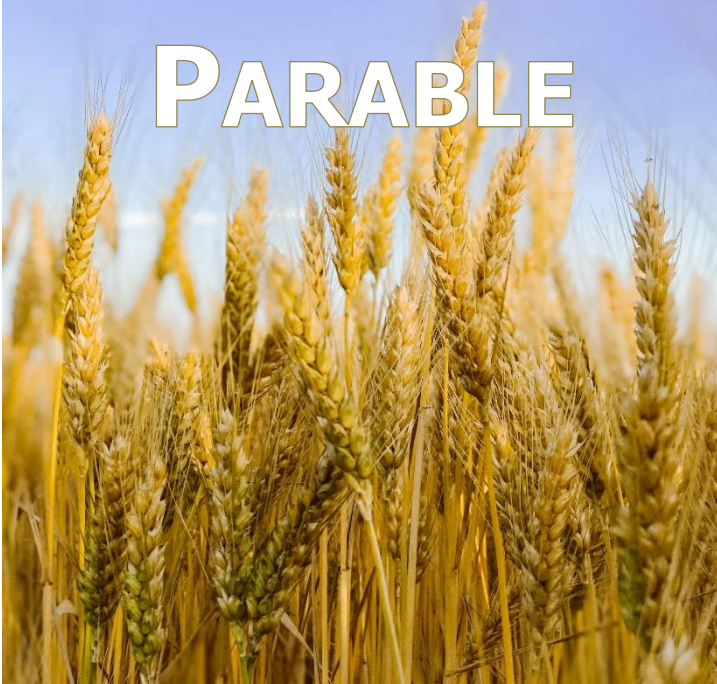


# THE MOST IMPORTANT PARABLE



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‘The Most Important Parable’  
by  
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# THE MOST IMPORTANT PARABLE

A parable is a simple story which is told to illustrate a moral or spiritual truth. Jesus told a lot of parables. Some are very well-known such as the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the Parable of the Prodigal Son and this one – the Parable of the Sower.

## *The Parable of the Sower*

Jesus told the Parable of the Sower to a big crowd of people. It is included in the Bible in three of the four gospels – Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, and Luke 8:1-15. Here it is in Mark 4:3-8 – *“Listen! Behold, the farmer went out to sow, <sup>4</sup>and as he sowed, some seed fell by the road, and the birds came and devoured it. <sup>5</sup>Others fell on the rocky ground, where it had little soil, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup>When the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. <sup>7</sup>Others fell amongst the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. <sup>8</sup>Others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing. Some produced thirty times, some sixty times, and some one hundred times as much.”*

## *Why Jesus Spoke in Parables*

Afterwards, Jesus’s close followers, His disciples, asked Him why He spoke in parables. He replied in Mark 4:11-12 – *“To you is given the mystery of God’s Kingdom, but to those who are outside, all things are done in parables, <sup>12</sup>that ‘seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest perhaps they should turn again, and their sins should be forgiven them.’”*

Jesus didn't want to simply give people head knowledge – that isn't the way to becoming God's forgiven child. He wanted them to understand the spiritual meaning of what He was teaching. Those who were open to God would begin to understand about Him through the parables. This is what it means when Jesus said in Mark 4:9 – *“Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.”* Everyone had physical ears on the sides of their heads, but many people would not have spiritual ears to understand the meaning.

God isn't interested in an in-depth knowledge of the Bible with no faith in Jesus. He is looking for people who have a heart that can respond to Him and His love. Jesus didn't reveal His truths to those who were hard-hearted – cold, unfeeling, insensitive, judgemental. You need to have a soft heart towards God to accept who He is and what He is saying with simple faith. In Matthew 13:16 Jesus says to His disciples – *“But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.”*

It sounds as though God is making things difficult for you, but the opposite is true. His truth isn't hidden from you, it's hidden for you. God doesn't want those who have hard hearts and are against Him to understand all His truths, or they could use them for their own advantage. God will always make everything He says clear to you when you sincerely desire it.

