

# The Parable of the Sower

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Great. Well, if you have your Bible, open it up. We've been studying through the book of Mark. And we are in Mark chapter 4.

We've been looking at the parable of the sower. We started the parable of the sower. It's been, what, three weeks now since we last were there. And when we first looked at the parable of the sower, we kind of focused on, this was the first parable or one of the first parables that Jesus taught. And so there's a lot there about the purpose of parables. Why did Jesus teach in parables?

And it's easy to think, well, parables are stories, they're illustrations. A parable is meant to make a certain truth easier to understand. And that is true. Telling stories helps us understand certain truths. But one of the purposes that Jesus said, or a purpose that he used parables for was to what?

Was to actually hide the truth. Isn't that interesting? Why would Jesus want to hide the truth? It just seems so contrary to, you know, Jesus is teaching everybody. He wants, doesn't it seem like God wants people to know the truth? And we talked about that a few weeks ago. And the Lord is willing for those who want to be blind, for those who want to miss the truth because of the hardness of their hearts. He's willing to basically hide the truth from them because they don't want to hear the truth.

The truth is there for those who want to hear it, for those who are of a willing ear, for those who want to understand. But for those who don't, then he says it comes in parables. And so we talked about that last week. We're going to start this week in verse 13. Jesus has told a parable. His disciples came to him in private and said, Jesus, what was that all about? That was an interesting story, but what was it about?

[ 2 : 1 9 ] And so he talks to them about what it was. We're going to read from verse, where should we start? Let's actually start with verse 10 and then we'll go down to verse 20 and then we'll just go verse by verse here. Verse 10, but when he was alone, those around him with the 12 asked him about the parable.

And he said to them, to you, it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those who are outside, all things come in parables so that seeing they may see and not perceive and hearing, they may hear and not understand lest they should turn and their sins be forgiven them.

There he was quoting from the Old Testament prophets. And then he said to them, do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word.

And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. And when they hear Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word immediately receive it with gladness and they have no root in themselves and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. Now these are the ones sown among thorn, among the thorns. They're the ones who hear the word and the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desires of other things entering in choke the word and it becomes unfruitful. But these are the ones sown on the good ground. Those who hear the word, accept it and bear fruit. Some 30, some 60 and some 100 fold.

As we go through this, one of the difficulties in going through the gospels in our very first message of talking about the gospel of John, we talked about understanding the gospels, all of them, not just Mark, but all four of the gospels in their context. What is the context of the gospels, of Jesus' ministry, his three-year ministry on the earth? And Jesus gives a little hint here with this parable and he talks about it as a mystery. He's revealing a mystery. And what is that mystery about? What's the subject matter?

[ 4 : 52 ] He says it's been given to you to understand the mysteries of the kingdom. And the kingdom is this, is the context that we need to keep in mind throughout all of this. The kingdom was not this new idea. It wasn't something that people in Israel were unfamiliar with. The kingdom was something that had been foretold by the prophets for thousands of years. That there was a coming kingdom in which Israel, the people of God, would be restored to their land and their kingdom. And not only would their kingdom be restored, but it would supersede all the other kingdoms. That a Messiah would come who would sit on a throne ruling over Israel, but not just Israel, but over all of the earth.

And Israel would no longer be the tail. Israel would be the head. It would be the head of all the nations. And all of Israel knew about this. The prophets had spoke of it for many, many years.

And so this concept of the kingdom wasn't something new. It was something familiar. And that is the context of this parable and as well as all the rest of the parables. So that Jesus says, do you not understand this parable in verse 13? How then will you understand all the parables? You know, the parables of Jesus have been interpreted in many, many different ways. If you go through studies on different parables in the Bible, you'll hear so many ideas and interpretations about what they mean.

And you can imagine why there's confusion. I mean, Jesus said it was intentionally told in parables to not add clarity, but actually maybe add a little bit of confusion to the people of the day.

