

**Text:** Matthew 13:10-12, 18-23

**Meaning:** Jesus taught the disciples about faith

**Big Idea:** Faith is a matter of the heart

**Objective:** I want the hearers to have a heart of faith

**Theme:**

### **THE CONDITIONS OF THE HEART**

#### **ADAM SUTTON ILLUSTRATION**

When I was a student Pastor we had a remarkable young man in our ministry by the name of Adam Sutton. Adam loved to play guitar and enjoyed playing sports, but Adam had a problem. He was born with a defective heart. From a very early age doctors realized that Adam would need a heart transplant to live into adulthood. His heart got so weak that toward the end of our time there he had to wear a battery pack that literally kept his heart beating. The family had to keep another fully charged battery with them at all times so that if the battery he had stopped working they could immediately swap it out with the new one. Why? If that machine ever stopped working Adam's heart would literally stop beating. If the heart stops, life stops.

The same is true in our spiritual lives.

#### **Proverbs 4:23**

*Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*

As the old saying goes, "The heart of the matter is that life is a matter of the heart."

#### **READ MATTHEW 13:10-12, 18-23**

In the earlier chapters of Matthew we see that Jesus has performed multiple miracles, 3 of those being direct Messianic Miracles, which were miracles the Pharisees and religious leaders said for years only the coming Messiah would be able to do. One was the healing of a

man born blind. Another was the casting out of a mute demon. The third was the healing of a leper. Jesus did all three declaring Himself to be the long awaited Messiah. So the Pharisees begin to investigate and interrogate the claims of Jesus that He is the Chosen One. But in Chapter 12 instead of celebrating Christ, they accuse Him of casting out demons by the power of Satan. So, from that point on, starting here in chapter 13, Jesus begins to preach in parables to the people.

The disciples ask Him, "Why are you now preaching in parables?" They want to know why now has he decided to make his teachings harder to understand. Why is he not giving the crowd the full explanation as he has given to them? THE POINT IS THAT IT IS A MATTER OF THE HEART. GOD ALWAYS REVEALS HIMSELF MORE AND MORE TO THOSE WHO DESIRE TO KNOW MORE AND RECEIVE MORE FROM HIM!

**SEED – The Word of God**, the message of the gospel. Why seed? BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY MESSAGE THAT HAS LIFE IN IT.

**SOIL – The condition of the heart**

**FRUIT – CHARACTER, CONDUCT, CONVERTS**

Some read this parable as only the last heart condition is a picture of true saving faith – AND THAT IS TRUE. JESUS SAID YOU WILL KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUIT. BELIEVING WITHOUT OBEYING IS NOT FAITH.

HOWEVER, WE ALSO SEE IN THIS THE CONDITION OF ANY GIVEN HEART AT ANY GIVEN TIME WHEN IT COMES TO RECEIVING THE WORD OF GOD.

A CHILD OF GOD CAN MISS OUT ON WHAT THE LORD PLANTS INTO HIS OR HER HEART BECAUSE THEY ALLOW OTHER THINGS TO STEAL AWAY OR CHOKe OUT THE WORD.

The **POINT IS IT IS ALL ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE SOIL,** WHICH IS A PICTURE OF THE HEART. The sobering part of this parable is that 3 out of the 4 soils did not bear fruit.

We love to focus on the crowd, but Jesus's focus was on the heart of each and every individual. Jesus was not impressed with the crowd. He was compelled to call the ones who wanted to go deeper with Him to take the next step.

JESUS'S INTEREST TODAY IS NOT SO MUCH ON HOW MANY PEOPLE WE HAVE ATTENDING. HIS INTEREST IS IN THE CONDITION OF YOUR HEART AND MINE TODAY?

**WHAT CONDITION IS YOUR HEART IN TODAY? DO I REALLY WANT MORE OF JESUS IN 2024?**

### 1. **HARD HEART**

Jesus says here that there are some who hear the message of the gospel but they do not understand it, so the enemy comes and steals away that message. The path was the hardened ground the farmers would walk on from field to field, that which was unplatable.

**DO NOT UNDERSTAND** – carries the idea of an unwillingness to apply oneself to understanding. It's a verb in the Greek. So this is willful denial of the message.

*Rebellion, Pride  
Bitterness, Anger, Unforgiveness  
Lust, sexual impurity or immorality*

SIN SEARS THE CONSCIENCE AND HARDENS THE HEART.

### **Farming Illustration**

In today's farming you have large fields with paths to drive on around the edges of that field. You can't plant on those paths due to

the hardness of that soil. ANGER, BITTERNESS, UNFORGIVENESS, PRIDE, REBELLION, SEXUAL IMPURITY – THESE THINGS ARE LIKE TRACTOR TRAILERS FULL OF GRAIN DRIVING OVER YOUR HEART.

