

6/28/26

Sermon Title: The Parable of the Seed Falling on Four Kinds of Soil

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: Matthew 13:1-23

### **The Parable of the Sower**

<sup>1</sup> That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.

<sup>2</sup> Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore.

<sup>3</sup> Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed.

<sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

<sup>5</sup> Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.

<sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

<sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

<sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

<sup>9</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

<sup>10</sup> The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”

<sup>11</sup> He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.

<sup>12</sup> Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.

<sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables:

“Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

<sup>14</sup> In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

<sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’

<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.

<sup>17</sup> For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

<sup>18</sup> “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means:

<sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

<sup>20</sup> The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy.

<sup>21</sup> But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

<sup>22</sup> The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.

<sup>23</sup> But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Jesus had just redefined the meaning of family when His mother and brothers came looking for Him.

He declared that His true family consists of "those who do the will of My Father in heaven," emphasizing the spiritual family over biological ties.

Then, on that very day, instead of spending time with His earthly family, He taught the gathered crowds by revealing the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven through seven parables.

Today's passage is the first of those seven parables—the Parable of the Sower, or the parable of the seed that fell on four different kinds of soil.

As Jesus sat by the Sea of Galilee, a great crowd gathered around Him.

<sup>1</sup> That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.

<sup>2</sup> Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore.

The phrase "Jesus went out of the house" most likely refers to Peter's house in Capernaum.

During His public ministry, Jesus made Capernaum His base of operations.

Located about 50 kilometers (30 miles) from Nazareth, where He was raised, Capernaum was a strategic city with well-developed land and sea transportation routes.

The crowds who gathered around Him were largely people of low social status.

They came to Jesus seeking relief from material hardships, physical illnesses, and various weaknesses.

They viewed Him primarily as a deliverer who could solve their immediate problems rather than recognizing Him as the Messiah who came to save their souls and grant eternal life.

Although Jesus faced constant criticism and persecution from the scribes and Pharisees, He never stopped proclaiming the gospel to the crowds.

It was to these people that Jesus told the Parable of the Sower, the parable of the seed falling on four different kinds of soil.

Through this parable, Jesus explained the contrasting responses of the people of Israel to the kingdom of God, as demonstrated throughout chapters 11 and 12.

<sup>3</sup> Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed.

<sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

<sup>5</sup> Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.

<sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

<sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

<sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

<sup>9</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

Although this parable is commonly called the Parable of the Sower, its primary focus is not on the sower but on the different kinds of soil upon which the seed is sown.

The parable describes four kinds of soil: the path, the rocky ground, the thorny ground, and the good soil.

Some of the seed fell along the path, that is, beside the edge of the field, and the birds immediately came and devoured it.

Some fell on rocky ground.

Because the soil was shallow, the seed could not develop deep roots.

When the sun rose, the plants were quickly scorched and withered away.

Other seed fell among the thorns.

As the thorns grew up, they choked the plants, preventing them from growing.

But some seed fell on good soil and produced a crop—some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold.

After hearing this parable, the disciples asked Jesus why He spoke to the people in parables instead of speaking to them directly.

<sup>10</sup> The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”

<sup>11</sup> He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.

<sup>12</sup> Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.

<sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables:

“Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven belong to the heavenly realm and cannot be understood by human effort alone.

They can only be known through divine revelation.

Jesus declared that these mysteries were now being revealed through Him.

Yet while it had been granted to the disciples to know these mysteries, it had not been granted to the crowds.

Jesus then explained the reason by quoting the book of Isaiah.

<sup>14</sup> In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

<sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’

Here is the passage from Isaiah:

(Isa 6:10) He said, "Go and tell this people: 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.'

(Isa 6:10) Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

They see but do not perceive, hear but do not listen, and fail to understand. Jesus was describing the spiritual ignorance and hardness of heart that characterized the people of Israel.

Although the Messiah was standing among them, they did not recognize Him.

They showed no genuine response to His message.

They refused to repent.

Therefore, Jesus did not reveal the mysteries of the kingdom to them plainly but spoke in parables so that they would not understand.

The mysteries of the kingdom are revealed to those who open their hearts to the truth and respond to it in faith.

But they remain hidden from those who close their eyes and ears to Jesus and His message.

Faith leads to greater understanding, while unbelief leads to greater spiritual blindness.

Jesus taught the truths of the kingdom in parables so that whoever has faith will be given more, and they will have an abundance; but whoever does not have faith, even what they have will be taken from them.

In contrast to the crowds, Jesus spoke of the privilege given to His disciples.

He told them that they were seeing and hearing what many prophets and righteous people of the Old Testament longed to see and hear, but were not given the opportunity.

<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.

<sup>17</sup> For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

Many prophets and righteous people in the Old Testament longed to see and hear the realities of the kingdom of heaven, but they were not given that privilege. They looked forward in faith to the coming of the Messiah, yet they neither saw Him nor heard His teaching.

