

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for September 18, 2016**

**The Parable of the Sower**  
**Mark 4:1-20**

I. The illustration of the parable (4:1-9)

*Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land.*

- Jesus' passion and purpose was to preach (1:38)
- Once again, there was a great crowd (3:7, 20)
- Teaching from a boat provides ability to both be heard and not get crushed

*And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them:*

- Parables can include riddles, proverbs, allegories, etc.
- Parable is a "story with a point"

*"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it."*

- "Listen" is a word repeated in this passage (vv. 9, 15, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24)
- Soil of the path
  - Seed accidentally fallen outside of prepared/plowed soil
  - Seed takes no root, soil does not accept it
  - Seed is out in open for the birds to devour

*"Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away."*

- Soil of rocky ground
  - Not soil filled with rocks but thin layer of soil on top of bedrock
  - Roots of the plant do not go deep enough; thus, the sun then burns the roots

*"Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain."*

- Soil of thorns

- Farmers would plow their land with weeds and thorns included in the soil
- Thus, the weeds would grow with whatever was planted
- In this scenario, the weeds overwhelmed and choked the plant

*“And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”*

-Good soil

- 30, 60, 100 fold are probably referring to grain kernels per stalk
- 3 unsuccessful soils and 3 different amounts of success in the good soil

*And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

- This is a call for everyone to listen to what He is teaching (Jeremiah 5:21, Ezekiel 12:2)

## II. The intention of parables (4:10-12)

*And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables.*

- The scene changes to later in the day, after Jesus spoke many parables
- This is a different group than the “very large crowd” (4:1)
- These are potentially the same people from 3:31-35 as His true “family” who does the will of God

\*Jesus reveals the twofold purpose of parables:

1. Teach about Kingdom to true followers (Reveal)
2. Confirm spiritual blindness of unbelievers (Conceal)

*And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God,"*

- Those following Jesus had spiritual insight
- Thus, the parables instruct them regarding the Kingdom of God
- These parables encourage the disciples that God’s Kingdom is still happening despite the mixed responses to Jesus

*but for those outside everything is in parables, so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven."*

- Those not following Jesus out of faith, were “those outside”
- Potentially biological family, religious leaders, enthusiasts, etc.

- Meaning of parables were hidden from those outside
  - Jesus does this because this was their confirmed condition before God
    - They had already blasphemed the Holy Spirit's ministry through Jesus (3:22-30)
  - This is judgment because now the message is hidden from them
    - Parallels Isaiah's ministry to Israel who already stood judged
    - Isaiah 6:9-10 "And he said, 'Go, and say to this people: Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

### III. The interpretation of the parable (4:13-20)

*And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"*

- Parable of the sower is key to understanding the other parables
- If the Jews did not embrace the teaching of the Messiah, then all the parables would be worthless

*The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.*

- These people listen but don't really hear the message
- Hebrews 3:13 "But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

*And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.*

- Emotional response to the Word of God
- Instead of trials producing maturity, they fall away
- 1 John 2:19 "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us."

*And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.*

- Weeds:

- Cares of the world

- Deceitfulness of riches

- Love of money is root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:9-10)

- Desires for other things enter in

- 1 John 2:15-17 "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life--is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."

- Result:

- Choke the word and it proves unfruitful

- One cannot serve both God and the world

- James 4:4 "You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

*But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."*

- **Luke 8:15** "As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience."

- These people hear, keep, hold fast the Word in order to bear fruit