"The Sower, Seed, & Soil"

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
2-18-2018

Introduction:

- The Sower = A messenger of God
- The Seed = The Word of God
- The Soil = The heart of man

**** Examine the condition of your heart!***

Which type of soil characterizes your heart?

I. HARD - Hearted (v. 4, 19)
***This soil characterizes the rebellious person**
(one who does not want to hear it at all).



II. FAINT - Hearted (v. 5-6, 20-21)
***This soil characterizes the non-committed person**
(one who is emotionally interested but not committed).



III. HALF - Hearted (v. 7, 22)
***This soil characterizes the easily distracted person**
(one who is preoccupied, other things are more important).



IV. WHOLE - Hearted (v. 8, 23)
***This soil characterizes the tender person**
(one who has a sincere and good heart - Luke 8:15).



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What is the difference between someone who looks forward to reading their Bible, and someone who never or seldom wants to?

What is the difference between someone who loves coming to church and hearing a message, and someone who would rather stay home and play?

What is the difference between someone who gets something every time he reads or hears the Scriptures, and someone who is unchanged and even unchallenged whenever the Word is read or heard?

What is the difference between the two?

ANSWER: The condition of their hearts

Your heart is the door to your spirit; it is the gateway to your "inner-man."

This is why Solomon said: "Guard your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

Your heart is that invisible part of you that thinks, feels, and chooses. (It is the culmination of intellect, emotion, and will).

Your heart is that which loves and hates, chooses to do right and wrong.

"The LORD looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7).

The Sower = A messenger of God
The Seed = The Word of God
The Soil = The heart of man

Why is the Word compared to a seed?
The Word, like a seed has life in it (Heb.4:12)
The Word, like a seed must be planted (I Cor. 3)

The Word, like a seed will take root & produce fruit if the soil is cultivated.
(Tenderized & watered - Rom.10:17)

*** Examine the condition of your heart!**

Which type of soil characterizes your heart?

I. HARD - Hearted (v. 4, 19)

***This soil characterizes the rebellious person** (one who does not want to hear it at all).

Jesus is describing a heart that "has never been softened by remorse, never broken up by conviction of sin" (MacArthur, p. 357)

The "hard-hearted" person has this attitude: "No one is going to tell me what to do!"

"Harden not your hearts" (Heb. 3:8)

"He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed" (Prov. 29:1).

Some say, "I pray! I don't need church or Bible reading." --- "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9).

This is the teen who goes to church because his parents "make him."

You can't grow anything in ROCK!

II. FAINT - Hearted (v. 5-6, 20-21)

***This soil characterizes the non-committed person** (one who is emotionally interested but not committed).

"The same sun that hardens the clay will melt the wax."

The sun ("persecution") can either help the true believer to grow, or reveal that the profession of a false believer was not real, genuine, or sincere.

“No Deepness” – This shallow hearted individual had no deep conviction of sin or salvation, as evidenced by his withering away when criticism, pressure, or persecution comes to test his faith.

The "faint-hearted" person has this attitude: "It's not worth it!"

The stony heart says, "Living for Jesus is good [Okay] as long as it doesn't cost me anything." It's fine as long as all my friends are doing it. But if I ever get "made fun of" or actually opposed, I know this is "quitting time."

V. 20

"Anon with joy" - right away or immediately with much emotion.

This quick response to the gospel was very promising (especially when compared with hard soil). The superficial, "surface" response was characterized by "joy" (enthusiasm, an emotional high, great feelings, but no depth. "The gospel truth has not penetrated his heart but only the edge of his mind, and it is therefore as immediately renounced at it was immediately received." (MacArthur, p. 358)

This is the one who professes faith, gives a tear-jerking testimony, is all "on fire" for Christ, and then fizzles away when things get hot, never to be found again! [EX: Ron Stravel, Satanic cult leader]

This is the person who likes learning about the Bible in a class, chapel, or in church, so that he can get an "A" on his test, or please his teacher, or have the answers to give out to others (Ex: cults, other religions), but he himself does not totally believe it or obey it.