But he does explain it to his disciples. And so that brings clarity to us as we read, you know, 2,000 years later, looking back, we can have more clarity. And I think understanding the context of the kingdom really helps us to hone in on what it is that Jesus is talking about.

[ 6 : 56 ] Verse 14. So we're going to see, well, what are all these elements of the parable about? The sower sows the word, he says. So he told this story about a sower sowing some seed and it's like, okay, but he didn't say, well, what do they represent? Now he's telling them. The sower or the seed, he doesn't tell us who the sower is, by the way, right? He never mentions who the sower is, but we can imagine it probably wasn't too important to what he was trying to get across because he didn't say who it was. But I can imagine the sower could be anyone. I mean, the sower is God himself.

God is the source of the word, of the message. But then also Jesus himself, the disciples, anyone who has a message can sow it, right? As long as you know the message, you can dispense it. You can scatter that message out just like seed.

But he tells us what that seed is. The seed is the word. Now here's the question. The word? What word? Words can mean all kinds of different things. Is it just any word? Is he talking about just the Bible? We call the Bible, right? We call this the word of God.

Or is he talking about something more specific? Maybe he's talking about Old Testament prophecies. Is that what he's talking about? Sowing the word of the prophets? Well, I don't think so. What about maybe moral instruction? You know, Jesus taught a lot of good things that we ought to practice as far as morality and forgiveness and love and those types of things. Is that what Jesus was talking about in sowing the word, teaching people how to live a good life? It's not.

Well, what about this? Maybe the word is the gospel of the grace of God, in which we tell others, like we did at the fair this week, or this last week, that they can have salvation through Christ and his death, burial, and resurrection. Is that the word that Jesus was talking about being scattered? No, it can't be, right? Because that word was not available. Jesus had not died yet. Jesus was not preaching his death, burial, and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins.

[ 9 : 34 ] So what is this word? Well, actually, there's a parallel passage about this whole account in the book of Matthew. If you turn to Matthew chapter 13, verse 19, it tells the exact same thing, but it gives us a little bit of extra information, and it tells us what the word is. Matthew chapter 13.

And verse 19. Verse 18. Therefore, hear the parable of the sower. Verse 19. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. That is the one who received the seed by the wayside. What word is it? It's the word of the kingdom. That's important. That's the context, right? Jesus said, it's been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom. And the word that I'm talking about, this seed, is the seed of the kingdom. Remember back in Mark when we were looking at chapter 1? Jesus came. He came on the scene. He was baptized by John the Baptist. And it says he came preaching a message. And what was the message that Jesus came preaching? It tells us in Mark 1, verse 15. It says this, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel.

The time is fulfilled. All those things the prophets have been foretelling, that time is now. The kingdom of God, it's at hand. It's right here. Right around the corner. I mean right around the corner. Repent and believe the gospel, the good news. Repent and believe this message about the kingdom. Jesus came in his three-year ministry to prepare Israel for a kingdom that he was preparing with God the Father to establish on the earth, with him as the king.

And there are certain things that he needed to make sure that people, those who wanted to understand, were aware of as he was preaching this message and doing his ministry over the three years.

So that is the seed. It's the word of the kingdom. That's the seed. Verse 15. Again, back to Mark chapter 4 here, verse 15. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown.

[ 12 : 20 ] When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. So the language is a little bit strange here. He says these are the ones by the wayside, basically saying, well here, some seed fell on the wayside. Well, what's the wayside?

You can think of it, if you're sowing seed, you know, if you have fields, especially back then. Today we have what I would call a sidewalk, right? You have the sidewalk, you know, maybe you're planting grass.

That's mostly what I do. We do have a garden, but I don't have very much of a green thumb. But I can plant grass pretty well. But any seed that falls on the grass, right, it's not getting into the soil at all.

Well, back in these times, they didn't have cement sidewalks like we do, but they did have walking paths. If you wanted to get through the fields, you know, usually you went on the same path. You didn't just plow right through the wheat or corn or whatever it was.

You created these paths. And over time, those paths would get trodden down, and it would just be like, almost like cement. It would just be hard. And there's no seed even getting into the dirt on those beaten down paths.

