

d) Finally there will be some who receive and understand God's word and go on to become sowers of God's seed themselves. These seeds will produce fruit

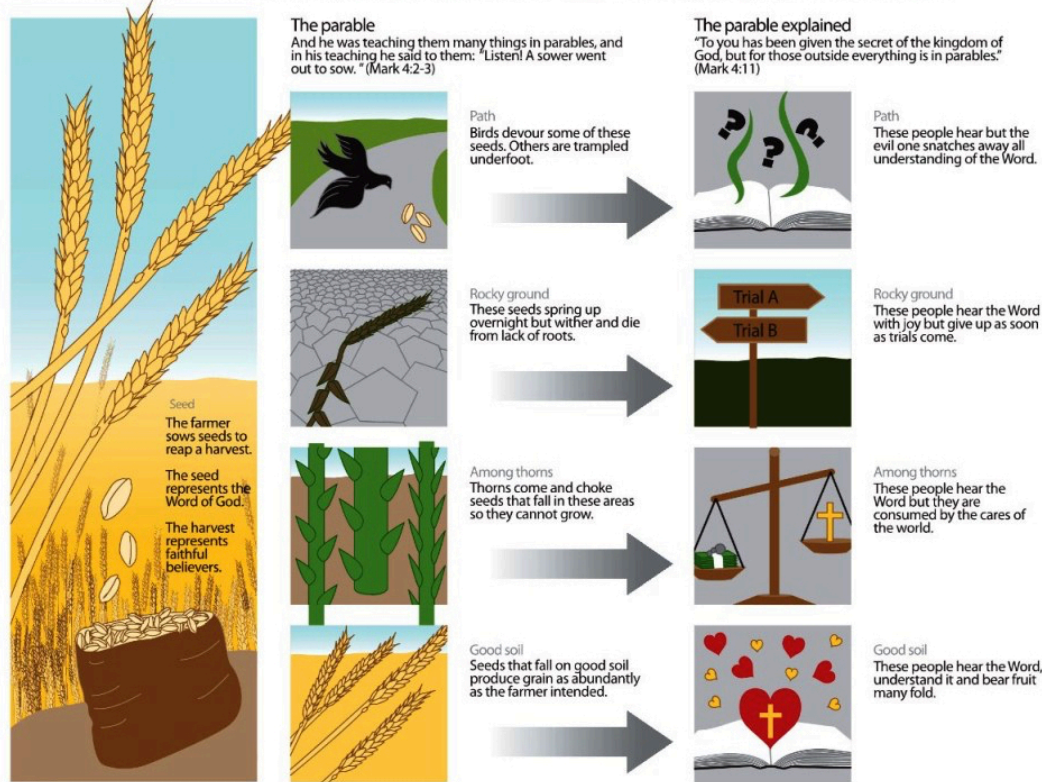
- Despite knowing that many will reject his message Jesus still sows and spreads God's Word liberally - We too need to sow seed even if many today will ultimately reject God.

### 2.5 Conclusion 'He who has ears, let him hear.' (Matthew 13:9)

- How will we react to what we have heard today? Will we be encouraged to become more effective sowers of God's seed whose lifestyles model what it is like to be in relationship with the living God and who recognise that the reaction to our sowing will be mixed.

### Parable of the Sower

Jesus often spoke in parables while teaching. He used this parable to differentiate between types of people who hear God's Word.



### 3. Questions to consider at home

- 3.1 Why does Jesus change his teaching style?
- 3.2 How would you describe a parable to an interested friend?
- 3.3 Why are parables so effective as a teaching method?
- 3.4 Is this parable principally about: the Sower, the Seed or the Soils?
- 3.5 How would you describe the seed to an interested friend?
- 3.6 Where are you sowing seed? Where is your church sowing seed?
- 3.7 Why do people react differently to the sower and the seed?

Matthew Street 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2023



## The St J's Group

'He who has ears, let him hear.': Matthew 13:1-9 & 18-23

### Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below

#### 1. Talk Passage – Matthew 13:1-9 & 18-23

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. 3 Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop-- a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 9 He who has ears, let him hear."

