



## TOPIC: DON'T BE A VICTIM OF IDENTIFY THEFT (KNOWING WHO I AM IN CHRIST)

*And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.  
~Mark 4:9 (KJV)~*

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### INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON

We live in a day and in a time wherein people are not as apt to receive the Word of God as they were in days of old. There was a time when, if people were told “Thus Saith the Lord”, they received, embraced, and lived out whatever was spoken to them of the Lord. The times when the Bible was one of the most popular books on the market and in the home have diminished amidst new age movements and new era beliefs. Sadly, it has been and is man’s ignorance of God’s Word that has led to man’s destruction and devastation. Sadly, it has been the behaviors of those who name the name of Christ and who profess a walk and life as Christ’s that has brought confusion to those seeking the Lord. This is because their walk and their talk have been inconsistent. They profess to know Christ but live as though they don’t. These are the times the apostle Paul makes reference to when charging his son in the gospel Timothy to be steadfast in ministering to the people.

#### 2 Timothy 4:3-4 (NLT)

- 3. For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will teach them whatever their itching ears want to hear.*
- 4. They will reject the truth and chase after myths.*

No longer are we looking for this time to come; this time is here. While people routinely make their way to the house (church) of God on Sunday mornings, they are reluctant to have their lives interrupted and rearranged to fit God’s plan. They fail to realize that what they think is life is not life at all. True life, real living comes only when we have an ear to hear the Word of the Lord.

### OUR STUDY

Our study text is taken from Mark chapter 4 where Jesus teaches the multitude concerning hearing and receiving the Word of God. He uses the Parable of the Sower to explain the various hearts by which the Word of God is received. This same teaching of Jesus concerning the Parable of the Sower is also found in both Matthew (*cf. Matthew 13:3-9*) and in Luke *cf. Luke 8:4-8*). The Parable of the Sower concerns a sower who scatters seed, which falls on four different types of ground. Each ground represents the reception of the word received by the hearer.

#### What is the meaning of the Parable of the Sower?

Jesus often told stories when he was teaching people. This is a very good way to teach, because people remember stories. We call these teachings by stories of Jesus parables. A parable is a story that teaches us

a truth about God. Or, a story that shows us behavior that pleases God. The stories taught by Jesus are taught in such a way that they are very easy to remember; they help us to know what God wants.

The story of the parable of the sower uses the story of farmer, his seed and his field to reveal four categories of those who hear the Word of God. The story reveals the importance of having an ear to hear God's Word. The story is simplistic:

**Mark 34:3-8 (NKJV)**

- 3. Listen! Behold a sower went out to sow.*
- 4. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it.*
- 5. Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth.*
- 6. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away.*
- 7. And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.*
- 8. But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.*

The sower in this parable told by Christ is Christ himself; and the seed is the Word of God. A look at the passage in Mark shows that the parable is about a seed that fell in four different kinds of land. Each kind of land represents the heart of the hearer. Let's look closure at each kind of land or each type of heart:

**Wayside.** The seed sown by the wayside represents the hearer who has a shallow reception of the Word. It represents those who hear the Word yet do not understand the Word. Because of the lack of right understanding and interpretation, the Word is not able to be penetrated into the depths of the heart of this hearer. The verse lets us know that then the birds came and devoured it. Because the Word is not able to take root and perform as God has purposed, the enemy of our soul comes and takes away the Word out of their hearts lest they should believe and be saved. While with the ears one hears the Word of God, with the heart (the inner part of the mind) he "understands" it. It is not simply a mental understanding of the Word that is meant in the Parable of the Sower. It is rather an understanding, an acceptance of the Word with the heart, inner part of the mind. The results and effectiveness of the seed (Word) is not dependent on the seed, the Word, but on the ground, the heart of the one who hears the Word. When the heart is calloused (hardened) then the seed of the Word will be like falling by the way. It is not able to yield its fruit in its season. King David as well as the writer of the book Hebrews understood the importance of having a receptive heart for the Word of God (*cf. Psalm 95:7-8; Hebrews 3:7-8*).

**Stony Ground.** The seed sown upon stony ground is like planting seed in the midst of rocky soil. This second condition of reception of the Word ends likes the first condition where the sown seed (Word of God) is not able to reach its full potential in the hearer. This second condition is a little better condition than the former because the former condition (wayside) represents the hearer who plainly refuses the seed; the seed is sown in a place where it is incapable of bringing forth even the tiniest fruit bud. The stony ground does have the capacity to spring forth the seed, though but for only a little while. The stony ground is like the heart of that hearer who hears the Word of God, and receives it with joy. He delighted with its beauty, its justice, its purity; and he breaks forth with holy affections. But alas he has more of the stone than of the good soil in his heart. Hence the Word of God cannot strike a deep root into his soul. He is not constant in the faith, he endures but for a time, and in the hour of temptation he falls away. His heart was not truly broken by the Word of God. His stony heart was not taken away and replaced with a heart of flesh wherein he is able to bear fruit that remains.

