Matthew 13.1-13
Sunday August 23,2026

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. [2] And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. [3] And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. [4] And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. [5] Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, [6] but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. [7] Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. [8] Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. [9] He who has ears, let him hear."

ESV Study Bible defines parables as follows:

- Jesus' means of communicating truth through narrative analogy in order to teach a moral or spiritual lesson.
    - Analogy: a comparison between two different things to show how they are alike in some way. People use it to explain a hard idea by comparing it to something simple and well-known.
        - A detailed comparison used to explain or prove a point.

The Parable: (see also Mk.4.1-20; Lk.8.4-15)

- A farmer went out to plant seed in his field
- The seed fell on different types of ground bringing different consequences in its growth.

The practice of the day:

- Farmers would broadcast their seed and then plow them into the ground.

[18] "Hear then the parable of the sower: [19] When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. [20] As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, [21] yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. [22] As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. [23] As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

The interpretation:

- The seed is the Word of God Lk.8.11
- The different types of ground represent the different people who hear the Word
- The seed, as the Word of God, is good. The problem lies with the ground.
- The seed on the ground suggests that the Word of God was heard

- Jesus' parable gives us four different responses

The different types of ground and response:

- The path (hard ground) with no response:
  - The message is not understood and those hearing it do not pursue it any further
  - Satan (the birds) comes and snatches the seed away – no serious further thought is given
    - *Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.* Acts 17.11
- The rocky ground with an emotional response:
  - The message is gladly received and rejoiced in until tribulation arrives. There is no root; their commitment is fair-weather only.
    - *On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" …From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.* Jn.6.60,66
- The thorny ground with a worldly response:
  - The message is received and held on to but the cares and deceitfulness of riches prevent true growth
    - *And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.* Mk.10.21-22
- The good ground with a fruitful response:
  - The message is received, understood and acted upon (bears fruit)
    - Note: Our yields reflect our gifting, talents and obedience. What is important is that each produce the best crop he/she is capable of
  - *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.* Eph.2.10

When we hear the Word of God, what kind of ground do we provide?

10 Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" 11 And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 13 This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

"'"You will indeed hear but never understand,
and you will indeed see but never perceive."
15 For this people's heart has grown dull,
and with their ears they can barely hear,
and their eyes they have closed,
lest they should see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their heart
and turn, and I would heal them.'

[16] But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. [17] For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Why use parables?

- Jesus' response is curt and to the point:
    - *To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.* V.11

- From before the creation God has chosen His people to fulfill His purposes:
    - *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. [4] For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— [6] to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. [7] In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace [8] that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, [9] he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, [10] to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.*

      [11] In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, [12] in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. Eph.1.3-12

Chapter 13 starts with telling us, *That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea,* v.1.

- That same day a demon-oppressed man experienced God's mercy when healed by Jesus
    - The scribes and Pharisees accused Jesus of being in league with Satan
- Possibly that same day a man with a withered arm was healed
    - The scribes and Pharisees accused Jesus of disregarding the Sabbath

Look at how people in the parable treat the word of God:

- They ignore it (they don't care about it)
- They abandon it when pressure comes (they don't trust it)
- They ignore it for worldly concerns (they don't value it)
- If we are given to understand the mysteries of God it must result *be for the praise of his glory.*

God's Word demands and deserves your utmost attention, your utter devotion, and your unwavering commitment to obey. To do otherwise is to reject God himself. Taigan Joos