this Isaiah prophecy is coming true! Prophetically the Jewish nation was in a blind state, in a state of expectation. They eventually rejected him. **Ezekiel gives further proof of the condition of Israel:** [Ezekiel 12:1-2](#): Jesus set a format of teaching in parables, using pictures with which the listeners were familiar. In this case, it was a simple story about farming. Jesus speaks the parables, explains why he teaches in parables, and then actually explains the parable to his disciples. This should give us a lot of insight and give us a model or template for how to understand all of the parables.

What were the symbols in the story and what did they mean?



Mark 4:14: (NRSV) *The sower sows the word.*

 **Sowing Seeds - Good Seed Yield, Modern Parables, Farmer DeMint**

- *One seed produces a lot.*

While the Sower is not defined by Jesus, it seems obvious that he would fit that role very well: [John 6:35-40](#): This gives us a sense as to the origin of the seed - it is the word of God, spoken by Jesus. Jesus is in the position of distributing the word of God and keeping those who follow him. **Secondarily, this Sower could be anyone who spreads the Gospel:** [Matthew 28:18-20](#): Jesus gives the responsibility to his followers of continuing to sow the seeds of the Gospel. [Luke 8:11:](#) (NASB) *Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.*

[Hebrews 4:11-12:](#) The disobedience is that of the nation of Israel, who lost out on this blessing to sow the seeds of the Gospel. We can learn from those before us and maintain our goodness of ground. This is an urgent story. The word of God is able to see through all of the barriers we might put up. It can judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart and is life changing.





What it takes to get to heaven, SO4J-TV

- For everyone it's different. Holding up to your morals and living your life to be the best that you can.
- Be a good person.
- Be good, don't get in trouble.

What does it take to get to heaven? Is getting to heaven "different" for everybody?

Matthew 4:3-4: Jesus was tested at the beginning of his ministry. He was visited by Satan and Jesus teaches us that it is the word of God that supports us. We don't need to be focused on the physical things. So the word of God is big! It has to do with eternity, so we need to be able to grasp that this seed is incredibly important.



What is Jesus illustrating with the different types of ground?

First, we have seeds that fell along the road; they were trampled underfoot and the birds came and ate them up.

Sowing Seeds - Pathway, Modern Parables, Farmer DeMint

- It is impossible to get a good crop on ground like this.

Matthew 13:19: Jesus interprets the parable for us. When someone hears the Gospel and doesn't understand it, it is like sowing seeds on the side of the road. (The birds come and eat the seeds = Satan snatches away what has been sown.)

Sowing Seeds - Pathway Birds, Modern Parables - Farmer DeMint

- The birds are scavengers and will pick up anything laying around.



Who is at fault for the lack of understanding of the "pathway people?" Satan is always looking for ways to take the word of God from us. Once he does, we are defenseless!

1 Peter 5:8

Satan trying to take Peter: Luke 22:31-32 Satan trying to take God's Word from Jesus: Matthew 4:5-7



Observations regarding the path and the birds:

- The path is not supposed to be a place for planting. (Jesus taught in parables and all did not understand.)
- The seeds left here were trampled - not noticed as of any value. (The value of the Gospel is not even recognized.)
- Those seeds not trampled were eaten by birds. (The scavengers would not allow the seeds to produce a crop.)
- Seeds here had practically NO chance of germination.
- Satan is ALWAYS LOOKING to thwart the Gospel.

What do YOU think it takes to get to heaven?

Next are seeds that fell on rocky places and immediately sprang up because they had no depth of soil. When the sun rose they were scorched and withered for lack of depth.

Mark 4:16-17: In this case, the seed does germinate and begins to grow.



Sowing Seeds - Rocky Ground, Modern Parables - Farmer DeMint

- When we sow seed on an area with shallow soil, it dries out so quickly the plant cannot mature...we have a stunted plant that bears no fruit, with no resistance to adverse conditions and it dies.

James 1:21-24: The word is implanted, but there is still more to do. If we are going to be good ground for the seeds of the Gospel, we need to continually assess ourselves. Peer pressure, tragedies, or other outside influences can determine if the seed takes root.

What it takes to get to Heaven, SO4J-TV

- Keep going to church and pray to God and do the right thing.



- *I was raised Lutheran, so they have their own guidelines.*

Observations regarding the rocky ground:



- Seeds can take root here.
- Seeds DO take root here - quickly. (Because there is not a lot of depth.)
- There is great joy - great emotion - at the receiving of God's word.
- As with any highly emotional experience, it is only temporary.
- Upon being tested for the word's sake, emotional acceptance cannot bear the weight of the trial. (When affliction arises because of the word, emotion alone doesn't carry you through.)
- Falling away is inevitable, as the lack of depth becomes evident.
- Don't mistake emotion for spirituality!

What else could possibly hinder us from protecting and cultivating God's word in our lives?

Next are seeds that fell among the thorns. The thorns came up and choked them out and they bore no fruit.