[ 13 : 28 ] And so that's what he's talking about, the wayside. It's a beaten down, hardened path. And so he's saying, this is the seed that fell down on the wayside.

And then Satan comes immediately and takes the word that was sown in their hearts. So Jesus is about to describe four different types of soil, four different types of ground. In fact, some people have described this not as the parable of the sower, which is the most common, but some have described it as the parable of the soils, because really that's the subject matter.

That's where the difference comes in, is with the soils. There are different soils or different types of ground. This type of ground, the word is dismissed.

It's rejected. It takes no root at all. It doesn't even make its way into the soil. Again, if you look back at the parallel in Matthew chapter 13, it's, he says there that, it does not say this in Mark.

It just says that Satan comes immediately and takes away the seed. But in Matthew, it says that the word is not understood. And why would it not be understood?

[ 14 : 44 ] Is it because people are just, they really want to understand, but they just can't get it? Is that what it is? No, that's not what he's talking about. He's talking about people who don't want to understand.

You know, there's a verse actually in, I think it's 1 Peter, that talks about those who are willfully ignorant. Have you ever experienced that in your life? Some people, it's like they don't know what they ought to know.

And you realize after a while, it's not because they're searching and not finding. It's because they don't want to know. Have you ever met somebody like that? They want to be ignorant.

They're willfully ignorant. That's the kind of person, that's the kind of ground, that's the kind of heart that Jesus is talking about here. One thing I wanted to bring up with this is he says, who is the one who's taking the seed away?

He says it's Satan. And some people might get the idea, well, these are people who really want to understand the word, but somebody's just coming in and stealing it away, even though they'd really like to receive the word and understand it.

[ 15 : 51 ] But again, I don't think that's the way it is at all. In fact, a lot of times, Satan is just, he's here to assist us, if we want to, in temptation or rebellion against God.

But some people think that, well, if Satan wasn't around, then there wouldn't be any sin and no evil and no rebellion. And that's not the case, is it? Satan is certainly here to help with rebellion and temptation.

But mankind, even without Satan, is certainly capable of rebellion and hardness of heart, even without his assistance.

But he's there to assist regardless. And so a lot of times, Satan is used, right, as a figurehead of evil. Satan is the figurehead of the evil forces in the world.

And so it's described as Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. So that's the hard ground, the wayside, the sidewalk, the beaten path. And again, he's describing the hearts of men.

[ 16 : 57 ] So certain men, they won't even listen to the word. They hear it, it goes in one ear, out the other. Either they don't understand it, or like we said, they just don't want to understand it.

They've got better things to worry about, to think about. The next kind of ground is the stony ground. Verse 16, These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground.

When they hear the word, immediately they receive it with gladness. So this is a soil. It's got some earth there. There's some soil that can receive the seed.

But it's filled with rocks and stones. And that prevents any kind of root from going down deep to where it can actually survive. Sunlight, maybe a lot of rain, or whatever might come.

And so he says, And they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises, for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.

[ 18 : 04 ] Those stones, they crowd the soil. They don't allow roots to go deep. And so even though the message is received, again, he's talking about the hearts of men.

Even though the message is received, Hey, I'm interested in the kingdom. I want to enter into this kingdom that's going to be restored to Israel on the earth.

And people would be happy about that, joyful about it. But then difficulty comes. And even though they endure briefly, that seed, it may grow into a little plant, but it never gets big enough to actually what?

Bear any fruit. And we'll see that that's a big part of what all this is about. It's about bearing fruit. The stones represent what?

Persecution, trials, tribulations, difficulties in life. And specifically, difficulties related to what? He says, for the sake of the word.

[ 19 : 11 ] Persecution comes regarding the word of the kingdom. There are people that didn't like the king. They were pretty happy with Herod, weren't they?

And so do you see that in the Gospels itself? You see some persecution. Then we look in the book of Acts. We see more persecution. In fact, one of the things I think is important for us to understand is that as in Jesus' ministry, he was preparing people for a specific period of time in which there would be intense persecution that was meant to separate the wheat from the chaff.