If you ever want to bear fruit for Christ you have to FORGIVE and REPENT OF THE SINS OF PRIDE, REBELLION, AND SEXUAL IMPURITY

Forgiveness is not easy, but it will make life easier for you if you choose to forgive. Forgiveness is not forgetting – it is choosing not to hold someone else responsible

### 2. **SHALLOW HEART**

Jesus says the second heart condition is the one that grows on rocky soil so it has no depth or root in the gospel. As a result this person falls away quickly and easily. This is the person who gets baptized and jumps right in to ministry, but when difficulty arises they quickly decide this isn't what they signed up for. This happens when people put their hope in a personality instead of the person of Christ or when people are looking for a quick fix to a personal or relational problem.

ORIGINAL PARABLE – VERSE 6 – Jesus refers to trial and tribulation as SUNLIGHT. The interesting fact about that is THE PLANT NEEDS SUNLIGHT IN ORDER TO GROW.

Persecution, trial and tribulation is necessary for our growth. Adversity leads to prosperity in your walk with Christ, BUT THAT'S ONLY IF YOU ARE DEEPLY ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN THE LOVE OF GOD.

### **James 1:2-3**

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

### **Ephesians 3:17-19**

Paul prays that the believers at Ephesus would be ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN THE LOVE OF GOD and therefore be FILLED WITH THE FULLNESS OF GOD.

### **DEPTH IN CHRIST COMES THROUGH UNDERSTANDING OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST!**

#### **3. DISTRACTED HEART**

Jesus says the third type of soil is the one that is grown up with thorns so the plant is choked out from producing fruit. He names the thorns here, which are the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches.

**CARES** – the word is better translated ANXIETY or WORRY  
So much of our planning and preparations as a family is to combat all our worst fears. Fear of failure. Fear of not having enough. Some drive hard in business and career for validation, to prove they are somebody because of a dysfunctional upbringing or broken past. These CARES CAN KEEP US FROM GIVING, SERVING, AND TRUSTING GOD.

#### **DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES** – *Prudential Commercial*

A commercial came on TV the other night for Prudential Financial Services – the company logo is a picture of the ROCK OF GIBRALTOR and the tagline for the ad was “WHO IS YOUR ROCK?”

Church – there’s only one ROCK and his name is not Prudential or Dewayne Johnson, HIS NAME IS JESUS!

#### **Proverbs 23:4-5**

Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist.  
When your eyes light on it, it is gone, for suddenly it sprouts wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven.

JESUS SAID DO NOT LAY TREASURE UP ON EARTH WHERE MOTH OR RUST DESTROY OR THIEVES BREAK IN AND STEAL. LAY UP TREASURE IN HEAVEN.

**These Cares and Deceitfulness of Riches are like THORNS Jesus says.**

#### **THORNS ILLUSTRATION**

Behind our house we have a section of woods going down to the creek and we work often to keep this area clear and useable. One of the things we deal with the most are THORN BUSHES. You can cut down thorns and within just a few weeks they have grown right back. They grow rapidly and are incredibly invasive.

Don’t miss the picture! The cares of this world and chasing wealth are incredibly INVASIVE TO YOUR FAITH. Job, family time, house, possessions, kids activities, hobbies – we can allow these good things to take the place of GOD THINGS then they become idols.

THORNS – represent the curse of Adam. God said, “Cursed is the ground because of you. Thorns and thistles it will bring forth for you.”

When they put that CROWN OF THORNS on Christ’s brow it was representative of Jesus taking the curse of Adam for us.

Beloved, Jesus died to reverse the curse. DON’T BRING IT BACK IN YOUR LIFE! CHASING THE STUFF OF THIS LIFE IS A CURSE NOT A BLESSING!

#### **4. TENDER HEART**

The good soil is the one that bears fruit. Good soil is:

**SOFT**  
**DEEP**  
**NUTRIENT RICH**

**SOFT** – it is humble before God and others and quick to confess sin and receive counsel

**DEEP** – deeply rooted in the Word and the love of God

**NUTRIENT RICH** – Filled with the Spirit through prayer and faith

Good soil represents the heart condition for saving faith, but it also is representative of a heart that is ready to receive the Word.

**SO THE QUESTION IS, WHENEVER YOU OPEN YOUR BIBLE OR LISTEN TO BIBLE TEACHING, IS YOUR HEART READY TO RECEIVE IT AND OBEY IT?**

***We must open our Bible with an OPEN HEART  
We must listen to teaching WITH OUR EARS OPEN TO THE  
SPIRIT OF GOD***

Interesting Fact about sowing in the NT – they would broadcast the seed then plow the ground so that the seed would get deep into the soil. How are we plowing the seed of God's Word deep into our hearts?

**WHAT AFFECTS THE CONDITION OF YOUR HEART? (This question and all three points below on one slide)**

**What you put into your MIND**

**Romans 8:5**

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

**What you do with your MONEY**

**Matthew 6:21**

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**What you see as your MISSION**

**Galatians 2:20**

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

**(Separate Slide)**

**Hosea 10:12**

*Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the LORD, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.*