



THE
POINT
PATH
PROMISE

A STUDY THROUGH PARABLES OF JESUS
HEAR THE POINT, FOLLOW THE PATH, RECEIVE
THE PROMISE

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Dedication

I want to express my deepest gratitude to my children, Matt and Morgan, who have shaped me in ways they may not fully realize. They have profoundly influenced how I think, listen, and believe, most notably by helping me improve my language while playing golf.

Matt, your skepticism has never been a weakness. Your thoughtful questions, sincere pursuit of truth, and refusal to accept easy answers have sharpened my own faith. Watching you wrestle honestly with belief, doubt, and meaning has reminded me that faith worth holding is faith tested by questions. Your search reflects courage, integrity, and a commitment to authenticity that I deeply admire.

Morgan, your competitiveness and relational strength have always set you apart. You pursue excellence with intensity, yet you never walk alone. You connect deeply, bring people together, and elevate those around you. Your drive is matched by compassion, and your presence leaves people feeling stronger, seen, and encouraged. Watching you lead with both conviction and care has reminded me that influence is most powerful when rooted in character and relationship.

I am proud of both of you not only for who you have become but for who you are becoming. You each live with purpose, character, and influence, making a positive impact on the people entrusted to you. If this study bears any fruit, it is because I have first learned from watching you grow.

Biblical Reference

All Scripture quotations in this study are taken from the English Standard Version.



Jesus's Parables

Welcome to the third installment of this followership journey. If you've walked through our previous studies. The Word, The Water, and The Way and The Truth, The Turn, and The Test. you already know that spiritual formation unfolds as God speaks, shapes, confronts, and refines us. In those studies, you explored how God unfolds Himself and how His divine truth transforms willing hearts. This guide continues that same movement, but through one of the most distinct and powerful aspects of Jesus' ministry: Jesus' Parables.

Parables were not a random teaching choice. Jesus didn't use them because they were clever or poetic. He used them because they fulfilled Old Testament prophecy about the coming Messiah, they revealed and confirmed His identity as "The Christ". When Jesus taught in parables, He wasn't simply communicating truth, He was fulfilling Scripture.

The psalmist wrote,

"I will open my mouth in parables;

I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world."

(Psalm 78:2)

Centuries before Jesus walked the earth, God declared that His Anointed One would reveal hidden things through parables. Matthew explicitly connects this prophecy to Jesus:

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables...

So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

**‘I will open my mouth in parables;
I will utter things hidden since the creation of the surrounding
world.’**

(Matthew 13:34&35)

Put simply, when **Jesus taught in parables, He was unmistakably validating Himself as the promised Messiah.**

In addition, they are one of His most transformative tools for shaping the inner lives of those who follow Him. Jesus did not rely on philosophical arguments or complex theological codes. Instead, He told simple, unforgettable stories taken from everyday life, for everyday people. Within this guide we will focus on the stories about seeds, servants, vineyards, talents, prayer, and wealth. These stories were familiar, but beneath the surface they carried eternal divine truth. Jesus taught this way not only to fulfill prophecy, but also to reveal the condition of the human heart.

But before we begin, there is something essential to understand about the way Jesus explains through parables.

Parables are not meant to be dissected into dozens of symbolic details, nor are they riddles to be decoded through clever interpretation. They are spiritual arrows, aimed not at the intellect alone, but at the inner life. Jesus did not tell parables so that His listeners would walk away saying,

“That was interesting.”

He told them so that people would leave asking a far more unsettling question:

“What must change in me now that I understand His point?”

Every parable carries one central divine truth.

Jesus was not scattering ideas; He was driving toward decision. His stories demand movement. from hearing to responding, from insight to obedience. That movement is the inner life of this study.

In our first study, *The Word, The Water, and The Way*, we explored how God forms followers through revelation. how He speaks divine truth, cleanses the inner life, and urges people to follow. In the second study, *The Truth, The Turn, and The Test*, we examined how Jesus confronts us through the Sermon on the Mount, calling us to change direction and live out Kingdom of God righteousness under pressure. Now, in this third study, we turn our attention to how Jesus shapes His followers through parables. stories that press divine truth into everyday life and require a lived response.

Across His parables, Jesus consistently uses a simple but powerful pattern that guides followership:

The Point → The Path → The Promise

Each parable begins with a **Point**.

