

# The Parable of the Sower: Interpretation

**Lesson Title:** *Increase and Opposition in the Kingdom*

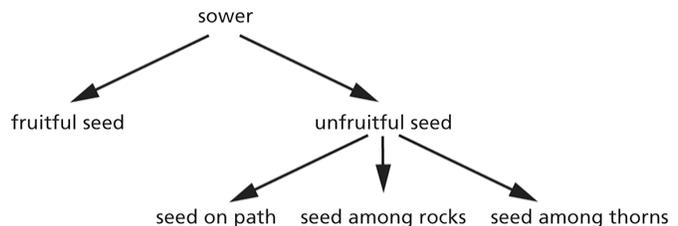
**Mark 4:14-20 (KJV)** – **14** The sower soweth the **word**. **15** And these are they by the **way side**, where the **word** is **sown**; but when they have **heard**, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the **word** that was **sown** in their hearts. **16** And these are they likewise which are **sown** on **stony ground**; who, when they have **heard** the **word**, immediately receive it with gladness; **17** And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the **word's** sake, immediately they are offended. **18** And these are they which are **sown** **among thorns**; such as **hear** the **word**, **19** And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the **word**, and it becometh unfruitful. **20** And these are they which are **sown** on **good ground**; such as **hear** the **word**, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

There are only **two** other parables in the New Testament that receive full, specific interpretations, similar to this parable. Other parables are left open-ended, and some have partial, implied, or no interpretations.

- Parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)
- Parable of the Dragnet (Matthew 13:47-48, 49-50)

## Brief Overview

- The Sower sows the Word
- Where the Word is Sown
  - Wayside (no depth)
  - Stony Ground (no root)
  - Thorny Ground (choked)
  - Good Ground (receive)
- Results of the Sown Word
  - **Fruitful**
  - Unfruitful



## Understanding the Parable

- Hearing both **frames** the parable and **dominates** the interpretation.
- How one **hears** matters!
  - Luke 8:18: “Take heed therefore to how you hear...”
  - Hearing in Scripture is not just auditory, it’s **receptive** and **responsive**.
- There is **fruitful** hearing and **unfruitful** hearing
- How one hears is determined by the condition of the **heart**.
  - Isaiah 6:9-10: “Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand.... for this people’s heart is waxed gross”

- A hard or unreceptive heart **blocks** understanding, even when the truth is clearly spoken.
- The seed is **always** good, but where the seed falls determines the outcome.
- The same message can yield different **results** (Acts 2:37; Acts 7:54; Acts 26:28).
- The Gospel isn't something we merely hear and **believe**; it is something we hear and **obey** (Romans 10:16; 2 Thess. 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17; Heb. 5:9).
- We are to hear and obey **all** of God's Word! (Luke 11:28)
- Only the soil that yields an obedient **harvest** is considered good. Good intentions never save. (Matt 7:21-23)

***Sound Check:** How can I be sure that my hearing is fruitful since it is nearly guaranteed that any time the Word is taught or communicated, each of these soils is present? Am I hearing, but not understanding? Am I hearing, but not obeying? What are some ways I can ensure I have a fruitful hearing that Scripture supports?*

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**For the Church**

- While we can focus on the presence of the first three soils, we mustn't lose sight of the **increase** of God's kingdom.
- God's Word will always produce results no matter how much opposition there is to it (Isaiah 55:11).
- Evangelism will always reflect the struggle of soils, but the "Sower **must** sow."
- We should **pray** every day that the condition of our hearts remains receptive and obedient to God's Word.

**Check-In**

How did your study of this interpretation compare? What things stood out to you the most?

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Where do you find your response to the Word as falling? Among fruitful or unfruitful ground? Identify areas where you need to improve.

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## ANPC ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

How do you prepare your heart before coming to Church and hearing the preached Word of God? Are you there as an observer? Are you there for an uplifting message that is enjoyable to you? Or, are you there to be challenged, changed, and provoked to obedience to God's Word?

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**Prayer:** Lord, show me the condition of my heart and help me to know if I am understanding, receiving, and obeying Your Word. No matter how uncomfortable You have to make me, please break through any blind spots I have that are keeping me from pleasing You and obeying your entire Word. I want to see, know, and obey Your Word with all my heart, mind, and soul, no matter the cost.

EXTRA NOTES