18 "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. 22 The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. 23 But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

#### 2. Talk Notes

##### 2.1 Introduction and Context - How does the Kingdom Grow?

- 'He who has ears, let him hear.' (Matthew 13:9) Jesus asks the crowd who have gathered around to listen to his latest teaching.
- The crowds are so large that Jesus has been forced to get into a boat to address them: 'That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore.' (Matthew 13:1-2)
- The disciples notice that Jesus' teaching style has changed and ask him: "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" (Matthew 13:10)
- We are almost half way through Matthew's Gospel. Jesus has given his famous Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1 -7:29) in which he revealed what the Kingdom is about. In Chapter 13 through the use of seven parables (Sower, Weeds, Mustard Seed, Yeast, Hidden Treasure, Pearl and Net) Jesus now explains how the Kingdom will grow and how different groups will react to the word of God.
- We all love a good story! Newspapers, magazines, books, the television, cinema, the internet, they all are loaded with stories.
- The crowds of Jesus' day also enjoyed a good story and Jesus knew that stories would be the best way of teaching spiritual truths not only to his disciples but also to the people of Israel and ultimately to us today. Parables were not a new phenomena, they had been used in the Old Testament e.g. in the famous 'Song of the Vineyard' which can be found in Isaiah 5:1-7.

- Parables are therefore a bridge helping us to move from the natural level of life to the spiritual level of life – they are earthly stories with spiritual meanings.
- The parable of the sower is Jesus' first parable. It is recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke and it is arguably one of the best known of Jesus' parables. Most of us remember the four Soils but we forget about the Sower and the Seed.
- The parable of the sower is about three words all beginning with 'S':

**a) SOWER**

**b) SEED**

**c) SOILS**

- In this amazingly simple story Jesus reveals to the crowd, to his own disciples and to us today how God plans to share the good news of His Kingdom.



2.2 The growth of the Kingdom starts with a **SOWER** – ‘*A farmer went out to sow his seed*’ (Matthew 13:3)

- To get his message out God sent his Son from Heaven to Earth to reveal the good news of His Kingdom - Jesus is revealing that the SOWER is himself.
- In Matthew 13:35 we read: “*I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world*” which is a direct quote from Psalm 78:2. The prophets had revealed that the Messiah would speak in parables – Jesus was revealing his true identity.
- But Jesus is not here today – and it is our responsibility to be God’s messengers, to sow seed today!

- Notice how generous the farmer is with the seed – he spreads the seed widely and liberally and we need to be equally generous – Are we prepared to spread seed to all or only to a defined safe group of people!

2.3. A sower who sows the **SEED** of God’s word and models what living in relationship with God is like - ‘*A farmer went out to sow his seed*’ (Matthew 13:3)

- If Jesus and us are the Sowers – What is the seed that we need to be spreading? The seed is made up of two things:
  - a) What we say: the ‘word of God’ and
  - b) What we do: the example of our lives. Both need to be in harmony with one another and Jesus is our perfect model. We need to speak the word of God but equally we need to live out the word of God.
- We are therefore spreading the seed of the Kingdom of God each time we go out. Everywhere we go, we are spreading seed: people at our workplace, in our community, when we go shopping, when we go to the gym or to the pub or go out to eat or have a cup of coffee our lives should be modelling to those around us what it is like to live in relationship with God.
- If our lives truly model what it is like to live in relationship with God then those around us will notice and hopefully ask us why. Then we should be ready with our words, our testimony and ultimately go on to share with these people the good news of God’s Kingdom, which of course is found in God’s Word, the Bible.

2.4. The sower and his seeds will be received into four different **SOILS** – 4 soils – ‘path’, ‘rocky places’, ‘among thorns’ and ‘good soil’



Path



Stoney Ground



Thorny Ground



Good Soil

- Jesus reveals that his message will be received in 4 different ways:
  - a) Some will hear God’s word, but will not understand or be interested in it.
  - b) Others will receive God’s word with joy but their initial interest will wane.
  - c) Others will receive God’s word and be interested in it but their attention will be choked by other distractions.