In fact, he tells another parable about that. To separate the sheep from the goats. To separate the wheat from the tares. He tells these in other parables.

The whole purpose, there was a tribulation coming. Persecution, intense. It would be so difficult. People would be killed. People would be tortured. It was something that the prophets foretold.

The prophets called it a time of Jacob's trial or trouble. Said in another way. The time of Jacob's trouble.

[ 20 : 34 ] Today, we call that the tribulation period. It's a time in which before Jesus returns, again, we're looking, we're in the future now looking back. But at this point, Jesus was talking to them about something that was supposed to happen immediately.

As we've talked about in the past, this is something that ended up being put on hold. But that's what was to happen. Jesus was coming. The kingdom was at hand. But before that kingdom could come, there needed to be this seven-year period of tribulation.

That seed of the kingdom needed to be held onto to bear fruit even through tribulation. If you weren't willing, if you weren't willing to go through that tribulation, the kingdom was not for you.

In fact, turn in your Bibles to Matthew 24. Jesus talks about this further. Matthew 24. Matthew 24, verse 9.

This is an end times prophecy here that Jesus is talking about. He predicts that the temple will be destroyed and that the end of the age is just around the corner.

[ 21 : 58 ] And as part of this speech that he's giving, he says in verse 9, Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

And then many will be offended. They will betray one another and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

But he who endures to the end will be saved. Give me a warning. Hey, the kingdom's coming, but you need to hold on to this message of the kingdom.

You need to be faithful. Don't give up. Endure through persecution. Endure through trial. This is a time where the wheat and the tares are being identified. The sheep and the goats.

Which one will you be? Will you endure through this tribulation period all the way to the end? That's what this is about. That seed on the stony ground.

[ 23 : 04 ] Are you going to allow these stones to get in the way? Will you endure to the end? And thus, what? Be saved. If you endure, you can find salvation in that kingdom that is coming.

Back to Mark chapter 4. We'll look at the next type of ground or the next type of heart. Verse 18. Now these are the ones sown among thorns.

They are the ones who hear the word. And the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

This is another kind of impediment to the seed growing. You had tribulation and trials, persecution with the stones. Here, you have just the cares of life.

And the cares of life may be things that are bad, but a lot of times they're things that are not bad things at all.

[ 24 : 05 ] You know, spending too much time pursuing riches can definitely be a hindrance to a spiritual life in any age, at any time, whether it's this time of the kingdom or the age of grace in which we live.

But I don't think he was just talking about those bad types of things, those kind of spiritual distractions, though anything can be a spiritual distraction. During this specific time period, it was different from the past, from the past age among Israel, and it's different from today, in the age of grace in which we live.

This was a special, intense time. They required something not required before and not required after. A different way to live.

I think many people have made the mistake of trying to live the way that Jesus is describing here without understanding the age in which we live.

I'd like to look at a few verses to kind of hone in on exactly what Jesus is talking about. There's these weeds and these thorns that are choking out the plant, and they're just the cares of the world, riches, the desire for other things.

[ 25 : 31 ] Well, other things than what? Well, other things than the kingdom. Are there other good things in life? Sure. But one of the things that Jesus was teaching was nothing compares to the importance of the kingdom.

There was one parable that he told, very brief, one or two sentences, the pearl of great price. And this is told in many ways. A man sells everything that he has, all that he has, for that one pearl.

And what does the pearl represent? It's the kingdom. There's nothing more important than that kingdom and entering in. There was a story of the rich young ruler.

Remember, he came to Jesus. What good thing must I do to inherit eternal life, he said. And what did Jesus say? Well, what did Moses tell you? Keep the commandments.

And he says, well, I think I've done a pretty good job with that. Jesus followed up and he said, you know what I want you to do? I want you to sell everything that you have and come follow me. And, you know, it's not going to be an easy life.