There is a need to abide in Christ and His Words in order to produce fruit (Jn. 15:1-8).

III. HALF - Hearted (v. 7, 22)

***This soil characterizes the easily distracted person** (one who is preoccupied, other things are more important).

The "half-hearted" person has this attitude: "This is boring!"

The thorns rob the water and minerals in the ground and choke out the sunlight from reaching the crop.

V. 22

"The care of this world" = The pre-occupations and anxieties of this present age.

--More worried about your career (job)
--More worried about your fame (status)
--More worried about paying your bills (Mt. 6:33)
--More worried about your marriage, world events, etc.

"Worry" will keep you from reading Bible and benefitting from it.

"The deceitfulness of riches" -

--Money is a deceiver (Mt. 19:23; I Tim. 6:9, 10, 17)
--Things preoccupy

The happy man is the one who has enough to live, but not enough to fall in love with it.

Something new (novel) and exciting can easily distract the half-hearted.

Why? Because they have one foot in the world while attempting to keep one foot in the Word (you can't do it - I Jn. 2:15-17).

You can't grow anything in GARBAGE!

IV. WHOLE - Hearted (v. 8, 23)

***This soil characterizes the tender person** (one who has a sincere and good heart - Luke 8:15).

The "Whole-hearted" person has this attitude: "Give me more!"

This “heart” (“soil”) is good “not because it has a different basic composition than the other kinds of soil, but because it is rightly prepared” (MacArthur, p. 361)

It was not compacted;
Not rock filled;
Not thorn infested;

Note: such preparation is done by the Spirit of God!
(ex. Lydia - And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. (Acts 16:14)

V. 23

The good ground:

1. "Heareth" (note: all "soils" heard the word - v. 19, 20, 22)

2. "Understandeth" - comprehension depends upon the condition of your heart.

   People don't understand for one of three reasons in their heart:

   1) They don't want to
   2) They don't put in the effort
   OR 3) They want to do other things (distracted).

3. "Beareth fruit" - the result of understanding the Word!

   Note: Not every Christian will bear the same amount of fruit, but all will bear fruit. “Only God knows how many apples one seed will produce”

Compare the fruitfulness of him who delights in God's Law:
"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psalm 1:2-3)

The average yield ration of grain crops in Israel was less than 8 to 1. (MacArthur p. 362)
Therefore, this harvest and fruitfulness is truly supernatural!

Have a soft heart while you are young. If not, it will become more calloused as you get older [Old people are "set in their ways"}

The most dangerous position to be in is to be "set in <u>your</u> ways" -- because God can no longer teach you.

What we need is <u>thirsty</u> soil!

--Not <u>cement</u> which can take no water (hard heart)

--Not rock-filled <u>shallow</u> soil which can only drink a little (faint-hearted)

--Not <u>thorn</u> infested soil which has its water robbed (half-hearted)

--But <u>fertile</u>, <u>cultivated</u> soil which will soak in the seed and water (whole-hearted)

Mt. 5:6 - "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

CONCLUSION:

"God knoweth your hearts" (Lk. 16:15).

Although I cannot see your heart, I can know your heart by your fruit.

V. 23

"Fruitfulness" =

1) Doing things pleasing to God (Jn. 15:8)

2) Doing things you can bring to Heaven

> [That your fruit should remain (last) – Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. Jn. 15:16]

a. souls (Mt. 9:37-38)

b. service for the saints (Mt. 25:34-40)

The problem is often not the preaching (or preacher) but the condition of your heart.

The problem is never the Word of God, but is the condition of your heart.

SEE: Jer. 4:3-4

"Break up your fallow (untilled) ground . . . and take away the foreskins of your heart . . ."

Our prayer needs to be:

"Take me"
"Break me"
"Mold me"
"Make me . . .
a tender-hearted Christian"

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Ps. 51:10).