

The Parable of the Sower

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[0 : 0 0] I just want to turn back to the passage that we read from Matthew's Gospel in chapter 13 and just look, a few simple thoughts from this parable, the parable of the shore it is a joy to be here with you in Varvis and a joy to be here with you this morning as well and thank you for all your encouragements and the welcome that you give to us whenever we come recently we had a little holiday, we were away and where we were staying there were little restaurants and you could go to any of these restaurants but you had to book and so there was a procedure for booking it was online, everything is online so we booked one of these little restaurants for an evening and we got there that evening and there was a family just in front of us and the man had the sheet with all the names of the people who had booked and he wasn't able to find the name of this family that they were in front of us and then someone else was called it was obviously the manager or whoever and the lady is getting a little bit flustered she's saying, I definitely booked, definitely booked

I've got the email and she's desperately searching on her phone to find the email but you know what happens all the time in these situations you can never find the email you can never find the confirmation well, usually so it ended up, there was a wee bit of a discussion and then the man just he had the sheet in front of us and he just said there's nothing here and that family had to leave because their names weren't on the sheet he felt sorry for them the lady thought she had done everything she needed to get a meal for her and her family in that restaurant that night only to be turned away because their names weren't there as I thought about that I laughed and I thought to myself what an illustration is there because there'll be people who'll go through life there'll be people who'll come to church every Sunday and there'll be people that'll they'll have thought that they've done everything they needed to do to be accepted into heaven on that final day that Jonathan was talking about last night but you know the Bible tells us that only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will be there and what a tragedy what a tragedy at the end of the day to be turned away to hear the words depart from me

I never knew you and as we consider this parable today it describes to us different reactions really to the word of God and there's only one that is a true faith trust in the Lord Jesus Christ so we need to be very sure we need to be very sure that our names are written there in the Lamb's book of life we need to be very sure that we have reached out in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ and we've put our trust in him and we're we're following him we need to be sure it's it's no it's not enough to go through just thinking hoping at the end of the day well I hope I've done enough many people are living like that we go around doors and we speak to people as part of what we do in missions and many people will say oh yes I'm a Christian and you'll see

I used to say to them oh that's great so you're absolutely sure then that you're going to go to heaven and people then usually say oh well who can be sure of that I said you can be sure if your trust is in the Lord Jesus Christ the Bible tells us that these things are written that you might know that you have eternal life and our certainty and our hope and what we're sure in is nothing of ourselves it's all about what Jesus has done it's all about him that's why we stress and all the time it's about him it's about trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation it's all about him we're told that nothing unclean will enter heaven not anyone who does what is detestable or false but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life the Bible tells us that to strive to enter through the narrow door for many

I tell you will seek to enter but will not be able once the master of the house has risen and shut the door you will begin to stand outside and to knock at the door saying Lord open to us then he will answer I do not know where you come from what a tragedy for those people and the Bible tells us that there will be people like this at the end of the day what a tragedy what a tragedy to sit under the preaching of the gospel week by week and still be in this state because we do not know when the

day nor the hour when the Son of Man will come there's so many warnings in the Bible but the offer of the gospel is to come to Jesus so the first type of hearts is talking about different types of hearts in this parable and response is the sower is the Son of Man the seed is the Word of God and the ground is the heart of man and in the first instance in this parable we've got a seed that was sown and it fell on the path that would have been just an area where people had walked back and forth where the ground was hard packed and there was no penetration the seed just landed on top of the ground and the birds came and snatched it away that's just a picture of someone's heart who is just hardened that the Word of God is making no impact that people can come and sit under the Word and can go out through the door at the end and it's made no impact whatsoever and they go home and carry on the week and all the activities of what is normally done through the week and this Word has no impact whatsoever and I find it quite striking that sometimes you can have a conversation with someone and you're trying to get this message across you're trying to tell people about

[7 : 45] Jesus and of their need of Jesus and the moment you finish they talk about something different it's like they've never even heard what you've said hard hearts oh and this is such a tragedy to sit under the Word to hear the Word even and there's no understanding there's no interest there's no impact made if this is you today if you can just come and go and leave from the Gospel preaching on the Word of God and it's of no effect on your life whatsoever oh my friend what can you do you can pray you can pray that God would soften your heart you can pray that God would give you a new heart a heart that would be receptive to his own precious Word oh if that's you if you find yourself coming and going and this precious Gospel has no impact at all giving you no thought whatsoever oh you need to pray Lord give me a softened heart a heart that would receive this precious