[ 26 : 43 ] We're not going to be staying at the Ritz-Carlton. And we're going to be sleeping outside and people are going to hate us and they're probably going to throw rocks at us and be angry at us and persecution's coming. But I want you to come follow me.

Just sell everything. And what happened? That man, it says, walked away sorrowful because he was rich. And his disciples, remember what their response was?

What was that all about? Jesus said, it's really hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom. It's hard. There's a lot to give up when you have more to give up.

When you're already poor, it's like, it's kind of easy to stay poor, right? When you have a lot, it's hard to give all that up. But the kingdom is so important.

Are you willing to enter in to the kingdom? In Luke chapter 9, and I'll just read this for time's sake because I want to try to wrap up here in about 10 minutes. Luke chapter 9, verse 57.

[ 27 : 45 ] So if you're writing down notes, Luke chapter 9, verse 57 through 62. Luke 9, 57. And I think this talks about worldly cares back to Jesus, his thistles and thorns and weeds in the parable of the sower.

Now it happened as they journeyed on the road that someone said to him, this is to Jesus, Lord, I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus said to him, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

He's saying, listen, count the cost. You're not going to be staying in a nice hotel. You're going to be sleeping outside, dude. Are you okay with that? Verse 59.

Then he said to another, follow me. But he said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. Now, is that a bad thing to do to bury your father?

In fact, wouldn't we consider it a irresponsible and a deadbeat who would not bury his own parents? Wouldn't you consider somebody who refused to bury their own parents to be a deadbeat, right?

[ 28 : 57 ] What did Jesus say? Jesus said to him, let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God. Listen, this is a special time.

Things don't work as they normally do. This is important. We don't have time for all these niceties, these things that are good and proper and right in most times.

But right now, the kingdom of God is at hand. We need to get the word out. Come follow me. Let's preach. Somebody else. And another also said, Lord, I will follow you, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.

I just want to say goodbye. Why? Jesus said to him, no one having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.

If you were going to go on a mission trip, let's say you were going to be gone for a year. Wouldn't you want to say goodbye to your parents? And wouldn't that be appropriate? It certainly would.

[ 30 : 01 ] But we don't live in the same time that Jesus was here. That was not appropriate. There's no time for that. We need to get the word out. The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Luke 12, verse 22. Luke 12, verse 22. Again, you don't have to turn there, but if you write notes, Luke 12, 22. Again, more about the cares of the world.

What Jesus was talking about when he was talking about thorns and thistles and the cares of the world choking out that seed, that word of the kingdom. Then he said to his disciples, therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, nor about the body, what you will put on.

Life is more than food and the body is more than clothing. Don't worry about food or clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn, nor feed them.

How much more value are you than the birds? And which of you, by worrying, can add one cubit to his stature? And if you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest?

[ 31 : 14 ] Consider the lilies, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. And yet I say to you, even Solomon in all of his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you, of little faith?

And do not seek what you should not, excuse me, and do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things.

But seek what? The kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Sell what you have, give alms to the poor, provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, and a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

So many have read this passage and think, oh man, I gotta like, well maybe I don't have to sell everything, but at least you'd be willing to, that kind of thing. Listen, this is a passage about this kingdom that's right around the corner.

[ 32 : 32 ] There's no time for jobs, money, trying to make sure that you feed your family. He's saying, listen, the kingdom is at hand.

Don't worry, God will take care of you. Remember how, who was it, Elijah? He ran away from the enemy, and he was hiding in caves and he was hungry.

God, did you leave me? What happened? The ravens came with food, right? God says, don't worry, I'll feed you. Now, what about in the age in which we live?

Some people think, well, I don't need a job. I'm a Christian. I'm gonna follow what Jesus said. I'm not gonna work and God will take care of me. What does Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, say?

He who does not work, what? Shouldn't eat. And he who does not provide for his own household is worse than an infidel. Worse than an infidel.

[ 33 : 30 ] Now, but things are different when the times are different. We need to know the times and the seasons in which we live. When it came to the kingdom, be willing to give all, even your own life.

