

Questions for Personal Reflection and Group Discussion

1. What is your attitude toward the Word of God?
2. Consider the three groups of people: (1) **Disciples** – committed followers of Jesus, (2) **Religious leaders** – opposed to Jesus, and (3) **Crowd** – “riding the fence”. Which group have you identified with in the past? Which group do you identify with now?
3. In what way do parables both reveal and conceal truth (v. 10-17)?
4. How would you describe the condition of the soil of your heart?
5. What fruit has come forth from your life recently?

Kingdom Stories: The Parable of the Soils

“The Way to a Man’s Heart is Through His Ears”

Matthew 13:1-23

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I. The Setting for the Parable (1-3a)

¹ That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea. ² And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach. ³ And He spoke many things to them in parables...

A. The place

B. The people

1. The disciples

2. The religious leaders

3. The crowd

II. The Telling of the Parable (3-9)

³ And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, “Behold, the sower went out to sow; ⁴ and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵ “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. ⁶ “But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ “Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. ⁸ “And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. ⁹ “He who has ears, let him hear.”

III. The Reason for Parables (10-17)

¹⁰ And the disciples came and said to Him, **“Why do You speak to them [the crowd] in parables?”** ¹¹ Jesus answered them [disciples], “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them [crowd] it has not been granted. ¹² “For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. ¹³ “Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ “In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; ¹⁵ FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.’ ¹⁶ “But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. ¹⁷ “For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

A. To **reveal** truth

B. To **conceal** truth

IV. The Interpretation of the Parable (18-23)

A. The **hard** heart

¹⁸ “Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ “When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

B. The **shallow** heart

²⁰ “The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

C. The **crowded** heart

²² “And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

D. The **receptive** heart

²³ “And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”