

## Matthew ch 13 vs 18-23

This morning we want to take the time to take a good hard look at vs 18-23 of Matt ch 13 as we consider Jesus' explanation of the parable of the sower. Last week we read over the parable Holy Spirit spoke practically of the illustration that Jesus was giving; knowing that a parable in its simplest definition as found in the gospels is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Remember the word parable means to "cast along side"; (Para) meaning along side, Holy Spirit (ballo) meaning to throw, or to cast. And the purpose of a parable is to cast a very tangible or practical illustration alongside of a spiritual truth or principle so as to throw light on an otherwise potentially difficult truth to grasp.

So a parable basically acts as a parallel truth to the principal that the teacher is trying to illustrate to you in order to make it easier for you to understand. So Jesus would use practical earthy examples to illustrate spiritual truths so that those who wished to be enlightened to the things of God could be. But at the same time a parable can conceal the truth to those not interested in searching out the truth that's contained within them, to them they just become sort of a neat story.

So there's sort of a 2-fold potential or possibility with a parable Holy Spirit what determines the outcome is the hearer. We took the time last week to examine the meaning Holy Spirit purpose Holy Spirit the abilities of a parable of which if you're interested in a more in depth understanding other than what we just reviewed I'd just encourage you to get that tape. But we looked at the practical earthy side last week in vs 1-9

Jesus noted for us 4 types of ground upon which the seed falls or is sown. He spoke of the wayside, that rock hard impermeable ground that was used as the paths along the sides of the fields. The stony places which remember isn't in reference to stony ground like you Holy Spirit I would probably think of around here, but rather the ground that looks just as fertile as any of the rest that's being sown. But unbeknownst to the sower right underneath the initial skin layer of earth is an impenetrable layer of bedrock that won't allow the seed to root deeply as it ought to or as it needs to. So that the continual searing heat of the sun scorches it Holy Spirit because it has no root, it withers away. 3<sup>rd</sup>ly there's the seed that was sown among the thorns, which sprang up Holy Spirit robbed the plant of its nutrients Holy Spirit choked it out so that it became unfruitful. But then finally there was the seed that landed on good Holy Spirit fertile soil Holy Spirit rooted deeply germinated properly Holy Spirit grew up healthy so as to bear much fruit Holy Spirit not just once but it continually bore fruit, that seed that was planted continued to yield its fruit, it wasn't a one time deal.

And then Jesus said (vs 9) in other words take heed how you here Holy Spirit listen up; or tune in because there is spiritual truth contained in the parable that I just spoke to you. And then Jesus' disciples asked Him why do you speak to them in parables? And Jesus said because to you it's been given to know the mysteries of heaven to them it hasn't. To the disciples, they were granted divine illumination Holy Spirit understanding of the otherwise unattainable spiritual truths contained in the parables because the Spirit would open their understanding. But to the others their understanding remained darkened, why? The answer is simple; because they weren't Disciples of Christ. Holy Spirit Yet I find that so many people want to make a complex issue out of this passage. And they want to argue election vs freewill here, but I'm just a simple enough guy that I don't really see that as even the issue here. The issue has nothing to do with election vs freewill; the issue has everything to do with are you a disciple of Jesus Christ or not.

If you're a disciple of Jesus Christ then to you it will be granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, because the Holy Spirit will illuminate those truths to you. Now if you aren't a disciple of Christ then the Spirit won't reveal those things to you, Holy Spirit you won't walk in the light but you'll remain in darkness. You say that's not fair I want to know the things of God, I want to understand the things of the kingdom, then become a disciple of Christ Holy Spirit you'll be granted the same privilege. You see it doesn't have to be a big theological debate if we'll just receive the word for what it says rather than trying to read deep things into it that were never intended. Now no doubt the word of God has depth's of riches unfathomable by the finite mind, but it has to stay balanced up with in the totality of scripture that's why we make it our aim to rightly divide the word of truth. Holy Spirit Remember that we're going to be able to use this parable as sort of a key to unlock some of the various implications of the others by that impressive sounding theological term known as expositional constancy.

Meaning that when Jesus explains what a certain figure or illustration stands to represent in this parable it will stay true or consistent in all of His parables. Because if we don't abide by that law we can start reading into the parables other things that were never intended by the parable. Holy Spirit So in this case I say that this means this, but in this case I say it means this, but you see it as this Holy Spirit so there's no way to really establish sound doctrine but it's a free for all of interpretations. Holy Spirit As I said last week that's how heresy is born. So if in your interpretation of a certain parable you say that this illustrates a certain thing but if you read it the same way in another parable Holy Spirit it makes no sense in that application then odds are you interpreted what that was meant to illustrate wrong. (Are you guy's with me on this?) There needs to be that element of consistency there or else we're just kind of taking pop shots in the dark.