Word so there's a hard heart but there's also just a shallow a very shallow experience that we can have some seed fell on rocky ground for it did not have much soil and immediately they sprang up since they had no depths of soil but when the sun rose they were scorched and since they had no root it was withered away for what was sown on rocky ground this is the one who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy yet he has no root in himself but endures for a while and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the Word immediately he falls away what kind of heart is this you know there are people like this that seem to receive the Word and you think yes that person's got it that's what we're told in the parable they receive immediately they receive the Word with joy you may say well that seems a lot better than the first response anyway it was just nothing but here at least there's something we might say but we're told that it doesn't last it doesn't last just like the plant that was sown where the soil was rocky and the soil was shallow whenever the sun came up the plant just withered and died no depth no moisture in the soil to keep it going what was the problem what was the problem here there could have been a response some people do just make a response whatever causes that it could be that someone really did feel something at the time that the word did speak to them in some way at the time maybe a person had been going through a hard and a difficult time and they start thinking about the things of God they start considering the ways of God and they think yes this is what I need and there is a response to the word of God but you know the Christian life is much more than a response oh don't base your Christian experience on some kind of response don't base it on some kind of light decision some sort of half hearted decision see the Christian life is much more than that the Christian life is not an easy life the Christian life is something that we cannot get through with just some sort of response we cannot go through see the sky come up to Jesus and said teacher I will follow you wherever you go and Jesus said to him foxes of holes birds of the air of nests but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head it's not going to be easy Jesus says it's not going to be easy there's going to be hard times we need to have a savior we need to be trusting in Jesus fully expect to be tried to be after a profession once somebody professes their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ you know expect to be tried whether that's a response or whatever or some kind of response there'll be trials will come and if it's not true if it's not real if it's not fully grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ you will fail you will just be like the little plant that will die I've heard people saying well I've tried it but it didn't work for me well you didn't try it properly you weren't willing to give the whole of your life to Jesus you see in this kind of response in this situation there's no humble surrender there's no self denial there's no true understanding of the significance of the cross there's no true conviction of sin and repentance it's just a response and yes it seemed real at the time and

it was with joy but it didn't last and there's no fruit make sure my friend that you're not thinking and basing your experience on some response that you've had at some time unless you're living the Christian life today unless Jesus is real to you today unless you've got a longing and a desire in your heart to be following him and obeying his truth and enjoying his truth and getting as much of his truth as you can don't think that some response sometime will do it it'll fade away but there are those also that are preoccupied other seeds fell among thorns and thorns grew up and choked them as for what was sown among thorns this is the one who hears the word and cares but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and it proves unfaithful remember we're talking about the seed and the soil the word is always the same there's not a different word the word is the same the seed is the same seed that was sown on the path that was sown on the rocky places that was sown among the thorns sown on the good soil it was the same seed and here we see another example this time we're told there's and we might say well that's good and it is good when people are hearing the word and we want that we want more and more people coming and hearing the word but at the start it didn't get far the man at the start and the other just died away but you might say well at least there's something here but what does this parable tell us about the heart of this person it tells us that the person's heart is not a clean heart it tells us that the word of [15:15] God was sown among thorns a ground that was not clean well prepared suitable ground for seed to be sown in and the seed that fell among the thorns is the thorns that grew up and it choked the seed and this reminds us that the only way that we can be right with God through Jesus is by the cleansing power of the blood we need to have hearts that are clean hearts that are washed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ you know that that's the condition otherwise we will hear this word but unless we're truly converted unless we'll come in repentance unless our hearts are cleansed by the blood the cares and the deceitfulness of riches and all the things that are going on in our lives will have a priority over the word of God that's what this is telling us the word didn't have the priority oh there was hearing and yes there was perhaps in a sense you could participate and enjoy you could come along to church and you could enjoy what you're hearing and you can enjoy the services and you can enjoy the singing and you can enjoy the people you can enjoy the fellowship and all the rest of it but

I want to ask you today my friend does the word of God got priority in your life because you know if it doesn't if our lives are not truly cleansed and washed in the blood then all the other things will spring up and they'll choke the word where are our desires today the weeds sprung up oh how tragic that is how tragic to go on into such a preoccupied state because you know unless Jesus is your actual savior unless you've come to him and you've received forgiveness for sin you will never manage it you will never go on through life and get anywhere because the pull of the world will always be greater the everyday things of life will always be more and they'll be taking priority and it'll come to the word of God it'll be a hassle to you it'll be a bother to you because it'll be pulling at you but the desires of all the things of this world whether it's work whether it's crafting whether it's whatever it is money these things will be always coming at you and taking a priority in your life that's what happened the seed when it was sown among thorns the thorns grew up the cares of the all the things that the devil would bring in on us will choke the word and again there would be no fruit no fruit the parable tells us it proves unfruitful but just finally and in a word the last heart was a softened heart and there's just such a difference such a difference other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain some hundred some sixty some thirty same word same word we're all hearing the same word a prepared heart produced fruit what's the difference you might ask the second one received the word with joy but there was no depths there wasn't really anything there it was just like an experience died out the next heart always hearing you're hearing the word but you've never experienced the true repentance and the cleansing power of the blood in your life that your heart's been made clean through the blood of

