

Approximately 35 minutes Expository



Before we open God's Word today, I want to invite you to do something very simple: ask the Lord to prepare your heart.

In Matthew chapter 13, Jesus tells a story about a farmer sowing seed. The seed is the Word of God, and the soil represents the condition of the human heart.

So today, this message is not just about hearing a sermon. It is about asking, "**Lord, what kind of soil is my heart?**"

Whether you are new to the faith, have walked with Jesus for many years, or are still wondering what it means to truly know Him, this passage speaks to all of us.

So let's lean in, listen carefully, and allow the Lord to soften our hearts, deepen our

roots, remove the thorns, and make us fruitful for His glory.

Sermon Title: “What Kind of Soil Is Your Heart?”



Text: Matthew 13:1-23

 Opening Prayer:

Father God, we come before You in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. We ask You to open our hearts to Your Word. Lord, remove distractions, soften hard hearts, strengthen weak hearts, and help us to receive the truth with faith and obedience. May the seed of Your Word fall on good soil today. Speak clearly, Lord. Save the lost, strengthen the saved, and glorify Your Son, Jesus Christ. In His mighty name we pray. Amen.

Introduction: Jesus by the Sea:

Matthew chapter 13 begins with a beautiful and powerful scene.

The Bible says Verse 1   (NIV), **“That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.”** (v.1) That lake is the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had been ministering in Galilee, teaching, healing, casting out demons, and revealing the power of the Kingdom of God.

But by this time in Matthew’s Gospel, opposition was growing. The religious leaders had already begun to reject Him. They had seen His miracles, heard His wisdom, and still hardened their hearts. They accused Him. They resisted Him. They would not receive Him as Messiah.

So now Jesus begins to teach in a new way. He teaches in **parables**.

A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. It takes something

familiar and uses it to reveal spiritual truth. Jesus speaks about farmers, seed, soil, birds, thorns, rocks, harvests, and fruit. These were things the people of that day understood.

In the biblical world, farming was part of everyday life. Many people lived close to the land. They knew what it meant to plant seed and wait for rain. They knew the frustration of weeds. They knew the joy of harvest.

In those days, a farmer did not usually plant the way modern farmers do today with machines and perfect rows. A sower would carry a bag of seed and scatter it by hand. Some seed would fall on the walking path. Some would fall on shallow soil with rock underneath. Some would fall among thorns. And some would fall on good soil.

Jesus takes that common picture and uses it to ask one of the most important questions any person can ever answer:

What kind of soil is your heart?

- The seed is the Word of God.
- The sower is the one who shares the Word.
- The soils represent human hearts.
- The fruit represents a life truly changed by God.

This parable is not just about people “out there.” It is about us. Every time the Word of God is preached, taught, read, or shared, seed is being scattered. The issue is not whether the seed is powerful. The Word of God is always powerful. The issue is the condition of the heart receiving it.

Let us get into the Word of God....



(NIV)

Matthew 13:1-23 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat

by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

¹⁰ The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in

parables?” ¹¹ He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. ¹² Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ¹³ This is why I speak to them in parables:

***“Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.***

¹⁴ In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

***“You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.***

¹⁵ For this people’s heart has become calloused;

***they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their***

eyes,

hear with their ears,

understand with their hearts

and turn, and I would heal them.’

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they

hear. ¹⁷ For truly I tell you, many

prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

¹⁸ “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the

message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in

their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky

ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with

joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they

last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word,

they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

I. The Sower Went Out to Sow:

➤   Let us look into this closely....

Verse 3 says,   (NIV) **“A farmer went out to sow his seed.”** (v.3)

That is simple, but powerful.

The farmer has one mission: sow the seed.

In this parable, Jesus is showing us that the Word of God must be spread.

- It must be spoken.

- It must be preached.
- It must be shared.

The sower does not create the seed. He does not improve the seed. 💡 He simply scatters the seed.

👉 That is a good reminder for every believer.

- We are not called to change the message to make it more popular.
- We are not called to water it down so people will not be offended.
- We are not called to make the Gospel fit the spirit of the age.

😬 👉 We are called to sow the Word.

🔓 🔑 The Gospel is this: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world.

- He lived without sin.
- He died on the cross for our sins.
- He shed His blood.


- He was buried.
- On the third day, He rose again.
- He ascended into heaven.
- He is coming again.

And as born again believers we must simply teach the Word simply, and clearly.

  Why?

Because the power **is in the Word**. God said through Isaiah that His Word will not return empty. It will accomplish what He desires.

So the sower goes out.

 But notice something: the same seed falls on different kinds of ground, and the results are very different.



That tells us something very important. People can hear the same sermon, read the same Bible, sit in the same church, and have completely different responses.



