

Series: “Summer Stories” Sermon: “The Key To Understanding”

INTRODUCTION: Psalm 25:14 “There is a private place reserved for the lovers of God where they sit near him and receive the revelation secrets of his promises.”

The Key to understanding the revelation that can be revealed from the parables is to relax in His presence.

Hebrews 5:12 You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God’s word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. ¹³ For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn’t know how to do what is right. ¹⁴ Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

The milk of the word is that which comforts and encourages
 The meat of the word is the word of righteousness. It is something that provokes change that transforms and helps me recognize the difference between right and wrong
 In other words it provokes our spirit to hear and challenges, confronts our flesh to obey

James 1:21 So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

NKJV-receive with meekness

NAS-in humility receive the word implanted which is able to save your soul

It is the ability of the word, not the soil that saves your soul.

The word of God will always reveal Him through us and to us.

Philippians 2:12 Paul says, work out your salvation daily with fear and trembling.

NLT “Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.

Mark 4:13 *“Then Jesus said to them, ‘If you can’t understand the meaning of this parable, how will you understand all the other parables?’”*

Luke 8:15 *“But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a **noble and good heart**, keep it and bear fruit with patience.”*

Patience=constant endurance with persistence

Matthew 13:3-23

He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:

“Listen! *A farmer went out to plant some seeds.*

This is one parable that cannot be ignored because each of us and everyone around us is found in this story. The nature and the purpose of the Word of God is illustrated in this parable and must be understood. The voice of God will never contradict his word. There is no excuse for biblical illiteracy in this church with all the resources available to you.

The Word of God today is the seed and the heart is the soil. Hearing the gospel every day is what recalibrates the compass of our soul. Martin Luther said, “We need to hear the gospel every day because we forget it everyday.”

OUT TEXT IS MARK 4:3-20

¹¹ He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of God.”

NKJV ¹¹ And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God”

What do you think is the key to perceive unseen realities?

1. THE TASK OF THE SOWER

- A. **The Sower’s Identity** – In the parable, the sower is a farmer who is spreading seed into his fields. According to Jesus and His interpretation of this parable in **Mark 4:14**; the “**sower sows the word**” of God. The sower pictured in the parable is a reference to Jesus and all those who preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am sowing at this very moment.

- B. **The Sower's Intentions** – As this farmer casts the seeds into his field, he does so with the hope that some will fall on good soil. He sows because he ultimately desires to reap a harvest. He casts his seed with the expectation of much more in return. The sower has one goal: to **get his seed into the ground so the harvest can come.**

The same is true with the seed of the Gospel message. It is sown into our city with the hopes that it will fall on good hearts, take root and grow up to produce much fruit to the glory of the Lord.

- C. **The Sower's Investment** – The farmer must give something away before he can expect to receive anything in return. He takes the seed that he saved from the last harvest and he casts it into soil, hoping that it will produce a great harvest. The seed is all that the farmer has and he gives it away hoping to receive more in return.

This is what the Jesus did. Jesus gave His all so that there might be Gospel seed to cast into the soil of the human heart.

The message we preach at Impact is a message about a free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, **John 6:37; Acts 16:31; John 6:47** However, while salvation may be free, it certainly was not cheap! It cost the Father, It cost Jesus and it cost Heaven.

2. **THE TREASURE OF THE SEED**

In **Luke 8:11**, Jesus identifies the seed as the “**Word of God.**” When the farmer walked into his field with his seed bag, he held in his hand a genuine treasure. He cast that treasure to the wind, hoping it would accomplish his desires.

Jesus walked into this world with a treasure. He came to give men the Gospel of grace. When Jesus cast the seed of the Gospel into the shifting winds of this world, He did so with the knowledge that it would accomplish His purposes completely, **Isa. 55:11.**

- A. **It Holds Great Power** – **Life** – Before the seed falls on the soil, the soil is devoid of life. It lies there barren and empty. But, when the seed falls onto good soil and germinates, it always brings life to something that before was dead .

So it is with the Gospel of grace! It brings life to the dead hearts of those lost in their sins, **Eph. 2:1-5.** You see, when seed germinates it always transforms the soil in which it was sown. It

brings forth life, and eventually fruit, in a place where only barrenness and death could be found before. We will discuss this truth more in a few moments. Still, this is what makes the Gospel such a great treasure; it produces life in a place that was formerly dead.

B. It Holds Great Promise – *More* – There are over 7700 promises in scripture all prescribed to provide hope.

Every seed that was sown by the sower had the potential to produce much more seed. **Verse 8** and **23** bear this out. One little seed had the potential to multiply itself 3000%; 6000% and even 10000%. Those of you who farm have seen this principle in action.

Each seed has the potential to reproduce itself many times over. Seed always holds the promise of more.

That is the promise in the seed of the Gospel of grace. When it is sown in a ready heart, it will germinate and reproduce itself over and over again. The seed has the potential to begin small and to bring forth much. There must be a breaking of the soil.

It is imperative as a sower to sow seed and not save seed

Hosea 10:12 Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SOILS

A. v. 4, 19 **The Compacted Soil** – The “*way side*” refers to the narrow footpaths that ran beside and through the fields. These were the roads of the day and the soil on them had become as hard as concrete from people and animals walking on them. When the seed fell on the footpath, it could not penetrate the soil and it remained there in the open, only to be devoured by the birds of the air.

