

21st Century Disciples

Part 3

The Seed and the Soil

The call to follow Jesus in the 21st Century is not any different today than it was when Jesus walked the earth.

What does God want us to do after we accept His gift of eternal life?

What does the Lord want?

- To adhere to a list of rules?
- To conform to a standard of conduct?
- To give Him our hearts?

Christianity is not a code of conduct...

... It is a relationship with God that affects every part of our lives.

The heart is the seat of all our decisions. It can be influenced by God, our self, or even the devil.

In the end, we are accountable for what directions we decide to follow with our hearts.

Jesus told a parable about the seed and the soils.

His purpose was to cause us to realize the same seed can have different results depending on where it is planted.

Now that you have the gift of eternal life, what is the Holy Spirit saying when you read this?

Matthew 13:3-4 (NLT)

He told many stories such as this one:

“A farmer went out to plant some seed. [4] As he scattered it across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them.

Matthew 13:5-6 (NLT)

[5] Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The plants sprang up quickly, [6] but they soon wilted beneath the hot sun and died because the roots had no nourishment in the shallow soil.

Matthew 13:7-9 (NLT)

[7] Other seeds fell among thorns that shot up and choked out the tender blades. [8] But some seeds fell on fertile soil and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted. [9] Anyone who is willing to hear should listen and understand!”

Jesus told the crowd the entire story, but he only interpreted it to his disciples.

Matthew 13:11-12 (NLT)

Then he explained to them, "You have been permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others have not. [12] To those who are open to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But to those who are not listening, even what they have will be taken away from them.

#1

Jesus wants us to be open to biblical truth.

Matthew 13:18-23 (NLT)

"Now here is the explanation of the story I told about the farmer sowing grain: [19] The seed that fell on the hard path represents those who hear the Good News about the Kingdom and don't understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches the seed away from their hearts.

What do you do when you hear something that goes against your existing beliefs?

Understand is the Greek word, suniemi, meaning to mentally put it together, consider it, and act upon it.

When we fail to take the proper steps to understand the principles of God's Kingdom, the evil one snatches the principles from our hearts.

How is this possible?

When our heart is hardened and not open to a different way to live, the seeds bounce off instead of remaining inside of us to consider.

Our current world wants everyone to be open and tolerant of different lifestyles yet there is little tolerance when the ideas come from the bible.

How quickly do you dismiss ideas that are different than what you normally do?

#2

Jesus wants you to stay faithful to Him and His ways during trials and persecution.

Matthew 13:18-23 (NLT)

[20] The rocky soil represents those who hear the message and receive it with joy. [21] But like young plants in such soil, their roots don't go very deep. At first they get along fine, but they wilt as soon as they have problems or are persecuted because they believe the word.

Some people receive God's Kingdom principles with joy but they do not stay committed for a long period of time.

Why?

The presence of problems does not equate the absence of God.

Some people have a habit of rejecting others once they feel they have been rejected or abandoned.

This is why people can walk away from each other, God, the local church, and the way of the Kingdom.

The rocky soil represents those hard areas of our life that refuse to change.

Sometimes these stones were created by hurts and disappointments that happened long ago.

God did not create your pain or send people to hurt you. He is your source of healing.

If you want to move beyond the rocky soil, you are in need of allowing God to heal your heart.

#3 Jesus wants you to guard against outside influences that stop you from growing and following after God.

Matthew 13:18-23 (NLT)

[22] The thorny ground represents those who hear and accept the Good News, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares of this life and the lure of wealth, so no crop is produced.

This parable illustrates that every believer will have two natural enemies to stop their spiritual growth. The cares of this world are the things we spend so much time on but they have no eternal value.

When we find we have no time to do what God's word commands us to do we need to re-prioritize our time.

We expect God and everyone to understand that our busy life does not include them, when in reality we are responsible for the schedule we keep.

Jesus warns that the pursuit of riches will also stop our spiritual growth.

Money only interferes with our spiritual growth in two ways, we either don't have any or we don't have enough.

God does not have a problem with us having money. He does have a problem when money has us.

How much money does it take for you to forsake God and his principles for life?

#4 Jesus wants us to prepare our hearts to receive the word of God and allow it to continually change our life.

Matthew 13:23 (NLT)

The good soil represents the hearts of those who truly accept God's message and produce a huge harvest—thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted.”

Seeds multiply when they reproduce.

Two kernels of corn seed will grow a stalk with multiple ears of corn containing up to 1600 kernels.

The more you allow God's principles to work in your life the more your life will reflect God's glory to you and others around.

The longer I practice God's principles the more my life looks like God's plan. My progress can be marked as 30%, 60%, up to 100%

What does Jesus want you to do since you have received eternal life?

What does Jesus want?

1. Be open to Biblical truth
2. Stay faithful to Him and His ways without falling away
3. Guard your heart against worldly cares and pursuing money.
4. Grow up spiritually and reflect God's plan for your life to others around you.

Which stage will reflect your life?

- No growth
- Growth but dies quickly
- Lives but produces no fruit
- Lives and is continuing to produce more and more fruit

What stage do you choose for your life to be?