

Read Mark 4:1-23

Today we look at the Parable of the Sower - Some truths by which we can walk out in 2023

What is it that every ordinary sincere believer must be found active in doing? What one task defines an effective Christian? **A Sower went out to sow. He scattered the seed. Just an ordinary person.** We must remember it's not the Sower that is prominent rather it's the SEED that is prominent. **A Sower is just an ordinary person** A person who maybe woke up early, maybe it was raining a little, they were not discouraged The mission to sow the seed had consumed them.

No, they were not carried by servants on a chair surrounded by Gold, oh no they didn't wear extravagant Garments. They were ordinary people. In today's thinking the so called big men, like to be recognised, likes to be lifted up, we see some come with 6 body guards a lot of pomp and ceremony!

No, the humble Sower is so very different, they simply see a great need. Like Paul they say Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel. They obey from strong convictions Gods universal call to "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel."

The parable is About the SOWER. About the 4 different types of Soil.

When The Lord explains this parable, He says *Mark 4:13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?*

The sower

The Sower.

The Conditions of the soil or heart. some fell by the way side,

The Sower

Lasting sowing of the Gospel seed comes from conviction. We must first see it in God's word for ourselves. our hearts are then stirred and ignited by Gods word. The motivation is Love for God. By this we know we love Him, that we keep His commandments and that His commandments are not burdensome to us. We as believers are rooted and grounded in Love. The love of God constrains me, and compels me. Grace is with those who Love the Lord in sincerity.

Let's Look at just a few of the Scriptures through the Bible. Scripture is full of these instructions it's not just a single verse pulled from an isolated obscure scripture. No not at all. The thread to sow the Seed runs throughout the entire bible.

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:” (1 Peter 3:15). Do we see it as our highest duty to witness and always be ready? Is our heart for the Lord?

Coll 4:6 tells us our speech should always be seasoned with Grace and seasoned with salt. That we should know how to answer every man.

Philippians 2:14-16 we are told to shine as lights in the world. To cheerfully hold forth the words of Eternal life. The more I see it in God’s word the more I will do it from conviction.

From old to new there was always a preacher. *In Psalms we read.* I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; lo, I have not kept back My lips, O Jehovah, You know. Isaiah puts it like this *“Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins.* We cry aloud because sinners are so very deaf.

Sowing the Seed is very hard work. Work that will not endure and continue unless it is done out of a Conviction to Obey the Holy Scripture. Out of Conviction that God has called me, just ordinary people to do this work.

In 2023 Let this conviction flood our hearts.

2. A matter of duty and conscience

a mother of a large family who has many children comes home from a long and a hard day. She may feel so very tired, to cook for her family. She knows and is fully convinced that the family needs nourishment, she knows a lot about food even knows all the vitamins in each kind of food. But knowing all this in her head won’t really get the Job done. What she needs now is a sense of Duty and Conscience. It must be done! It is my duty to get up and work! The mother did not want to let her family down, and we do not want to let the Lord down. The apostle did not want to let the Lord down. He said pray for me. Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.

3. Desire to do. When there is a longing to see lost soul saved; a shy and reserved personality is always overcome. This driving force of longing to see souls saved will lead us forward. William Booth was said to say “Can we go too fast in saving souls? If anyone still wants a reply, let him ask the lost souls in Hell.”

4. A matter of Prayer. “Work as if everything depended upon work and pray as if everything depended upon prayer.” Prayer gives us courage. Prayer creates

opportunities. The Sower must also be a Prayer. Pray for opportunities to preach the Gospel, to be a witness.

Don't forget it's possible to pray and ask God for opportunities and find that you yourself are not ready!

5. Being ready. 1 Peter 3.15: 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.' **We need wisdom** Colossians 1:28 whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. The word wisdom is translated as practical skill. While practical skill can never win souls. It will go a long way to help us present the facts simply and clearly with weight which demands and provokes thought. As many people are interested in a particular sport or a hobby and are consumed by it wanting to be better and better. Willing to spend their money on what ever can make them better. So too the Christian must desire to be better and better at being a witness for the Lord. This practical skill gets better and better the more it is used or practiced. But still there is another useful ingredient in being a sower.

6. Courage. Even the Apostle Paul who had faced so many hardships still requested prayer – prayer for boldness to proclaim as he ought to . Oh, pray that the Lord would grant you boldness to proclaim without tiring. It's not just for a season. It's in season out of season. It's for all the days of our lives.