Jesus kind of intimates the necessity of that when He said in regards to the parable of the sower in Mark 4:13, *“Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?”* Suggesting that this parable can in fact be used as that measure or key in the understanding of the other parables because He explains it to us so that we won't misapply something that was never intended in the others, unless specified otherwise by Jesus personally. So let's look into these 6 vs Holy Spirit see what we can glean from them this morning.

Read vs 18-23

Now there's a couple of things overall that I believe is worth noting so that we all have a balanced understanding of what Jesus is getting at here. #1 we need to be careful not to look for information or draw conclusions on things that the parable doesn't purport or intend to give. For example Jesus mentions 4 categories here that the seed might fall into; but He doesn't say that these are the only reactions with out exception that the word will receive. He's speaking here of 4 possible ways that one might receive the word, but He doesn't speak about the people that are despisers of the word, or those that are openly hostile towards the word, or those who refuse to hear the word at all. These are the reactions of those that willingly hear the word; in other words everyone sitting here this morning is willingly hearing the word.

You chose to get up Holy Spirit drive down here so that you might hear Gods' word but there will be 4 different reactions to the word as it goes out to those who receive it. If you were absolutely hostile toward the things of God, (which is a very real reaction to the word) but if that was you, odds are you wouldn't be here in the 1<sup>st</sup> place. So Jesus didn't say that these 4 categories were absolutes for every person that walks the planet. 2ndly Neither is Jesus saying that 1 out of every 4 people will bear fruit. As a matter of fact, if 1 out of every 4 people that you or I shared the gospel with became rooted in Christ Holy Spirit bore fruit, we wouldn't be meeting here any more that much is certain, we'd be meeting down at the memorial hall or someplace with vision to expand. Now by the same token I'm not saying that, that's an impossible thing because God's not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Holy Spirit I believe that God want' to blow the minds in Joplin Mo. by doing a radical work unparalleled yet. But the responsibility lies with the hearer, Holy Spirit the position of their hearts. Why, because God won't violate freewill. That's why we pray that God would cause our hearts to be fertile ground, willing to yield Holy Spirit bear fruit that would remain to His glory. But what Jesus is no doubt teaching here is that there will be; unfortunately by far more people that reject the gospel than receive it.

Fruitless hearers by far out-weigh, the fruitful believers. I've seen people get all pumped up by tele-evangelists saying I believe the Lords not coming back for less than He left. Holy Spirit He was teaching that He believed that at least 51% of the planets population would be reeled into the kingdom having been born again prior to the Lords return. And the people were all hooting Holy Spirit hollering Holy Spirit he was rallying them all up Holy Spirit they were all excited on this emotional high, Holy Spirit then of course he wove in some scripture as to how they needed your money because in order to reach out Holy Spirit see this happens it takes money. And though it makes for a real exciting presentation Holy Spirit probably set new records on their tithing reports, it holds absolutely zero scriptural basis. As a matter of fact Jesus said in Matt 24:10-12 in regards to one of the sign of His return, *“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.”*

Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Tim 4 Holy Spirit said *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.”* 2 Peter 2:1-2 says, *“there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”*

No doubt many of us are familiar with 2 Tim 4:3-4 *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”* And we see Jesus teaching in our text this morning a majority rejection of the Gospel. Well what about the scripture that says *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, Says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;”* I'm not here to debate that, nor am I here to say that's God's not doing some phenomenal things in the world Holy Spirit won't continue to increase that work. But the bible is clear that overall more people will reject Jesus Christ than receive Him. And we'll talk a little more about that later. Let's look at vs 18 together.

Vs 18

This word “hear” is the Greek word akouo Holy Spirit it means to hear, to learn, to perceive, understand, or comprehend. Jesus is saying that I am by the power of the Holy Spirit going to give you understanding Holy Spirit insight into the parable of the sower. The word therefore points us back to the reason, when ever you encounter the word therefore the bible it means, “these things being so” or in light of these things. In light of what things; the things that were just stated previously Holy Spirit I would point you specifically to vs 11. (Read)