When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour (what the Bible calls being born-again) God's Word or the Bible will help you to understand more of God and Jesus on a spiritual level and grow in faith. Make a decision today to have a soft heart towards God. Keep your spiritual eyes and ears open and God will reveal His truth to you. Meditate on that truth and live it out – don't just read the words. (To read about being born-again go to the end of this booklet)

## *The Most Important Parable*

Jesus said in Mark 4:13 – *“Don’t you understand this parable? How will you understand all of the parables?”* What makes this particular parable the most important is that it’s the key to understanding everything else that Jesus taught. It tells of a farmer sowing his seed in the ground so it can grow into a crop he can harvest. In Jesus’s day, the farmer carried the seed in a bag and scattered it around him by hand as he walked along. Inevitably some would land in places where it was difficult or impossible for it to grow.

The seed is a picture of God’s Word, the roots are a picture of spiritual understanding and the fruit are things that bless and help you and others. The parable tells you how to hear and nurture God’s Word so it can put down roots and bear fruit. If you are able to do this then you have the key to understanding everything God says to you. If you can’t do it, then you will not be able to understand what He is saying spiritually. God speaks only truth and His truths can all be found in the Bible. God can speak directly to you as well, but He will never contradict what He says in His Word. It is through His Word that you are drawn to Him and your faith rises to be born-again. Romans 10:17 says – *‘So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.’*

1 Peter 1:23 says that you have – *‘been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which lives and remains forever.’* God’s Word can be completely trusted. It can never be corrupted from inside or outside.

The parable of the sower applies to every Word of God you read and hear from the very first time, right through the rest of your life as a Christian.

## *1. The Seed that was Sown by the Roadside*

In the parable, some of the seed fell by the side of the road and in Mark 4:14-15 Jesus explained to His disciples what this means – *“The farmer sows the word. <sup>15</sup>The ones by the road are the ones where the word is sown; and when they have heard, immediately Satan (the devil) comes, and takes away the word which has been sown in them.”* There’s no soil on the roadside so the seed can’t form roots. If you hear the truth of God’s Word but can’t understand it spiritually, you can’t take hold of it. Roadside people might hear what God has to say, but they allow it to be stolen from them – because they can’t understand it spiritually, they can’t relate to it and so ignore it.

## *2. The Seed that was Sown on Rocky Places*

Some of the seed fell on rocky places. In Mark 4:16-17 Jesus said – *“These in the same way are those who are sown on the rocky places, who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup>They have no root in themselves, but are short-lived. When oppression or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they stumble.”* A rocky place person is someone who hears God’s Word and it fills them with joy, but then they lose their faith when things get difficult. Don’t rely on your emotions. They can’t sustain you by themselves in bad times – they go up and down. You need more than joy to get you through. It will help, but it won’t form a firm basis of spiritual understanding in you. But God’s Word will. If you make that your foundation and put your faith in Jesus, it can and will carry you through. 1 John 5:4-5 says – *‘This is the victory that has overcome the world: your faith. <sup>5</sup>Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?’*

### 3. The Seed that was Sown amongst Thorns

Other seed fell among thorns. Luke 4:18-19 says – *“Others are those who are sown amongst the thorns. These are those who have heard the word,<sup>19</sup> and the cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”* The whole point of the seeds the farmer sows is for them to produce a harvest he can reap. It is difficult for a plant to flourish among thorns because they will crowd the plant out and damage it. Jesus explained that the thorns are the ‘cares of this age’, the ‘deceitfulness of riches’, and ‘the lusts of other things’.

#### **‘The cares of this age’**

Jesus is talking about the things that worry you. Worry can be all-consuming. If you are constantly worrying about something you do not have the headspace to focus on what God is saying to you, so it’s not going to help you. Many times Jesus told people not to worry. You may say that’s impossible, but Jesus would never tell you to do something that you couldn’t do. But it takes a decision and discipline to stop worrying and think about God’s love for you and His promises for you instead. Go to the Bible and find His promises and focus on them. The more you do it the easier it becomes. They are seeds which can grow and produce fruit in your life if you don’t let the cares of life choke them.

#### **‘The deceitfulness of riches’**

The problem with money is that it’s deceitful – it tells you it can solve all your problems and will make you happy. Anyone who is really wealthy knows that both these things are untrue. But so many people believe the lies and spend a large part of their life trying to get more money or spending it. Money isn’t evil, it’s a

necessity in our world, but the Bible says in 1 Timothy 6:10 that – *‘the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some have been led astray from the faith in their greed.’* When you make money your main focus there’s no place for faith in God’s truths and promises to grow. Believing the lies money tells you chokes God’s Word so it can’t bear fruit.

