

MORNING SERMON OUTLINE
RESPONSES TO THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Last week we introduced Jesus' parables ("earthly stories with heavenly Meaning" – here in Matt.13, lessons about the Kingdom of heaven). We focused on verses 10-17, in which Jesus answers His disciples' question, "Why do You speak to them in parables," but we did not actually look at the "Parable of the Sower." So we will do that today. This parable should move you to ask,

"How am I responding to the message of the gospel of Christ?"

1. A Simple Story about a Farmer & His Crop

NOT a lesson in agriculture, but a lesson on the Kingdom of heaven.

Seed falls on four kinds of ground, of which -

one is totally unproductive, two *seem* to be productive at first, but only the fourth is truly productive of a fruitful harvest.

2. The Meaning

1st – The Sower is Jesus (vs.37) in the immediate setting; later it will be the apostles, the church, its ministers, its people who sow the word.

2nd – The seed = the word / message of the kingdom (v.19), the gospel

3rd - Responses to the Word:

a. Outright rejection by the enemies of Jesus – then & since

b. Seemingly positive responses to the Word that do not last -

- The "stony ground" hearers – receive the Word with joy, BUT with "no root," suffering & persecution kill their "faith."

- The "thorny ground" hearers – Their "faith" is choked out by the cares of the world & deceitful lure of riches.

c. The "good soil" hearers – in whom the Word is fruitful (variously)

"Good soil" does NOT mean "good people" (**ALL** are sinners),

but soil intended for the seed & plowed by the farmer –

the regenerating work of the Spirit we need if we are to

respond to the Gospel with true & fruitful faith in Christ.

3. How should WE respond to this story?

This account written for the instruction of Christ's church.

We should expect such responses, & not be discouraged by them.

We should hold forth the Word in confidence that God has prepared soil for its fruitful reception.

We should warn new believers of the pitfalls to lasting & fruitful faith.

Each of us should examine ourselves. "Am I truly trusting Jesus Christ with a faith that is enduring and is bearing fruit by God's grace?"

³¹Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, ³²& you will know the truth, & the truth will set you free." ... ⁷If you abide in Me, & My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, & it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples. **John 8:31f, 15:7f**