

Fruitful Lives

Matthew 13:1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the **sea side.** 2 And **great multitudes** were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a **ship,** and sat; and the **whole multitude stood on the shore.** 3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, **a sower went forth to sow;** 4 And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by **the way side,** and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5 Some fell upon **stony places,** where they had **not much earth:** and forthwith they sprung up, because they had **no deepness of earth:** 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had **no root,** they withered away. 7 And some fell among **thorns;** and the thorns sprung up, and **choked them:** 8 But other

fell into **good ground,** and **brought forth fruit,** some an **hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.** 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, **Why speakest thou unto them in parables?** 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is **given unto you** to know the **mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,** but **to them it is not given.** 12 **For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall**

**have more abundance: but
whosoever hath not, from him
shall be taken away even that
he hath.** 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables:
because they **seeing see not;** and **hearing
they hear not, neither do they
understand.** 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy
of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall **hear, and
shall not understand;** and seeing ye shall **see,
and shall not perceive:** 15 For this people's heart
is **waxed gross,** and *their* ears are **dull of
hearing,** and their **eyes they have closed;
lest at any time** they should see with *their*
eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with
their heart, and **should be converted,** and

I should heal them. 16 But **blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.** 17 For verily I say unto you, That **many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see,** and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

18 Hear ye therefore the **parable of the sower.**

19 When any one **heareth the word of the kingdom,** and **understandeth it not,** then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the **way side.** 20 But he that received the seed into **stony places,** the same is he that heareth the word,

and anon with joy receiveth it; **21** Yet hath he **not root in himself**, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. **22** He also that received seed among the **thorns** is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and **he becometh unfruitful.** **23** But he that received seed into the **good ground** is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

- Jesus began His ministry teaching in the synagogues.
Now He is teaching on the seashore
- Basically banished from the church of His day He goes to the streets, their homes, the seashore
- If you have a desire to get your message out you will find a way
- Jesus now begins to teach using parables
 - Before He had used stories and word pictures

- Salt and light
- Birds and lilies
- The wise and foolish builder
- Old wine skins and new wine skins
- Parables make truth concrete
- Parables cause people to be interested
- While parables reveal truth they also conceal it from those that are too lazy or blinded by prejudice to see the truth

1. A lesson about hearers of the gospel 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and **understandeth it not**, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the **way side**.

a. There are people with closed minds 4 And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by **the way side**, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and **understandeth it not**, then cometh the

wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the **way side.**

- i. These people are hard and closed.
- ii. Prejudice has blinded them against the light of the gospel
- iii. They are unteachable often because of pride
- iv. They maybe afraid to hear new truth
- v. It could be because of immoral character that causes them not to listen

b. Shallow people develop a superficial acceptance of the Word **5** Some fell upon **stony places**, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had **no deepness of earth:** **6** And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had **no root**, they withered away. **20** But he that received the seed into **stony places**, the same is he that **heareth**

the word, and anon with joy **receiveth**

it; 21 Yet hath he **not root** in himself, but

dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

- i. These people do not think things through
- ii. They are too concerned about fitting it
- iii. They get quickly excited and emotional
- iv. They flame up and then the fire goes out
- v. The daily disciplines discourage them and any opposition destroys them

c. Busy people 7 **And some fell among thorns;** and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 22 He also that received seed among the **thorns** is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

- i. These people have so much going on in their lives that the things of God get crowded out

- ii. They are too busy to pray, study God's Word, get involved in church
- iii. Too much and too many clamoring for attention in their lives
- d. Receptive people **8** But other fell into **good ground**, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.
 - i. There are others that are ready to hear and learn
 - ii. They are not too proud nor too busy to listen
 - iii. They are willing to think things through
 - iv. They are ready to obey
 - v. Their lives produce evidence that the Seed is there
 - 1. Notice that the one that really receives the Word brings forth fruit
 - 2. The only question is how much
 - 3. Normal fruit bearing in Jesus day was 8 to 1 and the lowest number He gives is 30 to 1
 - 4. The gospel makes a difference in your life
- e. Which kind of hearer are you today
 - i. Do you have your mind closed because of sin and pride?

- ii. Is it all just about appearances to you? Shallow and superficial?
- iii. Do you find other things to be more important than the Lord Jesus and His work?
- iv. Are you ready to hear, believe, and obey?

