

GRACEPOINT CHURCH

Weekly Devotional

Rooted and Rising: Parables of Growth, Grace and Harvest

From Dirt to Destiny – Ian France – 6 September

Scripture

Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

Observation

Matthew 13:1-9

On this day the crowd was so dense that Jesus got into a boat and sat down. It was customary for a rabbi to sit while He taught the people. Jesus was no longer permitted to teach in the synagogue, so He began to teach in the open air, on a boat, where the people could see Him. He spoke in parables – stories – knowing that the people would hear and remember the lessons He taught.

This parable began with a man who went out to sow his field, scattering the seed and then ploughing it into the ground. The sower scattered the seed widely so that it fell in different types of soil. Some fell by the wayside, some on stony ground or among thorns, whilst some fell on good ground. The wayside was hard, as it was the path people had trampled on. It would have been difficult for the seed to root and grow there.

The stony ground comprised thin soil. The seed may have sprung up quickly because there was a thin layer of soil, but it could not take root because of the hard rock beneath the surface. The seed that fell among the thorns would have been choked by the vigorous growth of the thorns, and it would not have survived. However, the seed that fell on the good ground would have grown well and produced a fine crop.

Jesus told the people to listen carefully to what He was saying.



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Matthew 13:18-23

Later Jesus explained the meaning of the parable about the sower to His disciples. He told them birds would have eaten the seed on the path. The seed was the Word of God, and some people would hear it but would not understand it. Just like the birds, Satan would snatch it away from such people. Some people would hear the Word with great enthusiasm, but after a short while they were unwilling to endure the consequences of following Christ. They had no depth of faith and fell away. The Word that fell among thorns represented those who accepted it at first, but their faith was stifled by the pressures of the world around them, and it did not develop further.

However, the Word that fell on good ground would result in a fine crop to a greater or lesser degree. The difference in the success of hearing the Word was in the soil, rather than in the seed. Jesus encouraged His disciples: Not everyone would respond to their message, but some would, and there would be a rich harvest.

Icebreaker:

What kind of garden do you have?

Do you enjoy working in it?

How do you feel in these first days of spring with the new leaves and flowers appearing?

What do these signs of new life say to you about God?

Application

- How would you describe your spiritual health right now? Choose one word to describe each of your following relationships:
 - With God?
 - With others?
 - With yourself?
- Having identified your relationships, what kind of spiritual soil describes you today? Does this thought give you peace? Why/why not?
- *Obstacle 1: Hardness of heart:* How would you define such hardness of heart? How does it affect a person's life? What sort of experience of pain would harden someone's heart? How is your heart? Are you willing to let God transform your heart? Why/why not?

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- *Obstacle 2: Shallowness of faith:* How have you deepened your faith? Do you
 - Add topsoil by following daily/weekly disciplines? Whether you do or not, what do such disciplines mean to you? Are they 'want to' events or obligations? What stops you from following them?
 - Remove rocks by giving time with God priority? What stops you from spending time with God and listening for His voice? Are you afraid to slow down? Why? How can God help you to deal with these obstacles in your life?
- *Obstacle 3: Weeds of worry and whispers of wealth:* What worries you most in your life today? How are you dealing with such worries? What legacy are you leaving for your family regarding how you deal with worry, and how you handle your wealth?
- Jesus ended His lessons by telling His audience, 'Whoever has ears, let them hear.' Do you hear? How will you move forward with the lessons you learnt in your discussion today?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Pray for one another regarding the issues raised during your discussion time and any other needs of the group.

Service

Where will you sow the seed of the Gospel this week? Look for opportunities to tell others about Jesus in your conversations.

Bibliography

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/matthew-13/>



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