To get that kingdom. The last ground is the good ground. Verse 20. Again, Mark 4, verse 20. But those are the ones sown on the good ground.

Those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit. Some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred. This is the good ground. There's no rocks. There's no thorns or weeds to get into the way.

And the big thing here is that the seed be able to grow in good ground, so a good heart, that it might bear what?



Bear fruit. That's the goal. Bear fruit. Fruit was what God was looking for from Israel. Again, we have a context here of the nation of Israel.

[ 34 : 32 ] And God had been working through His prophets to get Israel to bear fruit for millennia, for generations. And I want to go back and look at something that the prophet Isaiah, or God said through the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah chapter 5, verse 1. We're going to look at all seven verses here, or the first seven verses, I guess. Isaiah 5, verse 1. This relates, I believe, directly to the parable that Jesus is telling here.

Now let me sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved regarding his vineyard. My well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and he planted it with the choicest vine.

He built a tower in its midst and also made a wine press in it. So he expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes, bitter, nasty grapes.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, please, between me and my vineyard. What more could I have done to my vineyard that I might have not done in it already?

[ 35 : 45 ] Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes? And now, please, let me tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away its hedge and it shall be burned and break down its wall and it shall be trampled down.

I will lay it waste. It shall not be pruned or dug, but there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain on it, for the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant plant.

He looks for justice, but behold, he finds oppression. For righteousness, but behold, instead, he hears a cry for help.

What's the fruit that Jesus is looking for? It's the same fruit that God said he was looking for here through Isaiah. Righteousness and justice. And this is exactly what Jesus says when he comes on the scene.

Matthew 3, verse 7. Matthew 3, 7. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, Brood of vipers, who warns you to flee from the wrath to come?

[ 37 : 06 ] Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father, for I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

And even now, the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree which does not bear good fruit, fruits of righteousness and justice, is cut down and thrown into the fire.

I indeed baptize you with water under repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I. Actually, this is John the Baptist speaking. Whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clean out his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn.

But he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. What is the end for those branches, plants, that do not bear fruit?

[ 38 : 08 ] They are burned in the fire. The fruit he's looking for is righteousness and justice. Those who will uphold God's law under Israel.

Uphold the law. Uphold righteousness. Uphold justice. That it wasn't being done. And for those who heard the word of the kingdom, if you were going to endure to the end, you had to hold on to that word and you had to go after that kingdom, forsaking everything else, going through persecutions and trials and tribulations.

Even the regular cares of life that we all in typical times would need to deal with, things that we should deal with, put them aside.

We need to enter into the kingdom. Give up everything for the sake of the kingdom. Now I want to provide a contrast.

We don't live in an age of the kingdom. The kingdom that was promised to Israel has not been promised to us. And as we've described in the past and Pastor Marr for many, many years, there was a change that happened.

[ 39 : 27 ] Israel rejected their Messiah, their king, the king of the kingdom. And because of that, the Bible says that the branches were cut off from the tree.

Israel was cut off. And instead, a foreign group was grafted in, a group called the Gentiles. And God said, I'm going to do something. I'm going to make the Gentiles my people.

And instead of giving them the law as a way to be my people, I'm going to give them something I'm going to call grace, which all they have to do is believe that Jesus died for their sins and they can have eternal life.

That is the gospel of the grace of God. And I want to read a few verses about how things work when it comes, especially to bearing fruit.

Bearing fruit is good, isn't it? Who wants to bear fruit? I want to bear fruit. Romans 6.22 says this.

[ 40 : 28 ] This is the Apostle Paul speaking to the Romans. But now, Paul says that in a few different places. He says in Ephesians, he says in Romans, but now, he's describing before how it was under the law.

Under the law, it was like this. But now, having been set free from sin, he says, Romans 6.22, but now having been set free from sin and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness and the end everlasting life.

There's a paradigm shift, a difference. Instead of now, bear fruit. If you bear fruit, then you can enter into the kingdom. Now, if you trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and put your faith in that alone, I'll make you fruitful.

