

The Dirt in My Life

Parables -

“The word parable means to ‘cast alongside’. A parable is a story that teaches something new by putting the truth alongside something familiar. A parable starts off as a picture that is familiar to the listeners. But as you carefully consider the picture, it becomes a mirror in which you can see yourself, and many people do not ask for help, then the mirror becomes a window through which we see God and His grace. To understand a parable and benefit from it, demands honesty and humility on our part.”

Warren Wiersbe

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Parables -

“The primary purpose of the parables is to reveal some aspect of the coming of the kingdom of God in the person and teaching of Jesus. But Jesus also intended that the parables conceal his teaching while being a vehicle for it. Even the disciples of Jesus did not understand the parables without fail. But their adherence to Jesus caused them to seek and receive understanding of the parables. Understanding is made subject to whether a listener is willing to identify with Jesus or wishes to remain ‘outside’ (hold Jesus at arms length). The disciples inquiry arose from commitment and was itself hearing which was in contrast with others failure to hear.”

Eerdmans Bible Dictionary

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Parables , What do We Know?

1. They used everyday objects, events and images to communicate important truth.

-Matthew 13: 1-7

2. They were designed to test, not the intelligence but the spiritual responsiveness of the hearer.

-Matthew 13:11-13

3. Great insight about God and his Kingdom can be ours by listening carefully to these parables

-Matthew 13:16-17

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One Type of Seed and Four Kinds Of Soil

Seed - Message about God and His Kingdom vs 19

1. Hard Soil - *"As he was scattering the seed, some fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up."* vs4

2. Shallow Soil - *"Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root."* vs5-6

3. Crowded Soil - *"Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants."* vs7

4. Fruitful Soil - *"Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop - a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."* vs8

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The Hard Soil

- Life application Bible - “as the seed lay exposed..”
- Hard soil keeps the seed on the surface, exposed and vulnerable
- The Birds represent the evil one - *“When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes along and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.” vs19*
- Big Question - what makes hard soil in our hearts? What tramples a path across our hearts making it resistant to God’s word?

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The Shallow Soil

- Nothing of substance can grow without depth for the roots
- Enthusiasm for the truth is no guarantee of fruitful growth
- Shallow Soil represents persecution and trouble - *“The one who receives seed that fell on Rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 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.” vs20-21*
- Big Question - Am I rooted in the Word and Truth of God’s word, or do my roots seek easy water, and are they able to be plucked by the storms of life?

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The Crowded Soil

- Healthy plants need dedicated room to grow
- What we allow to be seeded beside God's word has an effect on that word growing in our lives.
- Thorns are worries of life and deceitfulness of wealth - *"The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful."* vs22
- Big Question - What am I allowing to be planted in my heart alongside God's word? Do I do any weeding, or have life's worries and pursuits left me without fruit in God's kingdom?

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The Fruitful Soil

- Soil that produces a return is carefully prepared.
- Plants that produce fruit are tended, and the condition of the soil maintained diligently.
- Good Soil is Hearing and Understanding God's Word - *"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."* vs23
- Big Question - If the Sower is expecting a return, how do I ensure the largest crop? Can I make a difference in the return?

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So What

1. We need to ponder and “Hear” the truth of God found today.
2. As we get to sow God’s word, fertile soil is needed for a crop to be harvested. We have a responsibility with the truth.
3. As people where God’s truth is sown, we have a responsibility to prepare our hearts for his truth to grow.

Are our hearts:

- Hard - trampled and resistant to truth
- Shallow - bursts or growth abandoned in difficulty
- Crowded - full of life concerns and pursuits that choke
- Fruitful - we need to tend the truth that’s planted