- One person hears and is changed forever.
- Another hears and walks away unmoved.
- Another gets excited for a season but later fades.
- Another hears but gets choked by the cares of life.

The difference is not the seed.

  The difference is the soil.

II. The Hard Heart ... The Seed on the Path:

Look at verse 4...   (NIV) **Matthew 13:4** says, **“Some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.”** (v.4)

Later Jesus explains in verse 19,   (NIV) **“When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it,**

the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart.” (v.19)

The path was **hard ground**. People had walked on it over and over. The soil was packed down. The seed could not penetrate. It stayed on the surface, and the birds quickly came and took it away.

Jesus says this represents the person who hears the Word but does not understand it, does not receive it, and does not let it enter the heart.

  This is the hard heart.

A hard heart can come from many things.

- Sin can harden a heart.
- Pride can harden a heart.
- Religion without relationship can harden a heart.
- Bitterness can harden a heart.
- Repeated rejection of God's voice can harden a heart.

The dangerous thing about a **hard heart** is that a person can hear truth and feel nothing.

- They can sit under the Word and remain unchanged.
- They can hear about the cross and shrug.
- They can hear about judgment and not tremble.
- They can hear about grace and not rejoice.

👉 Jesus says the evil one comes and snatches away the seed.

That means there is spiritual warfare happening when the Word of God is preached.

- Satan does not want the Word to take root.
- He does not mind people being religious as long as they remain lost.

- He does not mind people attending church as long as their hearts stay hard.

The enemy loves distraction.

- He loves confusion.
- He loves pride.
- He loves when people say, “I’ll think about that later.” But later may never come.

👉 So we must ask: Is my heart hard?

Have I heard the Word so many times that I no longer respond?



Have I become resistant to conviction?

Have I allowed bitterness or sin to make my heart like a beaten path?

The good news is this: God can break up hard ground. 📖 ✝️ (NIV) **Hosea 10:12** says, **“...Break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord...”**

If your heart is hard, do not pretend. Cry out to God. Say, “**Lord, soften my heart. Let Your Word go deep.**”

III. The Shallow Heart ... The Seed on Rocky Ground:

  (NIV) **Matthew 13:5-6** says, “**Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil... But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.**”

Jesus explains in **verses 20-21** that this is the person who hears the Word and at once receives it with joy, but because they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the Word, they quickly fall away.

 This is the **shallow heart**.

This person responds emotionally. They may be excited. They may say, “That was a great message!” They may even appear to

grow quickly. But there is no depth. No root. No true surrender.

In Israel, there were places where a thin layer of soil covered limestone rock. Seed could sprout quickly because the soil was warm, but the roots could not go deep. When the sun came, the plant withered.

The sun is not the problem. The sun that withers the shallow plant is the same sun that helps the healthy plant grow. Trouble reveals whether there are roots.

Jesus never promised that following Him would be easy. **He promised eternal life, forgiveness, peace with God, and His presence.** But He also said we must take up our cross and follow Him.

  Some people want Jesus as Savior but not Lord.

They want blessing but not surrender.

They want heaven but not holiness.

They want comfort but not commitment.

👉 But real faith grows roots.

Mature Christians know this truth well: trials reveal what is real. Persecution reveals what is planted deep. Suffering reveals whether our faith is built on Christ or on feelings.

This is why we must go deeper than emotion. Emotion is not bad. We should rejoice in the Lord. We should be moved by the Gospel. But emotion alone cannot carry us through suffering.

We need roots in the Word.

- Roots in prayer.
- Roots in fellowship.
- Roots in obedience.
- Roots in Christ Himself.



  (NIV) **Colossians 2:7** says we are to be **“rooted and built up in him...”**



So we ask: Is my faith shallow?

- Do I follow Jesus only when it is easy?
- Do I fade when people mock me?
- Do I disappear when trials come?
- Do I live on spiritual excitement but neglect spiritual depth?

The Lord wants more for us. He wants a faith that endures.

IV. The Crowded Heart ... The Seed Among Thorns:

  (NIV) **Matthew 13:7** says, **“Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.”**

Jesus explains in verse 22,   (NIV) **“...The worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.”** (v.22)

 This is the **crowded heart**.

This person hears the Word. There may even be growth. But something else grows too: **thorns**.

Jesus identifies the thorns as worries and the deceitfulness of wealth. Mark's Gospel also mentions desires for other things. These are not always things that look evil on the surface. That is what makes them dangerous.

- Worry can choke the Word.
- Money can choke the Word.
- Ambition can choke the Word.
- Entertainment can choke the Word.
- Comfort can choke the Word.
- Busyness can choke the Word.