We should go out with great zeal yet measured expectation. The Sower goes out to sow the field, at the same time, with the same seed, and with the same purpose; and scattered the grain on the right hand and on the left. Sowers cannot control harvests. They may sow well, and be mocked by a lean and withered harvest. Some say, that if the Gospel were properly proclaimed, men would yield to it. The fault is not in the Sower. Jesus preached the Gospel, was there ever a person that did so with such power and compassion, Never was preaching so excellent and so abundant . Yet when The Lord Jesus preached not everyone heard and believed. **When the apostle Paul preached its recorded**, "some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not." The seed was good, the soil was bad.

Note that the sower was never blamed for sowing seed on unproductive soil. No rebuke for scattering handfuls of seed, sowing even wastefully, on well-trodden paths , on rocky ground and even on thorns. God is able to take this seed and direct it to the hearts of man. Consider the archer who shot an arrow at king Ahab. It was God who directed that arrow not the archer's skill. *By chance, a soldier shot an arrow and hit Ahab king of Israel ·between the pieces [in a gap/joint] of his armor.* It pierced between the crack in

the armor. So too when we the Sowers take up our bows to shoot an arrow, we know it is the Lord that will direct the arrow to just where its needed. Right into the heart that needs grace and needs saving.

We can't manufacture any seed. The Sower didn't design the seed, he didn't make it. Rather we go in secret to the Lord, the giver of seed and when we have received of Him, we go out and scatter all he has given us. The preacher doesn't invent the message of salvation. It is given to him in God's Word, more than that, He experiences its saving power personally.

Some argue we should only preach to those ready to receive, those open to the gospel, if we knew where the best soil was perhaps we would go there. But we do not know men's hearts and therefore we preach the gospel to all men everywhere, to whosoever will hear. In the highways on the byways.

It is not the response of our hearers by which we are rewarded. But by our response and effort we apply to Gods command to preach the Gospel To scatter seed widely and extravagantly.

May many Sowers arise, this is what is needed in the world today. This is the Hope Humble ordinary people preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Gospel of Salvation. That's the highest calling to be a sow of the seed. It brings joy in heaven when one single soul '*... joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents*'

This parable is both a solemn lesson and warning, and a description of what is going on in the world today.

It's a call to surrender and lead a holy life. This call has either an immediate rejection, or it can be a slow forgetting. Some calls may be more striking or clearer, or seem to carry more impact. The calls differ in the degree of strength. But there is one thing in common, the hearer knows something that He didn't know before, he sees a truth that he didn't realise before. **The hearer can never say afterwards that He didn't know.** He was made to see made to realise the truth. The truth that they are sinners in need of forgiveness. The reality is the truth will either **save them** or **condemn them.**

This parable shows how different hearers deal with and handle the truth they have heard.

1. *some fell by the wayside.* **The unscrupulous and immoral ground.** These are they who hear sermons but pay no attention to them. They go to a place of worship, pricked by a guilty conscience, or to appear respectable before men. But

they take no real interest in the preaching. **Their thinking is**, Oh no, I can't have this Gospel, it threatens to interfere with my enjoyment of my sinful practices. It demands I repent. I don't want to repent so they reject it immediately. Oh some say at least they are honest. Honest but a very dangerous practice.

A continual hardening of the heart to Grace is a very dangerous business indeed. The Jews heard Jesus preach the Gospel to them over and over. And over and over they hardened their hearts. They refused to yield and listen, knowing full well that the words of Christ demand attention.

Matthew 13:15 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.

Their blindness and hardness was brought about by their constant refusal to believe. They were given up to blindness and deafness and could not understand worse still they were denied the grace which could only cure them. A heavy price for their wilful contempt of Gods Word.

John 12:40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

It was plainly foretold through the Old Testament. In Isa 53 "despised and rejected of men." In **Isa 6** we read of God judicially blinding His people. "Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

How hard the Pharisees and Jewish leaders were they would not believe. But the truth is its very similar today; multitudes are indifferent and don't believe even although they have heard over and over.