What is the one main divine truth Jesus stands as pressing into the inner life through this story?

Each point then unfolds a **Path**.

What does it look like to align your life with that divine truth in real, concrete ways?

And finally, each path is anchored by a **Promise**.

What deep change, freedom, or blessing does God offer to those who respond in obedient faith?

This pattern is not theoretical. It is deeply practical, unmistakably personal, and spiritually demanding. Jesus' parables are invitations into relationship, repentance, courage, forgiveness, trust, and perseverance. They do not allow the listener to remain neutral. And behind every divine truth Jesus unfolds stands a promise from God for those who take Him seriously.

As Jesus Himself declared, **“Whoever has ears, let them hear?”**

A Glimpse of the Journey Ahead

Study Week 2 The Sower:

Outlines how different people respond to the word

Promise: Be good soil and God will grow His Word in you.

Study Week 3 The Unmerciful Servant: Those forgiven much must forgive much.

Promise: Freedom from bitterness and restored relationships.

Study Week 4 The Workers in the Vineyard:

God's grace is His to give not ours to measure.

Promise: Joy and contentment replace envy and comparison.

Study Week 5 The Talents:

Fear buries; faith multiplies.

Promise: A life of purpose and eternal impact.

Study Week 6 The Persistent Friend:

Keep knocking, God meets the persistent.

Promise: God's presence and provision meet you in your need.

Study Week 7 The Rich Fool:

Life is not measured by possessions but by intimacy with God.

Promise: Freedom from fear, anxiety, and misplaced hope in the temporary.

Study Week 8 The Conclusion

Final thoughts and review of the next study His Glory, His Goodness and His Grace

Why Parables Still Matter and Still Prove Jesus Is Who He Said He Was

1. They Authenticate Jesus' Identity.

Every time you read a parable, you are witnessing prophecy fulfilled. Jesus doesn't just teach divine truth, His teaching proves He is the Messiah. His parables align perfectly with the prophetic expectations spoken centuries before His arrival. This guide will help you see that Jesus didn't only fulfill prophecy in His birth, death, and resurrection, He fulfilled it in His teaching as well.

2. They Transform Those Willing to Hear.

Parables bypass surface-level living. They strike at the heart. They expose what needs to change. They illuminate the path of discipleship. They compel you to ask: “*What is Jesus saying to me, and what will I do about it?*”

Your Invitation

As you step into these weeks, you are continuing the same spiritual path begun in *The Word, The Water, and The Way* and deepened in *The Truth, The Turn, and The Test*. The invitation is both simple and profound:

Hear the point.

Follow the path.

Receive the promise.

Each parable you study will give you a divine truth to understand, a step to take, and a blessing to receive. If you open your heart to the teaching of Jesus, the Messiah who fulfilled prophecy, revealed the Father, and spoke with divine authority, your life will not remain the same. May you discover the joy, clarity, and deep change God has promised to all who truly hear the voice of His Son?



WEEK 2
THE SOWER

A Heart That Hears Be Good Soil, and God Will Grow His Word in You

Before You Begin

Read Matthew 13:1-23 slowly, out loud if possible. As you read, imagine yourself standing on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Picture the crowd gathering, hear the gentle rhythm of the waves against the boat, and feel the expectancy in the air. Ask the Lord to show you what kind of soil your heart is today.

The Setting: A Moment Where Hearts Are Revealed

The Parable of the Sower is one of the most familiar teachings of Jesus, yet familiarity often dulls its weight. To understand its force, we must return to the moment in which it was spoken. Jesus had become a magnetic presence throughout Galilee, drawing crowds wherever He went. Some came desperate for healing, some hungry for hope, some curious, and others quietly searching for reasons to dismiss Him. On this particular day, the press of people was so great that Jesus stepped into a boat and sat down while the crowd remained along the shore. What unfolds is more than a sermon; it is a living moment where eternal divine truth is carried across the water through a simple story.

His audience reflected the full range of human hearts. There were fishermen and farmers who instinctively understood seed and soil. There were followers who had already left much behind and longed to understand His words more deeply. There were religious leaders

listening carefully, measuring His teaching against their own authority. And there were many whose hearts were undecided. drawn toward Jesus, yet unsure what following Him would require. In a quiet way, the crowd itself embodied the parable Jesus was about to tell. Every type of soil stood before Him. And Jesus speaks not only to them, but to us.