The plant is not destroyed by something dramatic overnight. 🙌 **It is slowly strangled.**

That is how worldliness often works. It does not always come in wearing a warning sign. It quietly takes space in the heart.



- A little less prayer.
- A little less hunger for Scripture.
- A little more compromise.
- A little more chasing after things that will not last.

Jesus says wealth is deceitful. Money promises security, but it cannot save the soul. It promises satisfaction, but it cannot fill the heart. It promises freedom, but it often enslaves.

This does not mean it is sinful to have money or possessions. The issue is when money has us. The issue is when the cares of life crowd out the voice of God.

  Here is a question worth asking: Is my heart too crowded?

  Is there room for the Word of God to grow?

  Or is my heart filled with anxiety, materialism, distraction, and worldly desire?

In a pre-tribulation, premillennial understanding of Scripture, we believe Jesus can return for His church at any time. We are looking for the blessed hope, the appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. That truth should affect how we live.

- This world is not our home.
- This age is passing away.
- The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord.
- Jesus will return, and He will reign.

 So why give our hearts to thorns?



Brothers and sisters, we need to travel light. We need to live ready. We need to keep



our lamps burning and our eyes on the Lord.

The worries of this life are real, but they are not ultimate. The deceitfulness of riches is powerful, but Christ is greater.

Do not let thorns choke what God is planting in you.

V. The Fruitful Heart The Seed on Good Soil:

  (NIV) **Matthew 13:8** says, **“Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”** (v.8)

Jesus explains in verse 23,   (NIV) **“But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it....”** (v.23)

 This is the **fruitful heart**.

Good soil does not mean a perfect person.
It means a open heart.

- A humble heart.
- A teachable heart.
- A heart that hears the Word, receives it, understands it, and bears fruit.

Fruit is the evidence of life.

An apple tree does not become an apple tree because it produces apples. It produces apples because it is an apple tree. In the same way, we are not saved by fruit. **We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.** But when we are truly saved, fruit follows.

What kind of fruit?

- The fruit of repentance.
- The fruit of obedience.
- The fruit of love.
- The fruit of the Spirit.
- The fruit of worship.



- The fruit of witness.
- The fruit of a changed life.

Some produce a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Not everyone produces the same amount, but every true believer produces fruit.

That should encourage us. God does not compare you to someone else. He calls you to be faithful with what He has given you.



The mature Christian hears this and understands: fruit takes time. Growth takes time. A harvest does not come the day after planting. The farmer must wait. He must trust. He must cultivate.

- So keep receiving the Word.
- Keep obeying the Word.
- Keep removing weeds.
Keep letting God plow the soil of your heart.
- Keep abiding in Christ.

Jesus said in John 15 verse 5,   (NIV) **“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”**

The fruitful life is not produced by human effort alone. It comes from abiding in Jesus. He is the vine. We are the branches. Apart from Him, we can do nothing.

VI. Why Jesus Spoke in Parables:

In Matthew 13:10, the disciples ask Jesus,   (NIV) **“Why do you speak to the people in parables?”**

Jesus answers that the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to His disciples, **but not to everyone.**

This can sound confusing at first.



Was Jesus trying to hide truth?

In one sense, parables reveal truth to humble hearts and conceal truth from hard hearts. The same parable that draws a hungry heart closer can leave a proud heart unmoved.

Jesus quotes from Isaiah, saying that some people will hear but never understand, and see but never perceive. 🙄 Why? Because their hearts have become calloused.

👉 That is serious.

It reminds us that spiritual truth is not received merely by human intelligence.

- A person can be educated and still spiritually blind.
- A person can know religious facts and still miss Christ.
- 👉 Understanding comes when the heart humbles itself before God.

Jesus says to His disciples in verse 16,



(NIV)

“But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.” (v.16)

What a blessing it is to hear the Word of God and receive it.

There were prophets and righteous people in the Old Testament who longed to see the things the disciples saw. They looked forward to the Messiah. They saw shadows and promises. But the disciples saw Jesus face to face.

And today, we have the full testimony of Scripture. We can look back at the cross, back at the empty tomb, and forward to His return.

👉 We are blessed.

But with blessing comes responsibility.

If God has given you ears to hear, then hear.

If God has given you light, then walk in it.

If God has given you His Word, then receive it.

VII. The Kingdom Now and the Kingdom Coming:

Matthew 13 is a **kingdom chapter**. Jesus is teaching about the **mysteries of the kingdom of heaven**.

From a premillennial perspective, we understand that Jesus offered the kingdom, but Israel's leaders rejected the King. The kingdom promises are not canceled. **God is not finished with Israel**. Jesus will return physically and visibly, and He will reign on the earth.

