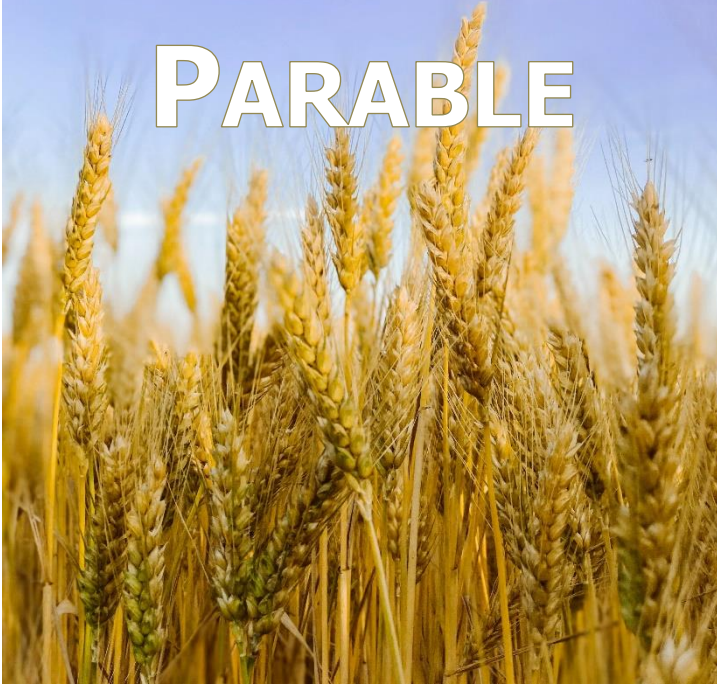


THE MOST IMPORTANT PARABLE



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‘The Most Important Parable’
by
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THE MOST IMPORTANT PARABLE

The Parable of the Sower

A parable is a story which is told to illustrate a moral or spiritual truth. This is one of many Jesus told. Here it is in Mark 4:3-8 – *“Listen! Behold, the farmer went out to sow, ⁴and as he sowed, some seed fell by the road, and the birds came and devoured it. ⁵Others fell on the rocky ground, where it had little soil, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of soil. ⁶When the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. ⁷Others fell amongst the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. ⁸Others 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.”*

The Most Important Parable

When His disciples asked Him what it meant, 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 all the others and everything else in God’s word.

It tells of a farmer sowing his seed in the ground so it can produce 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, flourish and bear fruit. Jesus said that the seed represents God’s word and the ground is the condition of our heart. It is our hearts that vary. God’s word

never does – it is always perfect and true. 1 Peter 1:23 says that we 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. He wants His word to bear fruit – bring us His blessings and, through us, to bless others.

1. The Seed that was Sown by the Roadside

In the parable, some of the seed fell on the path of compacted earth by the side of the field. In Matthew 13:19 Jesus explained what this part of the parable means – *“When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom and doesn’t understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown by the roadside.”* The soil on the roadside is trodden down hard by many people, so the seed can’t penetrate the ground. If someone hears the truth of God’s word but can’t understand it, they can’t relate to it and so ignore it. Satan is then able to rob them of the truth contained in that word. In Hosea 4:6 God says – *‘My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.’*

2. The Seed that was Sown on Rocky Places

Some seed fell on rocky places. In Mark 4:16-17 Jesus explained – *“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. ¹⁷They have no root in themselves, but are short-lived. When oppression or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they stumble.”* Someone can hear God’s word and it fills them with joy, but then they lose their faith in it when trouble comes or people make things difficult for them because of their belief. Don’t rely on your emotions – they go up

and down. Emotions can't sustain you in times of trouble or persecution. You need more than joy to get you through. It will help but, by itself, it won't form a firm foundation to stand on. However, faith in the truth of God's word will. Make that your foundation and it can carry you through. 1 John 5:4 says – *'This is the victory that has overcome the world: your faith.'*

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,¹⁹ 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 limit its growth. 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 His word can't help you. Many times Jesus said not to worry. You may say that's impossible, but Jesus would never tell you to do something you couldn't do. But it takes a decision and discipline to stop worrying and turn your thoughts around to think about God's love for you and His promises for you instead. Go to the Bible and find His love for you, His truth and grace and focus on it. The more you do it the easier it becomes. God's word is an incorruptible seed which can grow and produce fruit for you and for others if you don't let the cares of life choke them.

‘The deceitfulness of riches’

The problem with money is that it can be deceitful – it can tell you that it will solve all your problems and/or make you happy. Both these things will ultimately prove untrue as 1 Timothy 6:9 explains – *‘But those who are determined to be rich fall into a temptation, a snare, and many foolish and harmful lusts, such as drown men in ruin and destruction.* But many people believe the lies and getting more money can then become a major focus of their life. Money isn’t evil in itself; 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 love money, there’s no space for faith in God’s truths and promises to grow. Believing the lies money can tell 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 lust after something or someone or a situation, it takes over your thinking and you’ll find it hard to focus on God’s word, and then it won’t be able to produce the blessings God has for you and for you to share with 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.”* Interestingly, Jesus doesn’t describe what makes up the good ground as He does the other types. Good ground isn’t so much about what it has, but what it hasn’t! Less is more. Good ground doesn’t have hard impacted soil; it doesn’t have rocks; and it doesn’t have thorns.