Illustrating the Point: A Story Simple Enough to Penetrate the Heart

Jesus opens with an image everyone understands. A farmer goes out to sow seed. In the fields of ancient Israel, soil types were often mixed together within a single plot of land. As the farmer scattered seed by hand, some fell on hardened paths, some on shallow rocky places, some among thorns, and some on rich, fertile soil. No one in the crowd needed this explained. They had lived it.

Yet Jesus stands as not offering an agricultural lesson. He is revealing something far deeper. The seed represents the Word of God, and the soils represent the condition of the human heart. Some hearts are hardened and resistant, unable to receive divine truth. Some respond quickly with joy but lack depth, falling away when pressure comes. Some are divided, crowded by competing desires that slowly choke spiritual life. And some are receptive, able to receive the Word deeply, retain it faithfully, and produce fruit far beyond what seems possible.

When Jesus finishes the parable, He does not explain it to the crowd. Instead, He leaves them with a simple command: “He who has

ears, let him hear.” The words linger like seed waiting to take root. Only later, in private, does Jesus explain the meaning to His disciples, revealing not only the interpretation of the story but the purpose of parables themselves. They reveal truth to the humble and expose resistance in the proud. The same Word that softens one heart hardens another. The difference is never the seed. It is always the soil.

A Prophetic Method with Prophetic Meaning

Matthew tells us plainly that Jesus taught in parables to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Asaph in Psalm 78:2: “I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter hidden things, things from of old.” This ancient psalm recounts the history of Israel, its rebellion, God’s faithfulness, and the unfolding of divine truth across generations. The psalmist declares that God’s story contains mysteries long hidden but destined to be revealed.

Jesus steps into this prophetic stream. When He teaches in parables, He is not merely illustrating divine truth. He is unveiling what had been concealed. His storytelling is not only effective teaching; it is a signature of Messiah ship. His use of parables is itself a fulfillment of prophecy, a divine confirmation that He is indeed the Christ.

Jesus also quotes Isaiah’s words about a people who hear but do not understand, **see but do not perceive**. Parables are therefore both revelation and diagnosis. They uncover divine truth for the humble and expose resistance in the proud. The same sun that softens wax

hardens clay. The same seed that produces thirtyfold in one heart is snatched, scorched, or strangled in another.

This is why Jesus places the Parable of the Sower at the gateway of His teaching. It becomes a spiritual filter. It divides the crowd, not by background or knowledge, but by heart condition. The parable asks each listener the question Jesus asked repeatedly throughout His ministry: *How will you hear and receive the word of life?*

The Point Jesus Is Pressing: The Condition of the Heart Determines the Harvest

At the inner life of this parable is a single, penetrating divine truth: the condition of your heart determines what God's Word can grow in your life. The seed never changes. God's Word is always living, active, and powerful. The sower never changes. God is generous, faithful, and persistent in scattering divine truth. The only variable in the story is the inner life that receives it.

Jesus stands as not categorizing people permanently, nor is He inviting comparison. He is revealing states of the soul. Conditions can change when exposed to God's transforming work. This is why He places the Parable of the Sower at the foundation of His teaching. How a person hears determines everything that follows. A hardened heart cannot receive divine truth. A shallow heart cannot sustain it. A divided heart cannot prioritize it. But a receptive heart welcomes the Word deeply and allows God to produce a harvest far beyond human effort.

Illuminating the Path: Becoming Good Soil

The path forward is implied within the story itself. Becoming good soil does not happen accidentally. Hardened soil must be broken. Shallow soil must be deepened. Thorn-filled soil must be cleared. This work is not passive; it requires humility, attentiveness, and intentional cooperation with the Spirit of God.

Though Jesus first spoke this parable two thousand years ago, the soils remain strikingly relevant. Consider how each one appears in modern life.

The **hard heart** is the person closed to God, perhaps due to disappointment, pride, skepticism, or wounds that have calcified into cynicism. They hear divine truth but it bounces off, never entering, because the inner life has become like a well-trodden path.

The **shallow heart** represents the person who responds emotionally but not deeply. They begin well; they feel God's presence; they rejoice in early growth. But when trials come, or when obedience becomes costly, their roots wither.