We are told that this speaks of the person who hears the Gospel, but who doesn't “*understand it*”. They cannot make the connection between the claims of the Gospel and their own life. Maybe they are stuck in sin and refuse to believe. Maybe they are calloused and cold toward the things of God and refuse to hear. Maybe they have hardened their hearts for years against the call of the Gospel and like a path trampled underfoot for centuries, they have become hard hearted!

Whatever their need, they are hard hearted and the seed of the Gospel cannot penetrate the soil of their heart. They hear the Gospel and dismiss it as foolishness, **1 Cor. 1:18**. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God

- B. v. 5-6, 20-21 **The Crippled Soil** – Rocky Soil: These stony places are common in Palestine. Some paths were made of limestone rock covered by a thin layer of topsoil. This soil looks like it is ready to be sown. This ground looks good and productive, and seed cast here will germinate and quickly spring up into a promising plant. But, because there is no depth of soil, as soon as the sun beats down on the seed or small plant, it withers and dies without producing any fruit.

This kind of soil speaks of the heart that makes an emotional response to the presentation of the Gospel. Maybe this person heard the Gospel and said, “***Well, I’ve tried everything else, maybe that is what I need! I might as well give Jesus a try***” Or, maybe they came to an altar and prayed because a friend did. Maybe they heard a shallow fear based presentation of the Gospel that presents the benefits of salvation but does not share the costs. Whatever happened, they made a profession, they are excited, they are active, and they are accepted as the real deal. But because they have no depth to their profession, they fall away when the persecutions and tribulations associated with knowing Jesus arise.

They begin to have problems with simple matters like church attendance, prayer and reading the Bible. They have a difficult time making a genuine, lasting break with their sins. They shrink away from the radical claims of Christ and the cross, **Matt. 16:24**. They become offended when they are mocked, ridiculed, laughed at or persecuted for their profession of faith. These are the people who make a profession, often running strong out of the gate, and then wind up right back in the world. In the end, they are further away from God than they were before they made their profession.

- C. v. 7, 22 **The Crowded Soil – THORNY SOIL** This soil looks like it is ready to be sown also, but underneath the surface are the living roots and seeds of thorns and weeds. When the seed falls here, it also springs to life quickly and gives every indication that a good harvest will follow. However, the same ground begins to produce the thorns

and weeds that were already there and they soon choke out the tender plant. This plant withers and dies without producing any fruit at all.

This is a picture of a person who tries to have the benefit of the Gospel while still clinging to the old life of sin. Without a conscious break from the old life of sin this person will constantly struggle with the same sin continuously. The seed of the Gospel cannot survive to produce fruit in a heart filled with other things. ***The seed will have the ground or sin will have the ground, but it cannot be shared!*** Jesus said it was the cares of the world and the quest for earthly riches that spelled disaster for this kind of soil.

CARES OF THE WORLD=DIVIDED MIND

This kind of person begins well, but soon fades away, having their profession and promise choked out by sin and the world.

Man lost hand in accident-Athletic Guy-Picked up handball-became champion and defeated others with two hands even though he had one. When asked how he won he said, the others had to decide which hand to use. Because I have one choice, I eliminated the need to think.

When my only option is Jesus, I forfeit my right to choose. STOP feeding the beast that steals my joy and salvation.

The enemy is always empowered by our agreement! You agree with his fiery darts that slip past your shield of faith.

Rich people think they have power until they are facing death! "There is an illusion of power and personal significance that increases with greater possessions and money." Bill Johnson

The deceit of riches creates a sense of entitlement and identity that is deceiving.

Image Is the counterfeit attempt to create identity.

Vs 19 "The desire for other things" Refers to things outside the realm of HIM. All of this refers back to THE ONE THING! I only want what comes from Him not what is enticed or enhanced from the devil.

I will not pursue anything in outside of his heart for me!!!!

It is pursuing things outside the dominion of God

The appetite to gratify the desires of the flesh can never be satisfied because you will always want something better, be someone different etc.

Cravings can take you away from your calling

D. v. 8, 23 **The Choice Soil** – Finally, some seed fell onto good ground. This ground had been worked and prepared. It had been plowed and tilled and it was ready to receive the seed when it came. The seed germinated within the heart of the soil and the plant began to grow. When the plant reached maturity, it began to produce fruit that brought honor and gain to the farmer.

This is a picture of the heart that has been plowed deeply by the Word of God. It is a picture of a heart that has been tilled and prepared by the grace of God. When the seed of the Gospel hits this kind of heart, it germinates, grows up and bears fruit to the glory of God. This heart alone pictures that kind of life that can truly call itself saved! Why do I say that? This is the only soil that produced fruit!

The only difference between these types of soil was fruit. On the hard soil, the seed never penetrated the hard ground and was carried away. On the other three soils, the seed penetrated and disappeared, but only that which fell on the good soil produced fruit! The only obstacle to salvation is unbelief, but anyone who is willing to accept Jesus on His terms is good soil!

This soil represents the only soil among the four that pictures a saved heart. You see, when Jesus enters a life through the Gospel message, He will make His presence known beyond all doubt. He will cause the new believer to begin to bear fruit for the glory of God. In fact, He will lead the believer through a progression of fruit bearing. As the days go by, there will be more and more fruit for the glory of the Heavenly Sower, Ill. **John 15:1-8.**

John 15:2 *“Every branch **in Me** that does not bear fruit He takes away (**LIFTS UP**); and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”*

Mark 4:24 (AMP) *“And He said to them, be careful what you are hearing. The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you—and more [besides] will be given to you who hear.”*

Ephesians 3:17 *“Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong.”*