Jesus told His disciples that they were greatly privileged because they were seeing and hearing what those prophets and righteous people had long desired to experience.

Having said this, Jesus went on to explain the meaning of the parable to His disciples.

<sup>18</sup> “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means:

<sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

<sup>20</sup> The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy.

<sup>21</sup> But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

<sup>22</sup> The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.

<sup>23</sup> But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

The seed represents the Word of God.

The sower represents God, Jesus Christ who proclaims the Word, and, by extension, all Christians who faithfully share the gospel.

The birds represent Satan, the evil one, and the **soil** represents the human heart.

First, Jesus explained that the seed "falling along the path, where the birds came and ate it up," refers to those who hear the message of the kingdom but do not understand it.

Then the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their hearts.

The soil along the path has been hardened by constant foot traffic, making it impossible for the seed to take root.

It represents people whose hearts are hardened and closed toward God.

Though they hear the Word, they fail to understand or receive it.

Second, the seed "falling on rocky ground, where it sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow, but withered under the scorching sun because it had no root," represents those who receive the Word with joy.

However, because their faith has no deep root, they quickly fall away when trouble or persecution comes.

The trouble and persecution Jesus refers to are specifically the suffering and hardship that come because of His Word.

Those whose faith lacks depth may rejoice in the Word for a time, but when trials arise, they cannot endure and fall away.

Third, the seed "falling among the thorns, which grew up and choked the plants," represents those in whom the Word has taken root, but whose spiritual growth is choked by the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth, leaving them unfruitful.

People often trust that worldly wealth and power can secure their present and future, placing them in the position that belongs to God alone.

Yet these things can never provide true security or guarantee anyone's future.

Finally, the seed "falling on good soil and producing a crop—some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold," represents those who hear the Word, understand it, and obey it.

Their lives bear abundant spiritual fruit.

A right relationship with God begins with genuine self-denial.

To deny ourselves means to humble ourselves before God, to hear His Word, understand it, and live in faithful obedience.

When we do so, our lives will bear fruit—thirty, sixty, and even a hundredfold.

The sowing of the seed first refers to the ministry of Jesus and, afterward, to the ministry entrusted to His disciples.

The harvest represents people being saved and receiving eternal life through Jesus Christ and His Word.

To human eyes, the work of preaching the gospel may appear foolish and seem unlikely to produce any lasting results.

But that is not the case.

God's Word will certainly find good soil, and through it He will bring forth an abundant harvest.

Beloved members of Church of Godly Dreams,

Jesus reveals the mystery of the kingdom of heaven through the Parable of the Sower.

He teaches that whether a person responds to the Word of God is not determined by the seed or by the sower, but by the condition of the hearer's heart.

Those whose hearts are open and eager to know the truth are granted the privilege of understanding the mysteries of the kingdom.

But those whose hearts are hardened and spiritually blind are not given that understanding.

Though they hear the Word, they fail to grasp its meaning.

Therefore, the responsibility for not responding to God's Word rests with the hearer.

Jesus speaks in parables so that only those who have ears to hear will truly listen. Whoever has faith will be given more, and they will have an abundance; but whoever does not have faith, even what they have will be taken from them.

The people of Israel had become proud because of their knowledge of the Law and had grown spiritually dull.

Their hearts had become insensitive.

Even when they stood face to face with God Himself, their hearts were unmoved.

They refused to repent.

Jesus declared that the mysteries of the kingdom would not be revealed to such people.

Instead, they would be revealed to those who, like the disciples, had humble hearts that were open to the truth.

At this time, let each of us examine our own hearts.

What kind of soil are you?

Is your heart like the hardened path, made calloused by unbelief?

Is it like the rocky ground, where the Word is received with joy but quickly withers when trials and persecution come?

Is it like the thorny ground, where the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the Word and keep it from bearing fruit?

Jesus earnestly desires that our hearts be cultivated by the grace of the Holy Spirit so that they become good soil.

Good soil is the heart that denies itself before God's Word, humbly receives it, understands it, and obeys it.

When we listen to God's Word with such a heart, it will take deep root within us, grow, and produce an abundant harvest.

Our lives will be transformed.

Our character will change, our families will be changed, our churches will be renewed, and the fruit of God's kingdom will become evident.

We will bear fruit—thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and even a hundredfold.

Furthermore, God calls us not only to be good soil but also to become sowers of His Word.

Through the good soil He has prepared, He will bring in a rich harvest.

Our God never fails.

Therefore, let us be good soil by hearing God's Word with humble hearts and responding in faithful obedience.

And let us be faithful sowers of the gospel, whether the opportunity seems favorable or not.

May God grant that, by hearing His Word and living in obedience to it, each of us may bear abundant fruit for His kingdom.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.