It's been given to whom, His disciples whom He is presently speaking to; so in light of that "understand the parable of the sower." Now some say that this parable should really be known as the parable of the soils rather than the sower because the emphasis lies on the soils that the seed is sown on rather than the sower himself. But Jesus calls this parable the parable of the sower Holy Spirit I'm not going to argue that point with Jesus, others can if they so choose, but as for me Jesus calls it the parable of the sower Holy Spirit so I personally will stick with that. (Now vs 19 corresponds to vs 4)

### Vs19

Now Matt doesn't make it exactly clear for us but Luke tells us in the parallel passage to this quite plainly that Jesus said that seed is the word of God. And we find God's word likened to a seed more than once in scripture, Holy Spirit it makes a great symbol, or type because like a seed the word of God permeates the heart Holy Spirit germinates in the heart Holy Spirit brings forth life. 1 Peter 1:23 tells us that we've "*been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.*" That's why so often you might hear someone refer to planting seeds when they're talking about sharing God's word or the gospel message with someone. They're sowing that seed in their hearts in hopes that they will receive it deep down, that it might spring up into everlasting life.

But this 1<sup>st</sup> category of people that Jesus speaks of is illustrated by those who hear but don't understand. They've been coined by some as the careless hearer; in other words it goes in one ear Holy Spirit out the other with out a moments consideration. What you say to them they don't hear, nor do they have any intention of hearing it. Why, I believe vs 15 gives us insight into that (read) their hearts have grown dull, so their ears grow deaf. Now remember these are spiritual principals we're speaking of, Holy Spirit that will always be the order you won't grow deaf to the voice of God until your heart has grown dull or hardened to the things of God. The hearts of the people that fit into category #1 have grown hard even as the path that's been beaten down by many feet Holy Spirit it's set up like concrete.

There are some people into whose heart the word has no more chance of gaining entry, than the seed has of settling into the ground that's been beaten hard by thousands of feet. Why, because their mind is shut, so their heart is closed off. And so nothing sinks in, they are hardened to the things of God, not hostile or indignant. They'll receive it in that sense of the word, but they refuse to be moved by it. Holy Spirit There are several reasons that can contribute to that frame of heart Holy Spirit mind. Prejudice can blind a person to anything they don't want to see.

If there's something about me that you don't like, you're not going to hear a word I say, you'll purposefully close yourself off from the likes of someone like me if there's something about me that doesn't suit you. And I don't have to tell you that if that's your Holy Spirit prejudice has blinded you, you need to repent Holy Spirit get right with God. Some people think they know everything they need to know Holy Spirit there isn't anything that you have to offer them that's going to be of any value because maybe there a little older Holy Spirit you're a little younger so what do you know. That's referred to as an unteachable spirit Holy Spirit it's the result of 1 of 2 things. It can result from pride-mingled with arrogance, refusing to humble oneself before the likes of you as if you have something to teach me. Or it can simply be a result of the fear of maybe coming into the understanding of something that would be new to you Holy Spirit you've understood it this way for a long time. Holy Spirit You're not about to change now, so don't even talk to me about it it's not even an option.

Sometimes people grow hard to the word because they're living a life that the word condemns Holy Spirit they're not willing to repent. If the truth condemns the things you love, Holy Spirit the truth accuses the things you do; it's not uncommon for that person to refuse to listen or recognize the truth that condemns them. But here's the news flash, there are none that are righteous, no not even one, Holy Spirit the word condemns every one of us apart from the righteousness of Christ being appropriated to our lives by faith. So everyone here that knows Jesus Christ has had to humble themselves before God Holy Spirit confess that they were sinful Holy Spirit in desperate need of a Savior. But when a person is of this frame of mind Holy Spirit heart Holy Spirit not even willing to really consider the word of God that's being shared with them, the enemy, that being Satan or one of his demons quickly becomes active. So that the word doesn't have a chance to set there Holy Spirit who knows maybe some rain might soften that ground; so that it begins to establish roots, so they quickly "snatch" the word right out of their heart.

This is what was represented by the birds of the air feasting on the seed, the enemy stealing it out of the hearts of those who are callused so that there's no chance for the permeation Holy Spirit the germination of the seed. Holy Spirit That word snatched or catcheth up is interesting, it's the Greek word "harpazo" which is the same word used in 1st Thess 4:17 translated there as caught up in regards to the rapture. It means snatched away violently or plucked away immediately (the twinkling of an eye, 1/1000<sup>th</sup> of a sec.) so no sooner than it hits, then "bam" it's jerked right out, again in one ear Holy Spirit out the other. This is he who received the seed by the wayside.