The **divided heart** is perhaps the most common in our generation. The seed grows, but thorns grow faster. Worries about finances, the pressures of busyness, the endless noise of digital life, and the pursuit of comfort and approval choke the Word. The divided heart does not reject God; it simply tries to serve Him alongside ten other masters.

The **receptive heart** is the inner life that hears, the inner life that surrenders, the inner life that listens with humility and obeys with trust. It does not resist the Word, nor treat it lightly, nor allow other

loves to crowd it out. It receives the seed deeply, protects it, nourishes it, and waits patiently for God to produce a harvest.

Growth comes as we allow God to confront resistance, expose distraction, and cultivate depth within us. Spiritual formation is not built on emotional reaction alone. It is formed through retention, obedience, and perseverance over time. The good soil hears the Word, guards it, nourishes it, and waits patiently for God to bring the harvest. The work is slow, often unseen, but it is real.

The Promise Jesus Anchors: A Harvest Beyond Human Ability

The promise Jesus attaches to this parable is breathtaking. He speaks of a harvest that multiplies thirty, sixty, even one hundred times what was sown. To His original audience, such a yield would have seemed miraculous. Normal harvests did not multiply this way.

Jesus stands as offering more than encouragement; He is offering hope. When your heart becomes receptive to God's Word, He produces fruit you could never manufacture on your own. This is not the promise of ease, but of deep change. God grows patience where there was frustration, wisdom where there was confusion, peace where there was anxiety, and love where there was resentment. The harvest may be slow and quiet, but it is certain.

Conclusion: Preparing the Soil of the Heart

The Parable of the Sower leaves every disciple with a holy responsibility. Examine the soil of your heart. not to condemn yourself, but to invite God's work. He is faithful to sow. His Word is

powerful to grow. And when the inner life is prepared, the harvest will come.

As you allow Him to soften what has hardened, deepen what is shallow, and clear what competes, you will discover that what God produces in you is far greater than anything you could achieve on your own.

Week 2 Devotional Guide

The Sower

Day Two

Jesus used parables to reveal divine truth to hearts that were willing to receive it and to expose resistance in those unwilling to listen. The same story could soften one heart and harden another. Parables do more than explain divine truth. They reveal the posture of the listener and invite a response of humility or resistance.

Scripture: Matthew 13:10-15; Psalm 78:2

Question: How open is my heart to hearing divine truth that may confront me?

Day Three

The power of the seed never changes. God's Word is living, active, and effective in every generation. What differs is the condition of the inner life that receives it. Growth begins not with comparison to others, but with honest assessment of our own receptivity.

Scripture: Matthew 13:3-9; Hebrews 4:12

Question: What kind of soil best describes my heart right now?

Day Four

A heart repeatedly walked on becomes resistant to growth. Disappointment, distraction, and pride can slowly harden us without notice. Jesus warns that divine truth left on the surface is easily taken

away. A hardened heart does not reject divine truth openly; it simply stops receiving it deeply.

Scripture: Matthew 13:4, 19; Proverbs 28:14

Question: What has hardened my heart toward God’s Word?

Day Five

Initial enthusiasm can look like faith, but without depth it quickly fades. Jesus exposes a belief that receives divine truth joyfully yet collapses when obedience becomes costly. Rooted faith grows slowly, develops endurance, and remains steady through difficulty rather than disappearing under pressure.

Scripture: Matthew 13:5 6, 20 21; Colossians 2:6 7

Question: Where might my faith lack depth?

Day Six

Truth can take root and still be suffocated. Competing desires, constant worry, and misplaced priorities slowly crowd out spiritual life. Jesus warns that divided allegiance does not reject faith outright, but it prevents growth. A heart pulled in many directions cannot bear lasting fruit.

Scripture: Matthew 13:7, 22; Luke 8:14

Question: What competing concern is choking spiritual growth in me?

Day Seven

Good soil receives divine truth deeply, protects it carefully, and allows God to produce lasting fruit. Growth is not forced by effort alone. It is the result of receptivity paired with God's power. Our responsibility is openness. God's work is multiplication and deep change.

Scripture: Matthew 13:8, 23; Psalm 1:1 3

Question: What does receptivity look like in my daily life?