But between His first coming and His second coming, there is this present age in which the Word of the kingdom is being sown throughout the world.

Right now, hearts are being tested.
Right now, the Gospel is going out.

Right now, people are responding in different ways.

- Some reject.
- Some receive shallowly.
- Some are choked by the world.
- Some bear fruit.

And one day, the King will come.

Before the time of wrath comes upon the earth, we believe Jesus will catch away His church. The Bible calls believers to live ready, watching, and waiting. Then, after the tribulation, Christ will return to establish His kingdom.

That means this parable is urgent.

The seed is going out now.

The invitation is being given now.

The day of salvation is now.

Do not assume you will always have another opportunity. Do not say, “One day

I'll get serious with God." The Word is being sown today.

How will you respond?

VIII. Personal Application: Examine the Soil:

This parable invites every person to examine their heart.

- Not your neighbor's heart.
- Not your spouse's heart.
- Not your child's heart.
- 🙌 Your heart.

Are you the **hard soil**? The Word hits the surface but never enters.

Are you the **rocky soil**? You respond quickly but have no root.

Are you the **thorny soil**? You are crowded with worries, money, pleasure, and distractions.

Or are you the **good soil**? You hear, receive, understand, obey, and bear fruit.

The beautiful thing is this: soil can be changed.

- A hard field can be plowed.
- A rocky field can be cleared.
- A thorny field can be weeded.
- A neglected field can become fruitful.

👉 But you must let the Lord work.

- Maybe today God is putting His finger on something.
- Maybe He is saying, “That bitterness has made your heart hard.”
- Maybe He is saying, “You need deeper roots.”
- Maybe He is saying, “Those thorns are choking your spiritual life.”
- Maybe He is saying, “I want to make you fruitful.”

Do not resist Him.



(NIV)

Hebrews 3:7-8 warns us,
“...Today, if you hear his voice, do not
harden your hearts...”

Today is the day to respond.

Invitation: Be Born Again:

Now let me speak directly to anyone listening who has never truly been born again.

You may have heard sermons before.

You may know Bible stories.

You may believe that Jesus existed.



You may even attend church.

But the question is not, “Are you religious?”

The question is: **Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?**

Jesus said we must be born again. That means you cannot simply improve yourself into heaven. You cannot earn salvation

through good works. You cannot wash away your own sin. 🙌 You need a Savior.

The Bible says   (NIV) **Romans 3:23 “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”** Sin separates us from God. But Jesus came because **God loves us**. He died on the cross in our place. He paid for our sins with His blood. He rose again from the dead. He is alive today.



To be born again means you turn from sin and place your faith in Jesus Christ alone. You surrender to Him as Lord. You receive His forgiveness. You receive new life.

Today the seed of God’s Word has been sown. Do not let the enemy snatch it away. Do not put it off. Do not let pride, fear, or distraction stop you.

If you want to receive Jesus today, pray from your heart:

 Let us Pray:

Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner.... I believe You died on the cross for my sins..... I believe You rose again from the dead.... Forgive me.... Cleanse me.... Come into my life.... Be my Lord and Savior.... I turn from my sin and put my trust in You alone.... Make me born again.... Give me a new heart.... I surrender my life to You.... In Jesus' name, amen.

If you prayed that sincerely, the Bible says in   (NIV) **John 1:12 “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—”**

Closing Encouragement:

Brothers and sisters, the sower still goes out to sow.

- The Word is still powerful.
- The Gospel still saves.
- Jesus is still changing lives.

- The harvest is still coming.

So let us be faithful sowers and fruitful hearers.

Let us share the Word with our families, our neighbors, our coworkers, and our communities. Not everyone will receive it, but some will. Some seed will fall on good soil. Some will produce thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

And let us also guard our own hearts.

- Keep your heart soft.
- Keep your roots deep.
- Keep the thorns pulled out.
- Keep bearing fruit for Jesus.

The King is coming. Very Soon!
The time is short.
The Word has been sown.

Now the question remains:

What kind of soil is your heart?

 **Closing Prayer:**

Father God, thank You for the Word of God. Thank You that Your Word is living and active. Lord God, we ask You to search our hearts. If there is hardness, break it up. If there is shallowness, deepen our roots. If there are thorns, pull them out. Make us good soil.

Lord God, please help us not only to hear Your Word, but to receive it, understand it, obey it, and bear fruit for Your glory. We pray for anyone who received You today. Strengthen them, fill them with Your Spirit, and help them grow in grace.

Use us as sowers of the Gospel in these last days. Keep our eyes on You Lord, our hearts ready, and our lives fruitful until You come to get us.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.