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Parable of the Soils

Matthew 13:1-23

Faithful attendance at the services of the church is just one indication of a person's dedication to Christ, but it suggests a commitment that may be seen in other areas as well. In the parable of the sower, Jesus spoke of such life directing commitment when He spoke of the seed that fell on good soil, sprang to life, and resulted in a fine crop. Jesus explained that this good soil represented the individual who hears His Word, understands it, and bears fruit. Such would Jesus have all to be.

1. Why are some people more open to spiritual things than others?

2. Read Matthew 13:1-23. How was this parable well -suited to the personal experiences of the crowds gathered around Jesus ? (v. 1-9)

3. In verse 10 the disciples asked Jesus, "*Why do you speak to the people in parables.*" How would you summarize His answer? (v. 11-16)

4. How did Jesus' parables help His followers to understand His kingdom while hindering the understanding of those who weren't willing to follow Him? (v. 12-17)

5. What did Jesus mean in verse 12 when He said, "*Whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away.*"?

6. In verses 18-23 Jesus explains the meaning of this parable to His disciples. What is the seed? Who is the farmer? Who is the soil?

7. Satanic "birds" destroyed the value of God's word for the first group of people. Why? What did these hearers lack? (v. 19) What examples have you seen of people who respond this way?

8. Verses 20-21 describe the kind of person referred to as stony or rocky soil. Can you think of an example of this type of person?

9. What kind of person does the third type soil describe? (v. 22) How can a person avoid being choked by the weeds and thorns Jesus mentioned?

10. What are the characteristics of a person represented by the fourth kind of soil? (v. 23) What evidence is offered as proof of this kind of soil?

11. Examine the chart below. Which kind of soil do you most identify with?

The *Seed* and the *Soils*

Hard Soil	Thin Soil	Occupied Soil	Good Soil
NO Penetra- tion	NO Stability	NO Fruit	GOOD Harvest

12. Can a person's "soil type" change over time or is it forever fixed? If it can be changed, what can be done to encourage such change?

13. In what way is this parable instructive to those who teach? In what way is it a warning to those who are taught?