Vs 20-21

These people are the one's we refer to as the fireworks displays. They catch the spark, fire off, blazing up into the air Holy Spirit they sound off so impressive Holy Spirit look so good for just a little bit Holy Spirit then they fizzle out. These are also the one's that are the big disappointments to the vessel through which the Lord has sown the seed. Because everything seems to be going so right, they receive the word with such joy, they come forward at the altar call they seem so sincere Holy Spirit start hitting the studies every time the doors are open.

They seem to have such potential; they begin really, really well. They start off strong out of the starting blocks, but unfortunately a strong beginning isn't what counts is it? It's how you finish, it's how you fare or where you're at come harvest time. And so I bring to your remembrance once again the fact that Jesus didn't say well begun thy good Holy Spirit faithful servant, He said well *done*. It's not nearly as important how one starts the race, though that can determine a lot of things, but what matters is how you finish. So let's briefly examine the position of the stony ground, remember this ground for all intents Holy Spirit purposes looks real good. And Jesus says he immediately receives the word with joy; emotions play a big part in this person. Now don't get me wrong, joy is a very real part of the Christian experience, but will not make for you a solid foundation. This person is a superficial hearer that lacks real understanding as to what he's committing to. As Jesus would say, this person has no roots, Holy Spirit if you're not anchored deep in Christ, if you're not founded on the sure foundation of the word of God, if you haven't established a deep root system in Christ, then when the storms blow; you'll never make it. You'll immediately fall Holy Spirit great will be that fall. That's why Paul wrote in Col 2:6-7 *"As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."* Turn with me quickly to the book of Eph ch 3 vs 14-19

If you don't understand the height Holy Spirit the width Holy Spirit the depth of the love of Christ, how good He is to you, what He suffered in place of you, what you deserve vs what He's giving you; you'll never last in Christianity. You'll only endure for a little while, look at vs 21. Or is enticed to sin or falls away, he feels as though Christianity is a trap, the word that's been translated offended, or stumbles is the Greek word *"skandalizo"* from which we get our word scandalize.

He feels ripped off, like hey no body ever told me this was part of the deal, if I'd of know that hard times were coming I'd of never jumped on board. That's why Jesus tells us to count the cost, because in this world you will experience tribulation, how many of you have claimed that promise? Jesus said it, how many of you have this one highlighted in your bible; 2 Tim 3:12 *"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."*

Jesus never said He was the easy way, He said He was the only way Holy Spirit narrow is that way Holy Spirit difficult is that path Holy Spirit there are few who find it Holy Spirit even fewer who endure it. Because when tribulation or persecution arises because of the words sake, many stumble. Holy Spirit I want you to notice that Jesus says “when”, not “if”; it comes to all believers it’s just a matter of time. Holy Spirit The word trib. speaks of “heavy pressure” it’s used for example of treading out the grapes; it speaks of pressure to the point of bursting. Which links then to the persecution, so when the pressure is on this guy or gal they buckle, they “burn out” having been as Jesus put it in vs 6, scorched by the sun, in other words when the heat is on; you won’t last. This illustration teaches us that an emotional reception with out a strong foundation based upon the word of God Holy Spirit the love of Christ, will not enable a person to stand against trib. Holy Spirit persecution. This is the one who received the seed of stony ground.

Vs22

So here Jesus explains what the “thorns” of this life are, what those things are that choke the word right out of you Holy Spirit they’re the cares of this world, something we can all no doubt identify with Holy Spirit the other is the deceitfulness of riches. And I believe personally that this is probably the category that’s the most lethal in our day Holy Spirit age in our particular society. In Luke’s gospel we read that Jesus included the pleasures of life. And we’ve no doubt entered that day Holy Spirit age where the bible says in regards to the last days that men will be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. But what makes this category so vicious is the fact that this person is genuinely open to the word, their heart is cultivated Holy Spirit soft, this person is not a hardened rejecter, or a shallow enthusiast on an emotional high, with no firm foundation. They have a genuine interest Holy Spirit desire towards the things of God. But the problem is that this person has so many interests in life that the most important thing gets crowded out. This is the characteristic of the modern on the go life that becomes increasingly crowded, increasingly fast.

Rather than giving adequate time Holy Spirit attention to the word of God, those other things slowly crowd out that slot in his life Holy Spirit he becomes entangled in the things of this world Holy Spirit his relationship with God gets snuffed out. Paul understood this principal Holy Spirit that temptation, that’s why he wrote “*No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.*”

Again notice what the affairs Holy Spirit the cares of this life do; they entangle you, Holy Spirit eventually choke the life right out of you, they overcome you Holy Spirit consume you. The cares of this world, you're so worried about your business, or you invest so much time into your work that you don't have time to think of anything else. It's not that you intend to banish prayer or the bible or church from your life, as a matter of fact you have every intention of making time for those things, but somehow in your crowded life you never seem to get around to it. To busy building that nest egg.

