

LESSON 5



JESUS SOWED GOOD SEED (Part 1)

Scripture Text: Mark 4:1-17

While teaching by the seaside, Jesus was so thronged by the multitude that He went and sat in a boat to be more easily seen and heard. He taught by parables. The first parable of which He spoke was of the sower. The seed was God's Word. The four kinds of ground were the hearts of men. His followers asked Jesus to explain more in detail. In today's lesson we look at two of them.

In this lesson, as in the others, we find that the purpose of Christ's coming is to bring light, to make His Gospel known to all. Again, so vast a subject cannot be covered in the short time allowed for one lesson.

MEMORY VERSE: *Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.*

Luke 8:11

The Sower

Mark 4:1-13 Jesus entered into a ship and taught the multitude **many things by parables**. (A parable is a comparison, a story from which a moral is drawn, one in which objects and events are used to give spiritual meanings.) Jesus spoke of a sower who **went out . . . to sow**. He told of four kinds of ground in which the seed was sown. He went on to show the response of the ground in bringing forth fruit. **And when he was alone, they . . . asked of him the parable**. They wanted to know the deeper meaning of these things He had spoken. **And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?** Each individual success for bringing forth fruit for Christ depends upon one's response to God's Word when it is planted in the heart, and one's desire to know more about it. Christ has made a way for us to understand all parables.

Wayside Ground

Mark 4:14-15 **The sower**—Christ or His disciples, any who teach—**soweth the word**—the Word of God, the Gospel. **These are they**—that is, *they* are people. The pieces of ground are the hearts of people to whom the Word of God comes.

Wayside ground represents hearts where the Word does not sink in. The people are not interested, do not consider, and so do not understand the truths heard. Satan takes away the seed, or Word, before it takes root in these hearts. These are people who just happen to be around where the seed is falling. They may be in a funeral service, or they may just be visiting the house of God by invitation of a friend. They may have, by chance, heard it on the radio. The seed was sown, but it did no good. Why? Because the ground was not in shape to receive the seed. The very center of their lives is taken up in earthly and human interests. Thus the seed falls around the edges. When the Word falls around the edges, it will never bring forth an experience with God. These people are not saved. When one does not understand the Word, one does not have it (2 Timothy 3:7). Each person needs to get his ground in shape for the seed to fall and take root and bring forth fruit for God.

Christ Used the Best He Had

Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. Wayside ground is open to all of the attacks of the fowls of the air—false prophets. False ministers will pick up the seed before it sprouts and put

something else in its place (Matthew 7:15). This is why we read in verse 20 of some bringing forth less than one hundredfold. God used reformers to bring back the truth of the early church, a hundredfold message. He worked as fast as He could get light to these men. He did not require a sixtyfold fruit from a thirtyfold ministry. Nor did He accept a thirtyfold from a sixtyfold age. The thirtyfold age, the justification by faith age, taught and lived all they knew, and God accepted and blessed it. Then the holiness age—they taught these two truths together and were sixtyfold fruitful. Then came the hundredfold age—justification, holiness, and Bible unity. God did not, and will not, accept less than full fruitage from that time until the end of this Gospel Day. Thank God! In the age in which we live, we can gain a full understanding of God's Word (verse 11).

Stony Ground

Mark 4:16-17 Stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it . . . Stony ground is shallow, fickle, impulsive hearts. They are as a thin layer of soil over a bed of rock. They hear the Word and accept it without counting the cost (Luke 14:28). They **have no root**—have little understanding of the way of the Lord. They are saved, but **endure but for a time**. They become **offended** because the Gospel of Christ asks of them more than they are willing to pay.

Gaining a lasting experience is far deeper than the average person realizes (Matthew 7:14). All men are shown the way. But all do not find life because they refuse the Way, Jesus Christ. Jesus came to bring everlasting life. He came to give men and women an experience that enables them to live in peace with God and man every hour on this earth and die with peace in their souls and be ready to live with Him throughout the endless ages of eternity. **When affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake**, they cannot take it. They are not prepared for it. They let go of God and turn back into sin. The only way to obtain this life is to take God's way. Give up all.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Habit is like a cable; we weave a thread of it every day,
and at last, we cannot break it.**