**Among Thorns.** This is the person who receives the Word; however the cares, worries, distractions and desires for other things are their main focus in life. Like a garden with both plants and weeds, there are only enough nutrients to sustain either the plants or the weeds, not both. In other words, where you place your focus is where growth will happen in your life. A prime example of this parable in action is the rich young ruler. He came to Jesus asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. After a discussion, Jesus looked at him in love and said, “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me” (cf. *Mark 10:21*). At this the man’s face fell and he went away. He was very rich and the desire for wealth and worldly things trumped his desire to follow Jesus. The person who receives the Word among thorns is not a superficial hearer. The Word remains in his mind. He even goes through some initial hardship for the sake of the Gospel. He even stays in the local church for some time, so it appears that he is converted. Yet, he does not pass the test of time. When the worries and cares of life come along, as they do to every Christian, the faith of the “thorny ground” people is choked. They no longer live in the air of the life giving Spirit.

**Good Ground.** Finally, other seed fall on good soil and thus produce a harvest. The good ground represents the heart which receives the Word of God with joy and desire, and true devotion of spirit, and which steadfastly retains it, whether in prosperity or in adversity; and so yields fruit, “some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold”. It is the sincere hearer who when the Word of God is received it is able to go forth and perform as God intended. The sincere hearer is of a different character than the previous hearers.

#### **Character of sincere hearers:**

1. They possess an honest and good heart. The ground must be properly manured and prepared, before the seed can so mingle with it as to produce fruit. In like manner, the powers of the soul must be renewed by Divine grace, before the instructions of God’s Word can so incorporate with them as to become fruitful. Their understanding is illuminated, and a new bent is given to their will.
2. They hear the Word after a different manner, and to a very different purpose from what others do, and from what they themselves formerly did. They hear it with attention, candor, meekness, and simplicity.
3. They keep the Word. The seed once lodged in the heart remains there. It is not caught away by the wicked one, it is not destroyed by the scorching beams of persecution, nor is it choked by the thorns of worldly cares and pleasures. It is laid up in the understanding, memory, and affections; and guarded with attention and care as the most invaluable treasure.
4. They bring forth fruit. The seed springs up, looks green, and promises a fair harvest. They profess the Christian name and live answerable to it. Their external conduct is sober, useful, and honorable, and their temper is devout, benevolent, and holy. The fruit they bear is of the same nature with the seed whence it springs.
5. They bring forth fruit with patience. It is a considerable time before the seed disseminates, rises into the stalk and the ear, and ripens into fruit. The patient in heart will reap the benefits of the fruit.
6. And lastly, they bring forth fruit in different degrees, “some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold.

## Having an ear to hear.

Jesus concludes his parable by saying to the multitude “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (*cf. Mark 4:9*). This saying appears eight times in the gospels and appears seven times in Revelation between chapters 2 and 3. These words seem to underscore something important. It’s as if they are instructing us to “pay attention now”. This appears as though it is a necessity and not an option for the child of God. How good is your listening, especially for the Word of God? God is ever ready to speak to each of us and to give us understanding of His Word. Jesus’ parable of the sower is aimed at the hearers of His Word. As we have shared, there are different ways of accepting God’s Word and they produce different kinds of fruit accordingly. There is the prejudiced hearer who has a shut mind. Such a person is unteachable and blind to the things of God. Then there is the shallow hearer who fails to think things out or think them through; such a person lack spiritual depth. They may initially respond with an emotional fervor; but when it wears off their mind wanders to something else. There is the hearer who is the person who has many interests or cares, but who lack the ability to hear or comprehend what is truly important. Such person is forever too busy to pray or too preoccupied to study and meditate on God’s Word. He or she may work so hard that they are too tired to even think of anything else but their work. Then there is the one whose mind is open. Such a person is at all times willing to listen and to learn. He or she is never too proud or too busy to learn. They listen in order to understand. God gives grace to those who hunger for His Word that they may understand His will and have the strength to live according to it. It is he who has an ear to hear the Lord who received the fullness of the Lord in his or her life.

## CONCLUSION

Having an ear to hear the Word of the Lord comes from a heart intent on making the things of God a priority. It comes from a mind made up and purposed to live fully submitted unto the Lord. We recall from the book of Esther how she had a made up mind whether she lived or died, she was going to petition the king on behalf of the people of God (*cf. Esther 4:16*). We too must be steadfast in hearing and swift to move as God speaks. We must maintain a soft heart that’s bent on hearing God’s Word. When the ground of our garden is soft, the seed will go in and the blessing of God will come up thirty, sixty and hundred fold. We will be the soil that’s ripe for producing all the fruit we were created to produce. Be encouraged by brother and my sister as you continue to keep your ears open to hear.

*God’s peace and blessing be upon you....*

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