

# **“A FRUITFUL HEART”**

**(Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23)**

“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that hears the Word and understands it; which also bears fruit.” (V. 23)

## **Introduction**

**Question:** Why do some grow in the Lord while others do not?

**Question:** Why do some go forward while others slide backwards?

**Question:** How can the same Word of God that’s preached, bear fruit in some but produce nothing in others?

**Question:** How can many who love good preaching and teaching, remain shallow in their walk with God?

**Question:** Why is so much preaching wasted (or not effective in producing much fruit)?

## **Three Illustrations in This Parable**

### **I. The Seed Is The Word Of God**

“Behold, a sower went forth to sow, and some seeds fell by the wayside.” (V. 3, 4)

(How is God’s Word like Seed?)

1. God’s Word (like seed) has life in it  
“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God.” (I Peter 1:23)
2. God’s Word (like seed) is powerful  
“For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing...” (Hebrews 4:12)
3. God’s word (like seed) produces fruit  
Seeds produce fruit that has in it the seed for more fruit.
4. God’s word (like seed) must be planted to work!  
Seeds in a jar on a shelf will produce nothing unless they are sown in the soil.

### **II. The Sower Is the One Who Shares The Word**

”A sower went forth to sow.” (V. 3)

(Ingredients of Faithful Sowers)

“He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” (Psalm 126:6)

1. The Going: “He (or she) that goes forth”
2. The Compassion: “And weeps”
3. The Word: “Bearing precious seed.”

4. The Joy: “Rejoicing”
5. The Fruit: “Shall doubtless come again, bringing his sheaves (souls) with him.”
6. The Believing: “One plants, one waters, but God gives the increase.” (I Cor. 3:6,7)
7. The Patience: “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it.” (James 5:7)

“First the blade. Then the ear. After that the full corn in the ear.” (Mark 4:28)

### **III. The Soil Is the Human Heart**

**(Jesus is clear)**

**Fact**: The effectiveness of the Seed (The Word) will be determined by the soil (the heart).

**Fact**: Soil has great potential (it can become a garden or a jungle).

**Fact**: Soil must have great care (left alone it will run rampant with weeds).

**Fact**: Soil and Seed can result in germination (but you and I must cooperate with God to see lasting fruit for eternity).

**Jesus explains four kinds of hearts:**

(Four possibilities exist)

#### **1. The Hard Heart (V. 4,19)**

“And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up.” (V. 4)

**Fact**: The footpaths that ran through the fields in Palestine were hard ground.

**Fact**: It wouldn’t be unusual for seed to fall on these hard footpaths.

**Fact**: The fowls came and ate the seed, because it stayed on the surface and never sunk in.

**Question**: What is a hard heart?

**Answer**: (V.19) “When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom and understands it not, then comes the wicked one and catches away what is sown in the heart.”

(The Problem?)

- ◆ This person hears, but doesn’t understand.
- ◆ This hearer is not hungry enough to grasp and seek to understand truth.
- ◆ This person’s heart is hard and not broken to the total will of God.
- ◆ This hearer has forgotten the words of Jesus:

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone, but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.” (John 12:24)

**The corn and wheat have to die;**

(For the germ of life to spring forth)

**Question**: What is brokenness?

- Answer:**
1. Giving up yourself to God.
  2. Surrendering your rights to Father.
  3. Claiming to be nothing apart from God.
  4. Humility void of pride and self-conceit.

