**THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER WAS FOR “ME”**

“Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: ‘Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!’” (Mt.13:1-9)

Most sermons preached from this parable focus on “evangelism” – specifically, the hearts of those we are teaching. While that application is true, *I think that Jesus is actually talking about* ***“MY”*** *heart, not others!* In other words, the real point of this parable is to for me to examine **MYSELF** (cf. v.9). It’s more about how **“I”** hear the word, rather than how “others” hear it. So, as we take a look at this parable, examine your own heart…

**Do I have a *hard* heart?** “Therefore, hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside” (Mt.13:18-19). The “wayside” soil was trodden upon and packed down; it was ground that was too hard for the “seed” (the word of the kingdom) to penetrate. And the one thing which usually hardens our hearts is “sin” (Hb.3:13). Eventually, sin can cause us to become “past feeling” (Ep.4:19). So, let us be sure to avoid sin, so our hearts will remain penetrable. And keep your conscience tender!

**Do I have a *shallow* heart?** “But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles” (Mt.13:20-21). The “stony” soil was shallow, and did not allow the seed develop firm “roots.” A shallow heart is one that has not “counted the cost” of discipleship. Because of that, when those hard times come, he just withers up and dies! If we truly want to survive when the hard times come, then we must realize the cost of discipleship (Lk.9:23). We must become “*rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith,* as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving” (Col.2:6-7).

**Do I have a *worldly* heart?** “Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful” (v.22). The “thorny” ground is crowded with other plants. Sometimes, we allow our hearts to be crowded with worldly concerns, and the pursuit of wealth. These concerns eventually overwhelm the “seed” (word), so that it cannot survive in our heart. The only solution is to prioritize the spiritual over the material (Mt.6:33; Jn.6:27). Only then will we have a chance to survive and be fruitful!

**Or, do I have a *good* heart?** “But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Mt.13:23). The “good ground” is fertile – the perfect environment for the “seed” (word) to take root, grow, and thrive! An “good” heart is one which wants to do right. To do that, we must be honest with ourselves, honest with the truth, and willing to change if needed (cf. Ac.18:24-26). If this describes you, then you will assuredly thrive in Christ!

God created us with the ability to hear and understand His will (Ep.3:3-5). So, let us all examine ourselves, and make sure we are hearing the world in a way that’s profitable, fruitful, and pleasing to God!

--Lanny Smith