

## Is God Still Working In The World?

Mark 4:14-32

December 27, 2009

The word “*parable*” means “*to cast alongside of*”. Someone has defined a parable as “*an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.*” In a parable truth is cast alongside life and life interprets the truth. In other words, a parable takes the common, everyday events of life and uses them to illustrate the deep things of God.

You need to use caution when you try to interpret the parables in the Bible. Some people make the mistake of trying to make every single twist in the parable mean something spiritual. As a result, many false doctrines and foolish teachings have sprung to life. A parable is designed to teach one primary truth. When that truth is understood, the parable becomes clear.

***The Parable Of The Soils.*** This parable was told to the multitudes in public and explained to the disciples in private. In explaining this parable, Jesus tells us what each element of the parable means.

Everyone who heard this parable could immediately relate to what Jesus was teaching. They had all seen a farmer walk into his field and begin to sow seed into that field. They had all seen the crops spring up and begin to grow. Jesus used this common scene to teach a deep spiritual truth.

He tells us that the “*sower*” is one who sows the “*word of God*”. It might be the Spirit of God, a preacher, a teacher, a missionary, a Gospel song, a Gospel tract, a one on one witness, etc.

The “*seed*” is the Gospel of grace. It is the good news that Jesus came into this world, died for sinners, rose again from the dead and offers full and free salvation to everyone who will receive Him into their heart and life. In this parable, some of the “*seed*” produces fruit and some does not. The problem does not lie in the “*seed*”. All the seed was good “*seed*”. Each kernel held the potential to produce fruit. The problem was not the “*seed*”; the problem was the “*soil*”.

The “*soil*” in this parable represents the heart or the mind of the person who hears the Gospel of grace. Everyone who hears the Gospel hears it in a different way. Some revile it, some reject it and some receive it. It is the “*soil*” that is the primary emphasis of this parable.

I want to examine this parable today. I want to point out the kind of *minds* that hear the Gospel and how each responds to it. As we move through these verses, I would like for you to examine yourself. You will encounter your own mind in these verses today. Let’s consider the *minds* that are revealed in this parable as we think together about ***The Parable Of The Soils.***

Responses to The Revelation of God Mark 4:13-20

The “*seed*” was good, but the “*soil*” was unprepared to receive it. The “*seed*” could not penetrate the “*soil*”. The “*seed*” could not germinate. There could be no life. There could be no fruit. This is a picture of a lost mind.

This kind of soil speaks of the mind that makes an emotional response to the presentation of the Gospel. This is seen in the words “*receive it with gladness*”.

- Perhaps this person heard the Gospel and said, “*That is just what I need! I might as well give Jesus a try.*”
- Perhaps they came to an altar and prayed because a friend did.
- Maybe they tried to use Jesus as a “*spare tire*” in a moment of crisis. They ran to Him in their trouble and abandoned Him when the trouble passed.
- Perhaps they were in an emotional service and they got “*caught up*” in the moment and made a profession. This happens a lot in revivals and youth meetings.
- Perhaps they heard a shallow presentation of the Gospel that presents the benefits of salvation but does not share the costs. This person knows nothing about repentance, dying to self, and turning away from the old life.
- Maybe they got in one of those services where the preacher has people bow their heads and repeat a prayer after him and raise their hands if they were saved.

Many millions have been inoculated against the Gospel by some flimsy Gospel presentation and by a false profession of faith. Whatever happened, they made a profession, they are excited, they are active, and they are accepted as the real deal. But because they have no depth to their profession, they fall away when the persecutions and tribulations associated with knowing Jesus arise.

Were they really saved? No! How do we know for sure? There is no fruit of salvation in their life! By the way, when a profession of salvation is real, it will last! We often call these types of people “*backsliders*” or “*carnal Christians*.” In my opinion, they have never been saved. If the Lord saves your soul, He will change your life, **2 Cor. 5:17**. When God changes a life, He does it forever. What He does in you will last. You may fall, but you will not stay away from His house, His presence, His throne, His Word, His people and you will not be able to stay out of His will, Ill. **1 John 3:9**.

Were they really saved? No! How do we know? There is no fruit of salvation in their life! When Jesus comes in to a life, He causes the redeemed person to make a clean, clear break with the old life of sin. I will say it again, we like to look at people who have made a profession and who are back out in sin and say they are “*backslidden and out of God’s will*” or “*carnal*”. More likely, they have just never been saved to begin with! (Ill. **Col. 3:1-10; 1 John 2:15**)

Ill. Preachers have fed a generation the lie of “*easy believism*” and have failed to tell lost people that a holy God demands repentance, along with faith, before a lost soul can be saved. If you have made a profession and there has been no change in your life, then you need to repent and call on Christ for salvation.

### **Responses To The Gifts of God Mark 4:21-25**

So, what kind of fruit does good soil produce?

- Good works – **Col. 1:10**
- Holiness and righteousness – **Rom. 6:22; Phil. 1:11**
- Genuine spirituality – **Gal. 5:22-23**
- A burden for souls – **Rom. 1:13**
- Praise and thanksgiving – **Heb. 13:15**
- Sharing material goods – **Rom. 15:27-28**

### **Response To The Kingdom of God Mark 4:26-32**

A young boy of about nine went with his parents to Europe one summer. Part of their tour included visits to the great old cathedrals of the past. As he visited cathedral after cathedral he saw the massive stained glass portraits of the disciples and of other saints.

He was very impressed as he stood in these great empty halls looking through the beautiful stained glass windows. Upon returning to his church, he was asked by his Sunday School teacher about the great churches of Europe, and what he liked the most.

He thought for a moment and he said, “*I loved the sense of awesomeness and the hugeness of who God must be.*”

“*And what is a saint?*” his teacher asked next.

His mind went back to those massive beautiful stained glass windows and he said, “*A saint is a person the light shines through.*”

That is a good definition of what a saint of God is supposed to be. We have no light of our own, but like the moon, we are to reflect the light of Jesus to a lost and dying world.

In our text today, the Lord gives us some insight into light and the place it is to occupy in spiritual matters. I want to show you from these verses the truth that ***You Can’t Hide From The Light.***

Jesus is the “*Light of the World*”, **John 8:12**. His light penetrates even the darkest of places and the blackest of hearts. He gives us some insight into His light. Allow me to share a few of the *facts of light* with you as I preach on the subject: ***You Can't Hide From The Light***.

Light is a tremendous gift! Can you remember when the darkness of your sinful past was shattered by the light of the Gospel? Can you remember when the Lord placed His light and His life within you? If you can, then you know the value of that light. It must not be secreted away, but it must be shared with a lost and dying world!

No one has ever gotten away with sin! That is the clear teaching of the Bible, Reuben, **Gen. 49:3-4**; Achan, **Josh. 7:1-26**; Ananias and Sapphira, **Acts 5:1-11**. The hidden works of darkness will always be brought out into the light. You and I will not be able to hide our sins either, **Num. 32:23**.

If you truly want to know the deep things of God, take the time to share the things you already know. Give away what He has given you!

- Did you learn something about the Lord in your private time today? ***Give it away!***
- Did you glean a nugget in Sunday School? ***Give it away!***
- Did you get something from a sermon you heard recently? ***Give it away!***
- Did God open your eyes to a deep truth in His Word? ***Give it away!***