

Jesus shares one of His more famous parables about a sower sowing seed in a field. Although the seed fell on different types of ground, only one type produced a harvest, just as God's word only produces fruit when sowed into a heart of faith and obedience. Jesus also demonstrates His sovereign authority over creation when He calms a storm at sea simply by speaking a command.

**Verses 1-4:** Jesus has been traveling around the area, visiting each town and village and preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. He was accompanied by the 12 apostles and a group of women whom He had cast demonic spirits out of, including Mary Magdalene. When a large group of people had gathered around Him at one place, Jesus began teaching them with a parable.

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5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. 8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

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The parable Jesus used involved a sower who was sowing his field by casting seed by the handfuls in all directions. The seed fell on various types of ground, each of which provided different conditions in which the seed would try to take root and grow. Notice that the seed was the same wherever it fell. The factor that determined if the seed would bear fruit was the condition of the ground that it fell upon, with only the good ground yielding a harvest. Jesus concluded the parable with the statement "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Implied within that statement is the idea that only those who are "good ground" will have "ears to hear" the words of Jesus and will be capable of bringing forth a good harvest. We will see that Jesus used these parables for a two-fold purpose (v. 10): 1) to reveal truth to those who listened by faith; 2) to hide the truth from everyone else.

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9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? 10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

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**"And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?"** – The twelve disciples did not see the meaning behind this parable and so they asked Jesus to explain it to them. Matthew records that they also wanted to know why Jesus had begun using parables when He taught publicly (**Matt. 13:10** "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?").

**"And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries [something hidden that is now being revealed] of the kingdom of God"** – The disciples had been given the ability to understand the things of God through Holy Spirit because of their relationship with Jesus, as is true of all genuine believers. The Holy Spirit opens our understanding so that we may comprehend the things of God (**John 14:26** "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you").

**"but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand"** – The "others" are those who do not know Christ and thus do not have the Holy Spirit to teach them. Parables hide the truth from these people. They hear the words and see the things that God is doing and yet they misunderstand and miss the spiritual realities being presented (**1 Cor. 2:14** "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned").

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11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

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Jesus begins explaining the parable to the disciples by stating that the seed being sown by the sower represents the word of God. Just as the seed was the same wherever it was sown, the word of God is the same for all and its truths are unchanging no matter when and where it is proclaimed. The word of God does not evolve or become deprecated over time as some try to claim but is just as true today as when it was first written.

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12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

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The "wayside" were the paths around the edges of the field where the ground was packed hard by foot traffic going by to the next field. The seed would lay on the surface without penetrating the soil, making it easy for birds to eat it. The people represented by the wayside have hardened hearts that easily disregard God's word ("trodden down" in v. 5) which makes it easy for the devil cause them to ignore and forget the word before it can take root in their hearts and lead them to salvation.

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13 They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

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The seed that fell on a rock had landed on a shallow layer of soil over a layer of bedrock, providing little depth to support a root system or access to water. Here seed could temporarily take root, but being unable to grow deep roots or find water, the sprouts would soon die. Thus are the people who believe the word for a while, but when the trials come, find that they are not willing to continue following Christ because the word had not taken root deep enough to produce true salvation. These are the "fair-weather" followers. Jesus had many disciples who loved Him when He was healing their sick and feeding the 5,000, but ceased to follow Him when they became dissatisfied with the requirements of following Christ. On one occasion Jesus stated that only those who ate His flesh and drank His blood would have eternal life. Many of His disciples did not like that statement and stopped following Him (John 6:53-66).

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

The seed that fell among the thorns represent the people who hear the word of God but prioritize the things of this world. The word never bears the fruit of salvation in their hearts because it's choked and crowded out by their desires for what the world has to offer.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.

The "good ground" is the soil that allows the seed to sprout and grow into a good harvest (v. 8). Thus are the people who have "heard" (the Greek word carries the idea of understanding and believing) the word. They have an "honest" (Greek word means "beautiful; noble; honorable") and good heart, so not only do they believe the word, but they "keep" (obey) it and the word brings forth the fruit of salvation with "patience" (endurance). The endurance means that they do not turn away from Christ when the going gets rough, but will remain faithful to Him despite any suffering or persecution they may have to face.

16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed; but setteth *it* on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. 17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

Jesus didn't teach using parables in order to hide the truth from the world because the truths of God were presented within them. Anyone that has received spiritual insight from God can comprehend them as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts and minds. The gospel is to be proclaimed freely to all the world so that the people that are the "good ground," whoever they may be, can hear and believe.

18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

Jesus reinforces the idea that only those that have had their hearts opened by God to accept the word will receive it. The truth of the gospel is only hidden from those that God has not chosen to open their hearts. In fact, God will remove their ability to understand the gospel (**Rom. 1:21** "*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened*").

**Verses 19-21:** Jesus' mother and brethren came to see Him but were unable to get through the crowd. When someone told Him that they were there, Jesus stated that it was those who believed and obeyed the word of God that were His mother and brethren.

22 Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

Luke seems to always use the term "lake" when referring to the Sea of Galilee, as he does here. Jesus and the disciples are quite likely in the vicinity of Capernaum on the NW end of the lake. Since Jesus wants to go to the "other side" of the lake and they will arrive at Gadara (v. 26) on the SE end, they are probably embarking on something like a 13 mile voyage across the water.

23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

Even though Jesus was the Son of God, He still experienced the limitations of having a human body. He apparently was so weary that He fell into such a deep sleep that even the violent tossing of the ship on the waves and the noise of the storm did not awaken Him (v. 24). The storm was so violent that the ship was filling with water to the point that it was in danger of sinking.

24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

**"And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish"** – Matthew adds the phrase "Lord, save us" to the disciples' plea. Beyond simply warning Jesus of their impending demise, they were calling on Him to do something to help them survive the storm. They apparently did not know what He could do to remedy the situation, since they were surprised at His ability to calm the storm (v. 25), but they apparently believed that He could accomplish something with His miraculous powers.

**"Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm"** – The Roman centurion had believed that Jesus could accomplish the impossible merely by speaking (Luke 7:7-8) and Jesus demonstrated here that this was indeed true. He merely spoke to this storm (saying "Peace, be still" according to Mark 4:39) and it immediately obeyed.

25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

**"And he said unto them, Where is your faith?"** – Jesus knew that His Father would not allow Him to die until it was the time for Him to die on the cross. It's unclear how much the disciples understood at this point about the fact that Jesus was to die on the cross, but the disciples should have trusted that Jesus would protect them from harm.

**"And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this!"** – Awestruck by what just happened, the disciples were gradually becoming more aware that Jesus was more than "a great prophet" (Luke 7:16) – He was the Son of God.

**"for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him"** – Storms on the Sea of Galilee were likely one of the strongest displays of power that the disciples had personally witnessed, and yet Jesus had demonstrated His power and authority over even these.