

The Parable of the Sower

Mark 4:1-20

Into the Lesson:

For all who are enjoying the "Bible Reading Plan", compare worship as recorded in Numbers 7 (try to hum the tune to "The Twelve Days of Christmas as you read) with the "new way" that Jesus was declaring in Mark's gospel.

How do you suppose Jesus' message would have been received by:

- The Scribes and Pharisees-
- The Twelve-
- The crowds that were following Jesus-

As you read of Old Testament worship, do you get much of a, "find someone to hug" vibe (Leviticus 1:15 doesn't count)?

Into the Word:

As you reread Mark 4:1-20, try to read through the eyes of one who has only ever known the Old Covenant way to encounter God.

Although primarily an agrarian culture, not everyone was a farmer. How would this parable have been received by the ex-fishermen and the "city folk" who were part of the crowd?

Read Ezekial 33:1-6 and Matthew 7:12-14, then respond to Sam's question, "is God irresponsible in His approach?"

Of the groups listed above, how would you characterize the "soil" of:

- The Scribes and Pharisees-
- The Twelve (including Judas)-
- The crowds that were following Jesus-

From your understanding of farming (I've driven past a few farms), how does Sam's quote, "we cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven until we are rendered dead..." fit with the concept of sown seeds?

Into Life:

The following quote provides the whole of our response to "sowing seeds". What are the implications as we encounter those whose life choices have put them in the various soil groups?

"The measure of our duty is not limited by the character of our hearers, but by the command of God. We are bound to preach the Gospel whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. Let men's hearts be what they may. I am not loosed from my obligation to sow the seed on the rock as well as on the furrow, on the highway as well as on the plowed field." – Spurgeon

Is there still time for the "seeds" that have been cast on the trail, in the rocks or in the thorns?

Considering Sam's bold proclamation, "God is Sovereign, and man is responsible", what will be our response as we are called to "be the church" as we go out from here?

How does Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42) provide further proof that, "you just never know"?

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.
-Matthew 7:13-14