

## The SOIL, and the SOWER – January 31 2021

Introduction— I love stories — and funny stories ! ! I love to read them, to hear them, and to tell them. A British news organization selected this as the world’s funniest joke: Sherlock Holmes, the great detective, was out camping in the woods with Dr. Watson, his investigating partner. As the sun went down, they pitched their tent, started a fire, cooked the evening meal, unrolled their sleeping bags, and went to sleep. About 3:00 in the morning, Holmes woke up Watson and said, “Dr. Watson, what do you see?” Watson said, “I see millions of stars. And I suppose, that even if only a few of them have planets like earth, and if only a few have life on them like ours, it is possible that there probably is intelligent life elsewhere in the universe.” Holmes replied: “Watson, you idiot! Someone has stolen our tent!!” Okay — now, a parable is basically a story.

### I. Parable of the sower

A. Have you ever asked — what is: the meaning of parables??

1. Many stories, both old and new, are allegories!! Ex.: do you remember the story Gulliver’s travels? It told the story of Dr. Lemuel Gulliver, who was shipwrecked in a distant land called Lilliput. The people of that land were only 6 inches tall, but took themselves very seriously. The author of the story, Jonathan Swift, wanted to make fun of people who take themselves too seriously, & the people of Lilliput, & their customs, & their leaders, had parallels in the governments of Ireland and Scotland of that day.

2. An allegory is a story in which many or all of the persons and objects and actions: mean something else!!

3. But a parable is different— in the parables of Jesus, there is one main point to each parable. There are not “hidden meanings” in every object or character in the story— Jesus just wants to get one main point across to his listeners.

B. So— what is the story that Jesus told?? The story is a famous parable — the parable of the sower, the seed, and the soils.

C. Jesus gave the meaning of the parable — in Matthew 13: 18— 23.

1. The story is not really about the sower— nor is it about the seed.

2. The sower is God (& his servants).

3. The seed is God’s word — the Gospel of God’s grace.

4. The real point of the story is the soil — that the seed is thrown by the sower — on-to the soil !!!

5. Jesus tells us that there are— four types of soil .

6. And what Jesus means by this is: there are four types of souls — or hearts in people.

7. And these four types of soul each have— unique and different responses to the gospel. The question for each of us when we read this is:

II Is your “soil” ready?? — or (is your soul ready? Your heart??)

A. Jesus is telling us in this parable that there are four kinds of people. There are:

1. Indifferent people — some people, when they hear about Jesus, & the love of God, and what God has given us in forgiveness and eternal life— just don’t care!!! They either are only concerned with themselves, or else they don’t understand & don’t want to try to understand the problems of sin & what God gives us in Jesus ex.: Dr. Ira Galloway, who was for 15 years the senior pastor of the church in which I grew up, once told me of hearing a college girl speak about sharing her faith in Christ, & she spoke to a man who was working on the engine of his pick-up. The young lady explained the “four spiritual laws” to the man, and he kept working on his truck, just answering “yes” or “no” when it seemed proper. Finally, she asked the man if he wanted to receive Christ into his life as his lord and savior, and the man said “yes.” so, with the man still

working on his pick-up, this young lady prayed with the man to receive Christ! Then, the girl left— and Dr. Galloway thought that the man just wanted to get rid of that college girl without offending her, so he went along with whatever she said!! Some people are just indifferent— they just are not interested in things of eternal consequence!! Then there are:

2. Shallow people — these are people who have hidden agendas, and other priorities. They think “Jesus is wonderful, but i just don’t have a lot of time for him or his church.” They may confess Christ as lord & savior, and, as Jesus said in v. 16, may “receive it with joy.” But—

---->> They have no root in Christ, and soon the troubles of this world drag them away from Jesus Christ. -----ex.: Russell Chandler, the religion editor for the Los Angeles Times newspaper, said a few years ago, that the roper polling organization, [in 1990] “tested the behavior of born-again Christians before and after their conversion experience. The shocking result: conversion made little difference. ( ! ! ) In fact, the use of illegal drugs, driving while intoxicated, & marital infidelity all increased after the born-again experience!!” 1 Either these new Christians were not very serious in their commitment to “follow Jesus,” or else they did not seek the spiritual nourishment & develop the strong roots in Jesus Christ that would sustain them when Satan tempted them & tried their faith.----->> so: i tell you— put your roots deep down into Jesus Christ!! ----->> Then there are:

3. Christians with cluttered lives — people who are just so burdened with the trials & troubles of life, or with the temptations of this world, that they drift away from Jesus. — >> ex.: when i was in high school, I worked for steak & shake, a “short order” restaurant. I got to know A guy there who had been a “born-again Christian” at one time. A mutual friend told me that “Mark” had once talked for hours about “Mark’s” own conversion & his faith in Christ. But by the time I got to know “Mark,” he had given up his Christian faith— drinking with his buddies, and trying to seduce girls was just too tempting, and pulled him away from Jesus Christ. But Jesus also said there were:

4. People with good “souls” — people who are responsive to the good news!! These are people who hear the good news and understand it— they understand the demands, & the rewards of following Jesus, and they are willing to pay the price of following the guidance & instruction of

Jesus. They want a real relationship with the savior who has saved them, & are willing to put in the time and effort to put their roots deep into Christ. -----ex.: Jesus called these people “fruitful” — they would produce a crop— “30, 60, or even 100 times what was sown.” ( 13:23; NIV)

So----->> how do we put “deep roots” in Jesus Christ?!?— get active in a church (this one or some church);— study your bible & pray each & every day; — find a way to serve God & Christ wherever you are: at work, or near your home, or through your church. Reach out to the poor & unfortunate, or help those who are hurting. Be a kind and caring listener to others.

And >>>>— let others know about your faith in Christ, & what a difference Jesus has made in your life. -----ex.: there is another place in the new testament where “the fruit” of the Christian life is described. Galatians 5:22-23 tell of “the fruit of the spirit”: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, & self-control.” It is only when we put down our lives’ roots deep in Jesus Christ that the spirit can produce this “fruit” — “30, 60, or 100 times what was sown.”

B. Soooo----->>> which one are you ??????

1. Do you want to be a Christian who has deep roots in Jesus Christ, for him to sustain you and give you strength in the difficult times of life??

2. Do you want to be fruitful, and overflow with the joy and peace of Jesus Christ in your life??

3. If so, begin today!! Focus on Jesus Christ.

Conclusion — George Coleman went to church weekly when he was growing up. When he and his wife Ginny got married, she joined his church— she, too, had grown up going to church to instill “Judeo-Christian values.” But —they soon dropped out of church. For 14 years after that, his family did not attend any church. They had 2 bright, wonderful children, a good marriage, good jobs, and a good home— yet they felt that “something was missing.” Finally, their teen-age son, read a religious book about the end-times. He said: “dad, we have to find out more about god. Because I think that we are all headed for hell.” The next day, George’s boss at the oil company where he worked, invited George & his family to hear a famous Christian evangelist speak on the campus of Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. They went, & were so

moved by hearing that heaven is a free gift from God, and cannot be earned by human beings, but given by God as a free gift of God's everlasting love— that each of the four of them accepted god's salvation through Jesus Christ. They joined a strong church, & since have taken short-term mission trips to Haiti & elsewhere. George says, "Since we committed our lives to Christ..., God has given us peace, joy, and purpose. God has drawn us closer to each other and has enriched our lives." 2 are you ready for truly good news??? The good news is: Jesus loves you and accepts you just as you are. The point of this parable today is that you can choose — you can choose to be the "good soil" — that welcomes the good news of God's love and acceptance, and produces a fruitful crop. Ask Jesus to help you be "good soil" —