

"Whatever Happened to ...?"

1. This parable is the most fundamental teaching Jesus gave. It is recorded in all three synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. In the account given by Mark Jesus questions His disciples: "Do you not understand this parable? And how will you understand all the parables?"

2. Most fundamentally, "The seed is the Word of God." (Isa. 55:10-11)

3. The seed has power of life and reproduction in itself, but the right environmental elements must be present to produce fruit. The "sower" is not rebuked for indiscriminate planting.

4. The four soils represent four different types of responses in people who "hear" Christ's teaching.

5. Jesus is NOT teaching that these are four different types of Christians, some of whom produce good fruit and some who do not.

6. The reproduction of good fruit is the validating proof to genuinely authenticate the presence of true Christian faith.

Imagine taking the pains to plant a garden and never eating any of its produce.

7. There are three general threats to fruit-bearing: Satan himself, the trials and testings that accompany the sowing of the Word of God, and the worldly care, worries, riches and pleasures that attempt to choke out the fruitfulness of the seed. There is no good reason why you should not be on your guard against these threats.

8. Jesus' parables are designed to hide as well as to reveal. If you love and respect your own "canon" more than the standard of Christ's authority, you will only grow more obtuse, dull and blind in your understanding of eternal truth. (Isa. 6:9)

9. It is our responsibility to place ourselves in a position to receive the Word of God. But we have further obligation to receive it with a noble, good heart, and hold fast to what we hear in order to bear fruit with perseverance.

10. It is too common to be deceived about these things. "Therefore take care how you hear; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, *even what he thinks he has* shall be taken away from him."

11. Wherever the Word of God is heard, and always when it is announced, these are the possibilities for result. It will happen in church, at family devotions, in personal quiet times, on the mission field. It will happen whether the receiver is unconverted, a new Christian, or a mature saint. **"Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it."**

12. This is not "all" you need to know, but unless you know this you can know nothing more.