If the Gospel is despised and rejected by men. Men should not be surprised to discover that their continual rejection will lead to them being despised and rejected by the Lord. But thou, O Lord, *art* a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

But if Grace and mercy are constantly rejected we will face terrible judgement. **The Lord gives space to repent**, but some repent not. The branch that bears not timely fruit is cut off. **Joh 15:2.** The ground that yields not a seasonable and suitable return is nigh unto cursing, **Heb 6:8.**

Failing to listen to the call of Christ in your heart is like The chick that comes not at the clucking of the mother hen, it then becomes prey and is snatched by the wild birds of prey.

- 2. The light-minded and careless.** *Mark 4:16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness.* They Gladly receive Gods word. But to start is different from finishing.

If it is just a sense of duty that they have prayed. That sense of duty is never enough to carry you through.

The true test is when circumstances are difficult, and you continue and never let go. And how this parable points out that many fail. They may be easily moved to tears by the preaching. They may sound quite sincere in their talk. But there is no stability in them. As soon as people find out they are Christian and persecution for the word's sake arises they are offended! They want everyone will like them, they don't want people to make fun of them. I can't take that! They are like a cut flower that droops and withers under the heat. As soon as the sun comes up, they wither. They droop and fade for they have no root. Because they deny the Gospel taking root.

- 3. The World.** Chokes spiritual growth. God's word says that we cannot serve two masters, mammon and God. But it is as if so many hearers are trying to prove God's word wrong. No, I can they think. Ill love the things of the world and love the Christian principles. I'll continue in both. They plunge in to getting worldly position and positions and are carried away with much getting, and It becomes their goal, they suppose it's doing no harm at all. As the worldly stream carries them along and they get more and more content, spiritual things become dull and unimportant, its all about getting and getting and getting now. Eventually their goal becomes things of this world, they have been reduced to a mere person of this world.

They like the preaching of Christ's truth, and to a certain extent obey it. Their conscience is affected by it. Their affections are in favor of it. They acknowledge that it is all right, and good, and worthy of all reception. They even abstain from many things which the Gospel condemns and adopt many habits which the Gospel requires. But here unhappily they fall short. Something appears to chain them fast, and they never get beyond a certain point in their religion. And the grand secret of their condition is the world. "The cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things," prevent the word having its full effect on their souls. They never come up to the full standard of New Testament Christianity. They bring no fruit to perfection. It's sad to go so far and yet go no further—to see so much and yet not see all—to approve so much and yet not give Christ the heart, this is indeed most terrible!

while this parable speaks, first and foremost, to the state of unbelievers, and levels of listening and hearing, **it also applies to us to as believers.**

Do we mirror any of these categories? May it not be so, let us rather continue to grow in the Lord, Let us hold fast to Gods Word, Let not the devil steel the seed away. Let us always increase in our love for Christ. Let us live close to the Lord. I don't want to be any of these 3 categories , No I pray to be good ground.

4. **Good Ground** And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. These are they who really receive Christ's truth into the bottom of their hearts, believe it completely, and obey it thoroughly. In these kind of hearers the fruit of the truth will be seen—uniform, plain, and unmistakable results in heart and life.

SIN will be truly hated, mourned over, resisted, and renounced. Christ will be truly loved, trusted in, followed, and obeyed. Holiness will show itself in all their conversation, in humility, spiritual-mindedness, patience, meekness, and Love. There will be something that can be seen. The true work of the Holy Ghost cannot be hidden.

Their experience and degree of spiritual attainment may differ widely, some bringing forth thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred-fold. **But the fruit of the seed falling into good ground will always be of the same kind.** There will always be visible repentance, visible faith in Christ, and visible holiness of life. Without these things, there is no saving religion.

And now let us ask ourselves, What are we? Under which class of hearers ought we to be ranked? With what kind of hearts do we hear the word?—Never, never let us we forget, that there are three ways of hearing without profit, and only one way of hearing aright! Never, never may we forget that there is only one infallible mark of being a right-hearted hearer! And that is by the fruit we bear. **May this coming year be a fruitful year.** A year we grow in the Lord. A great depth to what we believe. Pray that we are fertile hearted believers. That we would be fruitful for him, that our homes would be happy and spiritual. And we can be a blessing to all around us. The Parable of the Sower, it applies to Christians, as well as unbelievers.

I close now. The parable of the Sower; providing much thought for the new year. Let us determine to yield to the Lord, let 2023 be a year that many Sowers go out with the precious seed. May you be one of them, may I be one of them.
Amen.