Be careful, Jesus said you can't serve God Holy Spirit money; you'll either love 1 Holy Spirit hate the other, or serve one Holy Spirit despise the other. The Lord knows you have needs Holy Spirit has promised to meet them, but 1<sup>st</sup> you have to meet the specifications, Holy Spirit that's seeking the kingdom of God 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Spirit His righteousness. If you seek 1<sup>st</sup> the kingdom, those other things will be added, if you seek 1<sup>st</sup> those other things the kingdom maybe subtracted. Because the pursuit of those other things have a tendency to choke Holy Spirit snuff out the word, that's why Jesus said you're not to worry about those things, because worry can choke out the word as well, because you become more consumed with how you're going to get this, or take care of that Holy Spirit you give more time Holy Spirit attention to worry then you do the word Holy Spirit the things of God. Holy Spirit That's to directly disobey the word which, is called sin; so be careful. And please don't misunderstand me I'm not insinuating that there's anything wrong with money, or riches or things like that, Holy Spirit neither is Jesus, it's the deceitfulness of riches that'll get you.

That's why it's so important that we're content with that, which God has given us. There's nothing-wrong with wanting to better yourself or anything like that, but it has to stay in check or else you can become consumed. That's why Paul wrote; *“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”*

Money's not the problem, it's the love of it Holy Spirit the trust in it, our trust is to be in the living God Holy Spirit nothing, or no one else. Holy Spirit We're running out of time but let me just tell you that we still see in this person who gets their priorities mixed up a lack of understanding. Prov 24:30-31 *“I went by the field of the lazy man, And by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding; And there it was, all overgrown with thorns; its surface was covered with weeds;”* The cares of this world rob your spiritual nutrition.

Vs23

And this my friends is where we all want to be; Holy Spirit here we see for the 1<sup>st</sup> time Jesus acknowledging understanding. So we want to take note of the importance of understanding in relation to bearing fruit. And again what is it that determines their understanding; it's the position of their heart, just as the hardened heart made for non-understanding. The good ground represents the softhearted person, the one who is sensitive to the Spirit Holy Spirit to the things of God. The one that receives the word with all readiness, searching the scriptures daily as Paul commended the Bereans Holy Spirit allows God's word to work itself deeply into every area of his/her life, Holy Spirit gets rid of everything that might even have the potential to crowd God out of their lives.

These people aren't hindered by pride, they're willing to listen Holy Spirit learn. And they're not hearers only deceiving themselves, they make practical application of the word to their daily lives, Holy Spirit the result is that that person will enjoy a fruitful Christian experience in this life. They have faith-mingled with works Holy Spirit the result is fruitfulness.

The bible tells us quite plainly what the fruit of the true believer is, Holy Spirit we don't have time to look them all up but I'll tell you what they are Holy Spirit you can look them up later.

1. And obviously the 1<sup>st</sup> thing that comes to mind is Gal 5:22,23 the fruit of the Spirit, which makes for Christ like, character.
2. The fruit of practical holiness Rom 6:22
3. The fruit of financial giving Rom 15: 27,28
4. The fruit of good works Col 1:10
5. The fruit of winning others to Christ Rom 1: 13
6. The fruit of your lips which is the offering up of praise Holy Spirit thanksgiving in Spirit Holy Spirit in truth Heb 13:15

Now will everybody bear the same amount? No but according to Peter what ever our ability, we should excursive it accordingly. Holy Spirit May God help us to keep the soil of our hearts tilled up, broken up, Holy Spirit soft, rid of anything that might choke out our walk with the Lord Holy Spirit cause us to become unfruitful. And we need notice this Holy Spirit with this thought I'll close, even though much of the soil would avail no fruit, it didn't stop the sower from sowing the good seed.

Why, because God is a gracious God, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. So He gives each individual an opportunity to respond Holy Spirit receive His love Holy Spirit grace that they might bear fruit to His glory. It's our job to so the seed, Holy Spirit we can't be discouraged with the results, that part is between the individual Holy Spirit God. And no seed bears immediate fruit, it has to be watered Holy Spirit nurtured Holy Spirit tended to Holy Spirit then it brings forth the harvest, sometimes we may not see the results of our sowing even this side of eternity, but that's OK we're called to sow the seed.