Remember, the ground represents the condition of your heart, so you don't need to think so much about what to add to your heart, but rather what you should take away.

Our Heart May Have a Mix of Different Areas

Trying to decide what type of condition your heart is in isn't necessarily black and white. Obviously, we all want to have good ground in which God's word can take root, grow and produce fruit. But maybe we have a corner that has some rocks in it and a patch of thorns with a path running along one side.

How to Have Less

Less Hard Earth

To turn hard impacted earth into good ground, you need a hoe or a spade or even a pickaxe, depending on how hard the ground is. We must understand what we read and hear of God's word or it can't penetrate our hearts and grow and bear fruit.

In Proverbs 2:1-4 God tells us – ***“if you will receive my words, and store up my commandments within you, ² so as to turn your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding. ³ yes, if you call out (to God) for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding; ⁴ if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures.”*** This passage tells us how to get rid of the impacted earth in our heart. Look at the words in bold and start to put them into practice.

This sounds like a long list, but it's all straightforward – it is simply ways to help us to understand God's word so Satan can't snatch it away. Proverbs 2:5 says that – *‘then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of*

God.’ So keep at this until it becomes a part of who you are and how you live, and your hard roadside will soon become good ground ready to receive God’s word and bear fruit.

Less Rocks

To remove small rocks like stones you can pick them up with your bare hands and throw them out of the way. But if there are big rocks in your heart, you may need a digger. Start to get them out by feeding on the truth of God’s word. Build a foundation of His love for you and the victory He’s won for you through Jesus. Write His word on your heart by speaking it out loud. Keep feeding on it – that will get the rocks out and you will be ready to stand strong when trouble or persecution comes along.

Less Thorns

You may be able to pull thorns out by hand or you might need to use a trowel or even a spade or fork. It depends how deeply rooted the thorns are. 2 Corinthians 10:5 describes – *‘throwing down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.’* We need to take control of our thoughts as quickly as possible and replace them with the truth of God and all He has done and won for us through Jesus. Let’s look at the different thorns Jesus mentions.

The Cares of this Age

This life is full of cares, both personal and general. We are surrounded by so many things that can easily wear us down. 1 Peter 5:6-7 tells us to – *‘Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your worries on him, because he cares for you.’* You might wonder what the connection is between humbling ourselves

before God and casting our cares on Him. Well, we can't do the second without doing the first. Only when we acknowledge that we can't sort out our own problems and that only God can do so, will we be able to truly cast them on Him. Choose to humble yourself and pull those thorns out by handing all your cares over to God. Your heart will then be in a much better position to allow God's word to take root and produce fruit, which will help you in the middle of everything you have to face.

The Deceitfulness of Riches

Believing money is the answer to everything is a deception. Pull this thorn out by focusing on God and all He has done for you through Jesus instead. He says in Matthew 6:33 – *“But seek first God's Kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well.”* We have His promise that if we keep our focus on Him and His ways, then God will provide everything we need and more.

The Lusts of Other Things

Pull this thorn up quickly and choose to be thankful for what you have, trusting God for all you need and for all the blessings He has for you. 1 Timothy 6:6-8 says – *But godliness with contentment is great gain.'*

Be Good Ground

Once you've got rid of any hard areas, rocks and thorns, you are left with good ground. Then God's word can take root in your heart and bear fruit which will help and bless you beyond your imagination, and enable you to bless others too.

Sow the incorruptible seed of His word into your heart. Don't let it get stolen because you don't understand it. Make sure you have a good foundation so it can still produce fruit when trouble

or persecution comes. Don't let it get choked by worry or thoughts of riches or the craving for things or status. Proverbs 4:23 says – *'Keep your heart with all diligence.'*

Expect God's word to produce fruit. Jesus says in Mark 42:26-28 – *"God's Kingdom is as if a man should cast seed on the earth,²⁷ and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, though he doesn't know how.²⁸ For the earth bears fruit by itself: first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."*

Now you understand this most important parable, you have the key to understanding everything else God says. Enjoy!

Being Born-Again

When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour you become born-again. God becomes your Father and you His child, and you can start to enjoy your personal 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.'* Say this prayer out loud and believe it in your heart – *"Jesus, I declare that You are Lord and that God raised You from the dead to live forevermore. Thank You for dying for me personally. I receive my forgiveness and my salvation now. Thank You Jesus, my Lord and Saviour."*

You are now born-again and Jesus has come to live in you. All your sins are forgiven, past present and future, and you have a new perfect spirit. And after this life is over, you'll live in love, peace and joy with your Father God for ever.

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Jesus said that if we don't understand
the Parable of the Sower,
we can't understand any others.

Find out why it's so important
and how you can make your heart good ground,
where God's Word can take root, develop
and bear fruit in your life
as you grow in understanding and faith.



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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