

James 1:18-22

¹⁸ In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

¹⁹ *This* you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

Luke 8:4-21

⁴ When a large crowd was coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable: ⁵ “The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up. ⁶ Other *seed* fell on rocky *soil*, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. ⁷ Other *seed* fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out. ⁸ Other *seed* fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great.” As He said these things, He would call out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

⁹ His disciples *began* questioning Him as to what this parable meant. ¹⁰ And He said, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is* in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.

¹¹ “Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. ¹² Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved. ¹³ Those on the rocky *soil* are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no *firm* root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. ¹⁴ The *seed* which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to maturity. ¹⁵ But the *seed* in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

The soil must be in the right condition for God’s Word to flourish- it must be good and honest!

Jesus reveals three conditions of “soil” which cannot ultimately bear fruit for God.

The first is soil that is “by the road.” That is, untilled, unprepared soil that is not open to receive the Word.

This soil does not receive the Word, so the Devil comes and takes it away so that it cannot be implanted.

The second is rocky soil, which has a soft covering of soil, but only hardness underneath.

This soil will appear to receive the Word, even with great joy, but a little “heat” is all it takes for the Word to wither.

The third is weedy soil, full of the thorns of worry, wealth, and indulgence in pleasure.

This soil will produce the plant, but it will be choked as it begins to bear fruit, preventing the fruit from maturing.

The only hope of the hearer (of God’s Word) is having a good and honest heart to receive and retain the Word.

Jesus goes on to warn his hearers that many begin well, but the condition of their soil begins to change.

¹⁶ “Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light. ¹⁷ For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor *anything* secret that will not be known and come to light.

At first, in goodness and honesty, we shine the light (share the Word) of what God has done in our heart with boldness.

Jesus warns them not to become ashamed and hide the light; the lamp was lit to illumine others!

The picture here is of a secret Christian being “un-bowled,” by circumstances, or by Jesus at His return!

¹⁸ So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him *more* shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.”

Jesus says the key to good stewardship of God’s Word is HOW we listen. We can lose a good crop if the soil becomes tainted.

It also matters a great deal what you listen to. Do the things I choose to listen to reinforce the righteousness of God, or the sinfulness of man?

¹⁹ And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd. ²⁰ And it was reported to Him, “Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You.”²¹ But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.”

Jesus’ true family- those of His likeness, and sharing His nature- are the ones who cultivate the Word until it bears fruit.

The Word, in full standing fruitful maturity, is being acted upon and bearing itself out in the character of the hearer.

James 1:25

²⁵ But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Matthew 7:24-25

²⁴ “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.