## 2. **The Shallow Heart** (V. 5, 6, 20, 21)

“Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they spring up, because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was up, they were scorched, and because they had no root, they withered away.” (V. 5, 6)

**Fact:** The soil in Palestine lies on a thick layer of limestone.

**Fact:** Where the soil is thin, the roots of a germinating seed cannot go far.

**Fact:** The result is, the shoot springs up quickly but there is no root system to sustain the plant.

**Fact:** No roots mean no water, and no water means scorching and death.

**Question:** What is a shallow heart?

**Answer:** “He that receives the seed into stony places, the same is he that hears the Word, receives it with joy, yet has no root in himself but endures for a while; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, by and by he is offended.” (V. 20, 21)

### **The Problem?**

- #1. The shallow heart is the emotional hearer.
- #2. This person loves great preaching and teaching but their response is purely emotional, shallow and temporary.
- #3. This hearer wants instant maturity, instant spirituality, instant fruit and instant blessing without addressing the root system.
- #4. This hearer wants a short cut around the absolutes that build a fail-proof life.

### Roots Grow...

- ◆ In Prayer (Ephesians 5:18)
- ◆ In the Word (Psalm 1)
- ◆ In Fellowship (Hebrews 10:25)
- ◆ In Service (Matthew 23:11)
- ◆ In Faithfulness (Psalm 92:13)

- **Tumbleweeds** are carried about by every new wind of doctrine.
- **Transplants** move from place to place, they only stay until they don't get their own way (they resist delegated authority and correction).
- **Planted;** those who are consistent in building relationships of trust so fruit can come forth. (They build on rock, not sand. (Matt. 7:24-27)

**Remember:** If the branches go out further than the roots go down deep, the tree topples over in the storm.

## 3. **The Crowded Heart** (V. 7,22)

“And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them. (V. 7)

**Fact:** The soil wasn't clean from weeds.

**Fact:** The soil had in it seeds of “another nature”.

**Fact:** These weeds weren't planted, they just naturally grow.

**Question:** What is a crowded heart?

**Answer:** “He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the Word; and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word and he becomes unfruitful.” (V. 22)

### **The Problem?**

1. The crowded heart found no lack of soil (but a lack of husbandry-weeding).
2. The crowded heart loves good preaching and teaching, but thorns in the heart spoil the seed.
3. The crowded heart wants to grow in God, but influences from the world choke the seed.
4. Two major weeds rob this believer:
  - ◆ “The cares of this world.”
  - ◆ “The deceitfulness of riches.”

**Question:** What cares rob us of fruit?

**Question:** How can riches be deceitful?

**Remember:** Jesus knew that many people on shore were not receiving the Word (they were too preoccupied with food, clothing, paying bills, problems and their “to do” list).

### **Weeds Will Destroy Your Fruit (Some facts about weeds)**

1. **Every Weed Starts Small**  
(A compromise, questionable activity, bad attitude, etc.)
2. **Weeds Sap Your Strength**  
(They drain you of joy and enthusiasm)
3. **Weeds Hide The Fruit**  
(The chaff covers the precious wheat)
4. **Weeds Spread**  
(Left unattended, weeds beget weeds and multiply rapidly).

### **How To Kill The Weeds**

1. See how serious they really are.
2. Call them by name.
3. Get going, decide now to get rid of them.
4. Stay out of other people's gardens.

#### 4. The Fruitful Heart (V. 8, 23)

“Other seed fell into good ground and brought forth fruit.” (V. 8, 23)

**Fact:** The fruitful heart is the one in contrast to the other three hearts:

- ◆ It’s not hard, but broken
- ◆ It’s not shallow, but rooted
- ◆ It’s not crowded, but clean

#### **The Secret?**

“He who has ears, let him hear.” (V. 9)

(Or)

1. Pay close attention to receive good seed.
2. Guard what goes into your mind.
3. Be alert to what is on your T.V.
4. Screen the music that enters your ears.
5. Discern the books that feed your mind.
6. Keep the heart’s soil free from debris.
7. Be careful what you plant into your heart.

#### **Result?**

“And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward.” (Isaiah 37:31)

(Lord Give Us Grace)

- ◆ To be Broken (not hard)
- ◆ To be Rooted (not shallow)
- ◆ To be Clean (not crowded)
- ◆ To be Fruitful (not barren)

AMEN!  
Bill Kirk