Jesus who died on the cross and all these other things take priority and it chokes that word but the one who receives the word with a softened heart with a clean heart the bible says and I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you and I will remove your heart of stone from your flesh and give your heart of flesh the heart that we have by nature is a hard heart it's a sinful heart it's a rebellious heart it's a heart that's caught up with the cares of the world but when someone with a heart like this comes to Jesus and receives his forgiveness we can have a softened heart an understanding heart and a fruit bearing heart that the word would when it's planted would take root deep into the heart you might say how can this be when we hear the word talks about hearing and

understanding and bearing fruit when we truly hear the word do you know what it does for us it shows us what we're like when you truly hear the word of God it's not just some experience it's not just hearing but truly hearing shows us what we're like and although we all know I'm sure in Barvis today that we have all sinned but to realize that to be convicted of that is different but when you hear the word it brings conviction into our lives that we have sinned against God conviction of sin is not just a sense that well I've messed up along the way conviction of sin is when we realize that we've sinned against God and God hates sin and that's me and that's my life I have sinned and it brings you to a place where you'll cry out to him for forgiveness you know that's what hearing the word really is that's the difference with this heart a softened heart it makes you realize that you're in a desperately needy place and you can't do nothing other but call out for mercy call out for forgiveness it brings us to a place where we realize that our best efforts are no good whatsoever it makes us look away from ourselves and look to the one who died on the cross the Lord

Jesus Christ Jesus is your only hope in John 1 12 we read but to all who received him who believed in his name may give the right to be called the children of God I wonder have you ever come to that place where you realize you're a sinner and that Jesus is your only hope and you've called out to him you know you can discuss you can discuss the Bible you can discuss the way of salvation for hours and hours and hours but this is the place you need to come to you need to come to this place of knowing your sins forgiven of coming and giving your life fully to Jesus he won't accept you in part he will only accept you completely fully surrender to him and you know it's wonderful when we do that there's fruit and that's the difference the first three hearts there was no fruit they were all unfruitful but yet the one when the word was understood and believed there's fruit something not all the same some thirty some sixty some a hundred fold but all will be in heaven and will be fully fulfilled what about you then are you that person that comes and goes unaffected by the word you need to pray pray that God would give you a softened heart a heart that would be towards him when does anyone rest in their hope on something that they've experienced at some time they have absolutely no assurance today that their your life is in his hands his care that he is your savior the christian life is is much more than just some sort of experience it's faith trust in Jesus Christ alone and it's living for him wonder if you're that person that you hear oh you're along faithfully you hear the word there's so much going on out there so many other things and these are the things that seem to take priority over the word the bible tells us that a life like this is unfruitful but oh if you have never experienced Jesus come to him that your heart would be filled with him that your heart would be a cleansed heart a heart that would be towards Jesus a heart that would love the Lord Jesus Christ for what he's done for you and a heart that would desire to follow him above everything else as Paul said for me to live is Christ and to die is gain but the fruit of the spirit is love that's love love first and foremost for Jesus can you say that today and love for

[26 : 29] each other as God's people if you love Jesus you should love each other and it's joy you know the bible tells us that the joy of the Lord is our strength wonder do you have that kind of joy because of following Jesus and there's peace my wife had no peace she had no peace and she just longed for peace when she came to Jesus and put her trust in him and she knew her sins were forgiven she has peace wonderful thing to have peace the peace of God he says peace I leave with you my peace I give unto you not as the world giveth give I unto you let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid patience kindness kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self-control may God bless his word Lord we pray that you would help us to experience the word of God in truth and in understanding that we wouldn't be left in any other state apart from the one who has truly come and received forgiveness received the gift of eternal life who has been truly born again of the spirit of God oh may this be our experience and nothing else that we might rejoice in you and follow you and at the end of the day when we stand our names will be there that will not be turned away but our names will be there because we've trusted in the one who is able to save grant your blessing upon your word we pray in

Jesus name amen we're going to sing in closing psalm 130 psalm 130 Lord that's on page 173 it's the psalm's version of the psalm book page 173 psalm 130 Lord from the depth I call to you Lord hear me from on high and give attention to my voice when I for mercy cry that's it isn't it if you are not his that's what you need to do Lord in your presence who can stand if you are sins record but yet forgiveness is with you that we may fear you Lord that's the promise there is forgiveness with him I wait my soul waits for the Lord my hope is in his word more than the watchman waits for dawn my

soul waits for the lord oh israel put your hope in god for mercy is with him and full redemption from their sins his people heal redeem let's sing this psalm lord from the depths i call to you lord heal me from on high and give attention to my voice when i for mercy cry lord in your presence who consigned give you your sins record but yet forgiveness is with you that we fear you lord i with my soul wish for the lord my hope is in his word more than the the one man whispered on my soul whispered the lord o

Israel put your hope in god for mercy is with him and full redemption from their sins his people hear the heart as you and and at 8 o'clock to the hall.

I must say, my soul has been richly blessed through Jonathan's ministry over these nights, and he'll be ministering again. And I wouldn't like to have missed it.

And so I'd encourage you to come under the sound of the gospel this evening.