I'll make you fruitful. Romans, the next chapter, Romans 7.4 says this. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law. That law of Moses, you become dead to it.

It doesn't have any power over you anymore. Through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, to him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit unto God.

[ 41 : 51 ] Instead of bearing fruit in order to gain a reward like the kingdom, God gives us the reward first, and then he makes us fruitful.

Isn't that incredible? That's amazing. Galatians, anybody ever heard of the fruit of the spirit? Talked about it in Galatians? The fruit of the spirit, is that something that you have to bear in order to get right with God?

No. That's the fruit that you bear when you walk with God because you've already been united to him. You've already been declared and made righteous. You already have life.

That's what Galatians 5 is all about. We bear fruit not to gain something because Jesus Christ already gained everything for us.

But we bear fruit because we love him, because he changes us from the inside out. So, to wrap this up, if I were to tell a parable of a sower today under the gospel of grace, this is how I would tell it.

[ 43 : 03 ] And I want to do this as a contrast, as a contrast to the parable that Jesus told under the gospel of the kingdom. Under the gospel of grace, the seed would not be the message of the kingdom.

It would be what? The message of the grace of God that Jesus died for our sins. And it doesn't require any works. It's faith and what?

Faith plus nothing. Not faith plus works. That was the law. Faith plus works. Faith plus nothing. So, in a couple of different places, Paul describes this.

He calls it the word of grace. He calls it the word of grace. Not the word of the kingdom. That's different. That's a different message. This he calls the word of grace.

In another place, in Romans chapter 10, he calls it the word of faith which we preach. It's a different kind of message. church. In Romans 10, I'll go ahead and read this.

[ 44 : 11 ] For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law. The man who does these things shall live by them. That's what righteousness under the law is. If you do the law, you'll be righteous.

But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way. Do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven. That is to bring Christ down from above. Or who will descend into the abyss.

That is to bring Christ up from the dead. But what does it say? The word is near you. It's right at hand. It's right in front of you. You don't have to go find it. It's right there. But what does it say?

The word is near you. In your mouth and in your heart. That is the word of faith which we preach. We preach a word of faith. There's a message. You mix faith with it.

And it accomplishes something. Specifically, eternal life. That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead. You will be saved.

[ 45 : 12 ] Not you will be saved if you endure to the end. If you endure through trial and tribulation. If you can navigate through all the cares of this life successfully and bear lots of good fruit.

So the parable of the sower I think would go like this. The sower goes to sow the gospel of the grace of God. Some of it falls on the wayside. And the message is rejected because it's seen as foolish, simple.

That's for simpletons. That's for people who need a crutch in life. I'm more sophisticated than that. I believe in science. I have more important things to do.

I've got to catch up on the latest season of XYZ. I've got lots of partying I need to do this weekend so I don't have time for that message.

Some falls on the wayside and it's rejected. Rejected out of hand. But some of the seed, this gospel of the grace of God, it falls on soil that receives it.

[ 46 : 22 ] That soil is full of rocks and gravel and thorns and thistles. People were kind of a mess.

Shallow lives without much depth. Full of worldly distractions. Full of sinful habits built up over years, a lifetime of giving in to temptation.

But despite the poor condition of the soil, it holds on. To that seed by faith alone. Just believing in that word of grace.

All the weeds and the thistles and the thorns, it prevents there being much growth. You know, sometimes even just the cares of this world like taking care of babies, crying, you know, keeping you up at night, get little sleep.

Needy children, diapers, spit up, caring for parents in their old age, sometimes dealing with debilitating illness, trying to take care of ourselves and others.

[ 47 : 30 ] Those are the cares of life that distract us from spiritual fruit even sometimes, right? that soil holds on by faith.

I'm going to hold on, I'm going to believe that word. And you know what? Because the seed itself is holy, the soil is made holy. Thorns, thistles, rocks and all.

even if there's no fruit. Without any fruit. That soil is declared righteous by the sower.

