

RELATED SCRIPTURES

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 7.23.23

Matthew 13:1-9 | Ezekiel 36:26-27 | Mark 4:10-20

SUMMARY

In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus not only provides a lesson that teaches us something about how different people receive the gospel, but he also interprets the parable's meaning in the verses that immediately follow (Mark 4:10-20). To the Pharisees and Scribes—the experts of the law who sought to self-justify and often *appeared* as though they were following God—the parable's meaning was hidden. But to Jesus' followers, he explained the parable's meaning: Where the seed lands on the path, this is when Satan immediately takes away the word that is sown in the one who hears the word. When the seed lands on rocky ground, it is representative of those who hear the word and receive it with joy, but as quickly as they receive it, they abandon it. The seeds sown among thorns represent those who hear the word but lose interest when tempted by other worldly cares. But the seeds sown upon good soil are the ones who hear it, receive it, and begin bearing the fruit of the gospel. It would be easy for those who hear and read this parable to assume that it details varying degrees of being lost and the one way of being saved. But in the economy of redemption, there are only two ways; someone is either lost or saved. The parable tells us that lost people take on different appearances. For example, the Pharisees and Scribes appeared to be put together and saved, yet they were still lost. However, when the Father, the True Sower, prepares a heart with his Holy Spirit to receive the Seed—his Son, Jesus—the result will be a person who yields the fruit of the gospel every *time*. Therefore, the follower of Jesus concerned about whether the seed of the gospel has taken root should worry no more. Salvation is God's work, and he promises to finish the work he started (Philippians 1:6) and rid our hearts of all the rocks and thorns so that the gospel will flourish (Ezekiel 36:26).

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Mark 4:1-9.

Why is it important for the Christian to understand this parable? What practical lessons can we take from it?

What assurances can you give the Christian who often feels like they might be among those whose hearts are as the rocky or thorny soil?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.