Mark 4:18-19



Sowing Seeds - Thorny Ground, *Modern Parables - Farmer DeMint*

- *Plant competition: Weeds compete with our crops. The plants are so close together that they can't get enough sunlight, moisture, or nutrition out of the soil to make a normal growth, so we just get a little spindly plant rather than a big healthy plant.*

The ground is good, but it is preoccupied. Too many things are competing.

Jesus' message was very consistent regarding his followers attitudes towards earthly things: Matthew 6:19-21: With too many earthly desires in the way, the seeds of the Gospel don't have a chance.

Five Emotional Cancers, *Stephen Covey*

- *Criticizing, comparing, complaining, competing (for a sense of your own worth) and contending (mean-spirited)*

These five things take away from your focus on other things. These could be some of the things in the thorny ground that move our focus away from the Gospel. The Gospel has a chance to grow there because the ground is good but the other distractions crowd it out. Matthew 19:16-24: Jesus saw the sincerity in this young man but he also saw his earthly attachments. He was doing good things but was focused on his possessions. This is a perfect example of thorny ground. He had the right kind of heart (soil), but it was too crowded. He couldn't fit the Gospel in because he was too attached to the other things and not attached enough to spiritual things. All of this takes courage!!!

Courage with Francis Chan - *Courage stands strong, BluefishTV*

- *Be happy when someone puts you down for following Jesus.*
- *God gave us a spirit of power, love and self-control.*
- *Even if the entire planet is against you, courage stands strong...even if it stands alone.*



Observations about the thorny ground:

- The presence of thorns proves the ability of the soil to produce. (The soil is good because things are growing there.)
- There are three elements that compete with the wheat: worries of the world, deceitful riches and the desire for other things. (These are in direct competition with what Jesus said was important, so this presents a challenge.)
- **None of these other things are fruitful, they are just consuming.** (They aren't producing anything of great significance, they are just consuming the nutrients.)



- The wheat can grow in this environment - though it cannot accomplish its mission.
- [Don't mistake acceptance of the word as application of the word...](#)

Jesus taught us to make sure the Gospel has our heart's full attention! Our soil, our hearts, house the Gospel, and it can be crowded out. [1 Timothy 6:10](#): When you focus on the wrong things, you end up with the wrong results. The thorny ground is not a good place for the development of the Gospel. We have to be aware of what else is in our hearts and minds.

How do we lock ourselves in to being good ground for life?

Finally, we have seeds that fell on good soil. They grew up and were fruitful - some 30-, 60-, and even 100-fold! [Matthew 13:23](#): There is something dramatically different in this environment.



Sowing Seeds - Good Ground, Modern Parables, Farmer DeMint

- *Deep top soil makes for good growing conditions- it has moisture-holding capacity and is high in nutrients.*



Observations regarding the good ground:

- You hear in an honest and good heart.
- You understand the word. (The ground is ready.)
- You hold fast to the word - treat it with reverence and apply it to daily life. (The other things aren't crowding it out.)
- NOW spiritual fruit can be developed. (Be that good ground!)



What it takes to get to heaven, SO4J-TV

- *By doing good, as long as you follow the Bible and go to church.*
- *If you are a Christian, it is following scriptures in the Bible. If you are Muslim, it is following the Koran. If you are Buddhist, I'm not sure what they believe, then it is reincarnation...?*
- *That's if you believe in heaven. I personally don't believe in heaven myself.*

The seeds of the Gospel have been received (or not received!) in a variety of different fashions. Why did Jesus speak in parables? (See Bonus Material in the Full Edition Rewind for more detail.) There are two different parts of salvation. First there is the call of true Christians and second, what Jesus said was the time when all that are in their graves will come forth - some to a resurrection of life (heavenly) and some to a resurrection of judgment (earthly). That word "judgment" doesn't mean a final sentence, but rather a period of trial. That's why Jesus spoke in parables. **The uniqueness of true Christianity:** [1 Peter 2:9-12](#): To follow after Jesus is a daily challenge and responsibility. That's why the good ground is scarce in the parable. You have to keep yourself in that "good soil" category so that in the kingdom, those who saw your example will remember it. They will eventually glorify God. So is Jesus wasting the seeds of the Gospel? No! He is spreading it out to look for those who will be of a heart and mind to allow the Gospel to grow in their hearts and change their lives. In turn, they can be the ministers of reconciliation described in the verse we just read, serving others in the kingdom.



The Lighthouse Principal, Finding your Voice, Stephen Covey

- *Your voice is when your talent and your passion overlaps what the world needs.*

If we have the privilege of being good ground, then we have this responsibility to find our voice in the service for the Gospel. That's what our voice can and ought to be. We can't let it be crowded out. [1 Corinthians 12:14-18](#): We are all different, and that is a good thing. However, everybody's voice can promote the Gospel in our lives. [Romans 8:37-38](#): We must focus on being the good ground so that the Gospel can develop in us the fruits of the spirit and allow us to be a good witness to others.

***So does God waste the seeds of the gospel?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!***