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"This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand." (Matthew 12:13)

### I. The Parable of the Sower Farmer

- a. This is perhaps the best known of Jesus' parables. It could also be called the parable of the soils. The seed is constant and unchanging, but the soil varies and is changed by the seed.
- b. Throughout history, the parable has been interpreted in four main ways:
  1. A parable of *victory* – the great harvest will come at the end of the world despite all opposition.
  2. A parable of *patience* – teaching disciples not to get discouraged in ministry when three out of four soils fail to bear fruit, but "that one soil" will be very fruitful.
  3. A parable of *responsibility* – teaching people to be eager hearers and faithful doers of the Word.
  4. A parable of *power* – teaching the church "the power of the Word" and of the Word's own ability to bring the Kingdom into the world.
- c. The main thing Jesus wants disciples to know is that God sows His Word in the world and all other activities are secondary.
  1. The seed falls onto four different types of soil, each gives a different result.
  2. The Kingdom comes when the soil and seed come together. There can be no Kingdom without the seed.

### II. The Seed and the Soil

- a. Jesus explained the parable so there is no doubt of its meaning. The seed is God's Word and the soil is various kinds of hearts.
- b. Unlike the words of men, the Word of God has life in it and that life can be imparted to those who believe.
- c. Notice in this text, Jesus did not describe a great harvest, but one in which the Word would be rejected. Fruit is the test of true salvation.
- d. In the parable, the *sun* represents persecution that comes because of the Word (v.6). Persecution helps believers grow, but the sunshine will kill the plants with no roots.

### III. Personal Application

- a. Jesus is telling us that our gospel witness may not immediately produce results. At the end of the day after hard labor we may not see anything, but we must keep on sowing.
- b. The sower sows in faith always believing there is nothing wrong with the seed.
- c. We often time seek to interpret the parable, but the parable actually interprets us. The parable is a mirror that shows people where they stand.
- d. The key words for understanding this parable are *He who has ears to hear let him hear.* (v.9)
- e. The key attitude in life, spiritually and socially, is the attitude of active listening.
- f. Just as soil is primarily passive, its task is to receive, so disciples are to be the first receivers.
- g. Right listening is the catalyst for right doing. Are you an active listener?