He declares the soil righteous before it bears any fruit. And then, over time, the sower goes to work.

And while that soil holds on to the seed by faith alone, despite all the crowding in the soil, God strengthens that bud, that budding plant.

[ 48 : 37 ] And it grows little by little and it pushes against the stones and the weeds and the thorns. For seasons, it fails to bear any fruit and it struggles. But he starts picking out the stones.

He starts pulling some weeds, pushing the briars aside and the seed starts to grow. And it starts bearing just a little bit of fruit.

And then, over time, as that ground holds on by faith to the declared righteousness that it has through Christ alone, despite all the obstacles that are in the way, it can grow to bear tremendous fruit.

That is the gospel of the grace of God. So, the question before we finish off, oh boy, is what about you?

Have you received that seed? Jesus was dispensing the gospel of the kingdom, which is for Israel, an important seed at that time and will be also in the future. Jesus is coming again.

[ 49 : 50 ] And that message will have preeminence again. But right now, it's that word of the gospel of grace. Jesus died for your sins. It's a simple message, and all it takes to hold on to that seed, you just got to hold on to it.

A little bit of humility, a little bit of faith. Just hold on to that seed. Christ died for me. Like it says in Romans, the message isn't like way up in the heavens that I got to climb a tower to get up there or go down into the depths of hell searching for it.

The message is right there. You just have to receive it. Believe and receive. Let's end in a word of prayer and then we'll hear some testimonies.

Father, thank you for the seed that you have given us. Thank you for the message of the kingdom, for Israel back then and as we read in the scriptures to be revived in the future.

Thank you for the gospel of grace that you have given us right now. Such a wonderful message. Christ dying for our sins that we can have eternal life through you just by trusting what you accomplished for us.

[ 51 : 05 ] That you make us righteous even before we bear any fruit. Absolutely incredible. I pray that if there's anyone in this room who has not received that message that they would humble their hearts to receive and believe that message today.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thanks everybody. Yeah, we'll get a microphone out. I hope some of you have some stories. We'll just take, I took too much time, I'm sorry, but if you're willing to sit around, we'll do at least five minutes if there's any.

So can I get some hands? Anybody want to share a story from our fair outreach from this week? We heard some great stories last week.

I see one. Okay. Sometimes you just got to get the ball rolling. Well, I don't have a long story.

I'm going to be very short. Okay. But I was just surprised about how many people need the Lord. Yeah. That song, People Need the Lord, just kept coming back to me and I just, my heart went out to them.

[ 52 : 22 ] You ask somebody who is Jesus and they're like, I don't know. Yeah. You know, children and they're like 12 and 13, they should know this stuff but, you know, when the parents don't take them to church and they don't, you know, hear it anywhere, it's just kind of sad.

So, I was somewhat saddened but thankful that I had the opportunity to do that. Yeah. Amen and hopeful. Yeah, I'm talking to especially younger people but even older people too.

A lot of people I would ask, have you ever read the Bible? It's a good way to start a conversation, a spiritual conversation. And maybe a third, maybe it wasn't quite that much but a quarter, 20%, I don't know, something like that would say, no, I've never read the Bible.

And not just little kids who are, you know, 8 and 10 years old but teenagers, even adults, I've never read the Bible before. And those are the words of life right in there, the scriptures.

Anybody else? Okay, Isabella? Come on up, Caleb. Use those young legs of yours.

[ 53 : 37 ] I'm just really surprised how a lot of people don't know anything about Jesus and everything. Yeah. So, yeah. That's true.

Give a little Bible quiz, ask just basic questions. Some people didn't know who Jesus was. And, you know, even if you haven't read the Bible, most people know who Jesus was.

But I remember I talked to a handful of people, two or three, that said, do you know who Jesus was? Ah, sounds familiar. I'm not sure. I'm not sure. So, we want to get the word out, right?

How will they hear unless somebody tell them, Paul says in Romans 10? Better at least let them know. At least let them know. Anybody else? All right.

Thanks, everybody. Have a great day. Thank you.