### **‘The lusts of other things’**

The word ‘lust’ is usually applied to sex today, but in the Bible it means an overwhelming desire for anything. If you are lusting after something or someone, it will take over your thinking and you’re going to find it hard to think about God’s Word and focus on your faith, so it can’t bear fruit. Thorns people allow the seed to be planted in their lives but the plant that grows from it doesn’t bear fruit – nothing comes of their faith so they can’t benefit from it or help and bless others.

## ***4. The Seed that was Sown on Good Ground***

But of course other seed fell on good ground. Mark 4:20 says – *“Those which were sown on the good ground are those who hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit some thirty times, some sixty times, and some one hundred times.”* Good ground has been well prepared, it has nutrients and sunlight and it is watered and weeded. God wants you to hear His Word and respond. He wants you to know He loves you totally unconditionally and He wants to help you to live the best possible life. Prepare your ground by opening up your mind and heart to Jesus and determining to keep your faith strong when things get difficult. Allow the sun of God’s love to shine on you. Water your ground with God’s Word. Make sure it is full of good wholesome things. Weed it – when things come into your life which are not good for you or which can make you forget about



God's love for you, turn away from them. Then God's Word can take root in you and you can start to understand God's Word on a spiritual level. As you trust Him, your faith will grow and, as you persevere, it will bear fruit which will help and bless you beyond your imagination, and you will be able to bless others too in many different ways.

## *Jesus the Word*

God said that Jesus Himself is the Word. Sow Jesus into your thinking and into your heart – it is only through Him that you can become God's child. No-one is perfect and on the Cross Jesus took the punishment for everything you think, say and do which is wrong – past, present and future. Because Jesus has taken the punishment, God's not angry with you – you are forgiven and able to become His special child. Be open to God's Word drawing you with His love and accept Jesus as Your Lord and Saviour. If you've never done this before, make today the day you do. It's only as you're born-again that God becomes your Father and you become His child, and you are able to receive your forgiveness and start to grow and bear fruit.

## *Be Good Ground*

Only by being good ground can you spiritually understand God's Word when you hear it or read it, and benefit from it so you can grow in your relationship with God and produce good fruit in your life. This is why the Parable of the Sower is the most important parable Jesus told. It tells you how to understand what God says at a spiritual level so you can begin to understand everything He says. Let Him sow the incorruptible seed of His Word into you. Don't let it get stolen because you don't understand it. Don't let it die when trouble comes. Don't let it

get choked by worry or thoughts of riches or the craving for things or status. Instead, look after it and water it and enjoy all that God has for you as you grow more and more in His love and promises, and produce fruit which will help you and others in amazing ways. Understand this most important parable and you have the key to understanding everything else God says. Enjoy!

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## *Being Born-Again*

When you acknowledge Jesus as God and decide to follow Him, you make Him your Lord. When you accept His sacrifice on the Cross for yourself personally, you make Him your Saviour. You are then born-again and have a new perfect spirit. God becomes your Father and you His child, and you can start to enjoy your personal love relationship with Him. Romans 10:9 says – *‘If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.’* Tell God you are sorry for the wrong things you do, say and think. Choose to believe that Jesus is Lord, that He died for you and is now alive. Accept Him as your Lord and Saviour. Say it with your voice and believe it in your heart. If you’ve done that sincerely, you are now born-again and Jesus has come to live in you. Everything you’ve ever done wrong or ever will do wrong is forgiven, and after this life is over, you’ll live in peace and joy with your loving Father God for ever. As a child of God, you now have a whole new family of brothers and sisters. Tell a trusted Christian that you are now born-again so they can help you in your new life in Jesus. And you have the Bible to help you understand and experience more of God’s love for you and all Jesus has done and won for you. It will help you to live your life in the best possible way – His way.

# *Life in Jesus*

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and all He has done and won for us  
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Jesus often told people stories  
to give them pictures  
of who God is and what He is like.  
They are called parables.

I wonder which you think is the most important.  
Find out and it will help you  
to understand God's Word at a deeper level  
so you can grow in your relationship with Him.



**Katherine Hilditch** has been teaching in local churches for many years. In 2013 she wrote her first booklet and since then has written many more. She created her website to make all the booklets freely available to everyone. They can be read online or printed out. Katherine's threefold purpose is to help people understand more about Jesus and all He has done and won for them, to encourage them to go deeper in their relationship with God and to provide material to help them share their faith with others. To read her story and find all the booklets go to –

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