2. A lesson to those that preach the Word

a. It is easy to get discouraged

- i. The apostles must have noticed that they were experiencing very little noticeable success
- ii. They were no longer welcome in the synagogues
- iii. People listened and were interested but then walked away

b. They should know from this parable that the harvest is sure

- i. They could know that not all seed would produce but some would
- ii. They could sow in confidence

c. When we sow the seed of the Word we really do not know what we are doing or what effect the seed is having

- The folklorist and short-story writer H. L. Gee tells this story. In the church where he worshipped, there was a lonely old man, old Thomas. He had outlived all his friends, and hardly anyone knew him. When Thomas died, Gee had the feeling that there would be no one to go to the funeral, so he decided to go, so that there might be someone to follow the old man to his last resting place.
- There was no one else, and it was a wild, wet day. The funeral reached the cemetery; and at the gate there was a soldier waiting. He was an officer, but on his raincoat there were no rank badges. The soldier came to the graveside for the ceremony; when it was over, he stepped forward and before the open grave swept his hand upwards in the manner of a royal salute. H. L. Gee walked away with this soldier, and as they walked, the wind blew the soldier's raincoat open to reveal the shoulder badges of a brigadier.
- The brigadier said to Gee: 'You will perhaps be wondering what I am doing here. Years ago, Thomas was my Sunday School teacher; I was a wild lad and a sore trial to him. He never knew what he did for

me, but I owe everything I am or will be to old Thomas, and today I had to come to salute him at the end.' Thomas did not know what he was doing.

- d. When we sow the seed we can't look for quick results
 - i. Seeds take a long time to grow into the full grown tree
 - ii. The Sunday School teacher has no idea how God is using them
 - iii. Think of someone that influenced you and did a great work in your life and who might not even realize it right now
- e. Where are you as a seed sower?
 - i. Have you gotten discouraged and wondered if it was worth it?
 - ii. Have you grown careless and stopped teaching, sharing the Word
 - iii. Have you allow doubt and tiredness to pull you away from who you are and who you were made to be?
 - iv. Are you trusting that God will bring a harvest if you will just be faithful?
 - v. Should you find someone that God greatly used in your life to say thank you for the Word sown in your

heart and life?

3. Why was Jesus speaking in parables? 10 And the

disciples came, and said unto him, **Why**

speakest thou unto them

in parables?

- a. Jesus was actually speaking in parables so some of them couldn't understand
 - i. The elite religious crowd would think it was foolish childishness
 - ii. The regular unlearned people would be able to grasp great truths

b. God had chosen to do a work that the Jews weren't ready and able to handle 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is **given unto you** to

know the **mysteries of the**

kingdom of heaven, but to **them it is not given.**

- i. A mystery was something that was unseen and not understood
 - ii. In God's plan He would use the church, the saved Jews and Gentiles to get the gospel to the world
 - iii. There would be a parenthesis in human history where God would set aside His chosen people and use another people
 - iv. You live in the church age. The time when God uses the church to fulfill His purposes.
 - v. Jews had failed to carry out the ministry and now God will use the church
- c. The Jews had everything and yet began to be selfish

with what they had **12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever**

hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

- i. God was going to do great things with the church
 - ii. He was taking from the nation of Israel and giving to the church
 - iii. This is not taking personal salvation
 - iv. Nor is it saying that individuals can't and will not be saved
 - v. It is a ministry that is being moved from one to another
- d. So the nation was caused not to see and understand

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they **seeing see not;** and **hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.** **14** And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall **hear, and shall not understand;** and

seeing ye shall **see, and shall not**

perceive: 15 For this people's heart is **waxed gross,** and *their* ears are **dull of hearing,** and their **eyes they have closed; lest at any time** they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and **should be converted,** and I should heal them.

- i. Israel had crossed God's deadline.
- ii. They had abused the grace and gospel to the point that He would raise up another to do His ministry
- iii. This is not talking about individuals but the nation
- iv. The church will be started by individual Jewish believers who would see and hear
- v. But the Jewish religious system was being set to one side
- e. We were given what so many wanted, the opportunity to see Jesus, God in human flesh, crucified and rise

again **16** But **blessed are your eyes,**
for they see: and your ears,
for they hear. **17** For verily I say unto you,
That **many prophets and**
righteous men have desired
to see those things which ye
see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those*
things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

- i. We have the gospel and ministry given to us
 - ii. We must realize the great responsibility that comes on us as He gives us this great ministry
 - iii. Many have wanted it and we have it
 - iv. What will we do with what God has given us?
- f. How will you respond personally as you understand that God has given the church, your church such a great opportunity and responsibility?

4. Fruit bearing **8** But other fell into **good ground,** and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.
- a. Do you see in the story that the real believer, the one that was truly receptive to the Word, brought forth fruit?
 - b. How is your fruit bearing?
 - c. How much is your life lived to the honor and glory of God?
 - d. Do you realize that if you were to produce disciples over your life time in the lowest number you would make a great difference?
 - e. Do you take seriously the ministry that God has given you?
 - f. Do you realize that if the Seed hasn't produced any fruit in your life that you should have no confidence in your salvation?
 - g. What is hindering your hearing?
 - h. Why do you not respond to His wonderful gospel message?

- i. Is it your pride, in that you would never want to humble yourself and repent
- ii. Is it that you think that your life is just too full and important to take time for the things of God?
- iii. Is it that you only do what others do and follow the crowd without taking the things of God seriously?
- iv. How will you respond today?