

**The Parable of the Soils**  
**February 7, 2016**  
**Matthew 13:3—23**

<sup>3</sup> And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, “Behold, the sower went out to sow; <sup>4</sup> and as he sowed, some *seeds* fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup> Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. <sup>8</sup> And others fell on the good soil and \*yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. <sup>9</sup> He who has ears, let him hear.”

<sup>10</sup> And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”

<sup>11</sup> Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. <sup>12</sup> For whoever has, to him *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. <sup>13</sup> Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup> In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says,

‘YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND;

YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;

<sup>15</sup> FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL,

WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR,

AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES,

OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES,

HEAR WITH THEIR EARS,

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AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN,

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 say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.

<sup>18</sup> “Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. <sup>20</sup> The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup> yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup> And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. <sup>23</sup> And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”

Intro: If I could sum what I want to teach this morning is **“Truth must be acted upon in order to be retained”** or another way to would be **“Truth rejected or unused is lost.”** This is not an evangelistic passage, I believe it is a message to the nation of Israel and to us in the church. I say that because Jesus was quoting Isaiah 6 before He explains the meaning of this parable.

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<sup>1</sup>In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.

<sup>2</sup>Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

<sup>3</sup>And one called out to another and said,

“Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts,

The whole earth is full of His glory.”

<sup>4</sup>And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.

<sup>5</sup>Then I said,

“Woe is me, for I am ruined!

Because I am a man of unclean lips,

And I live among a people of unclean lips;

For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

<sup>6</sup>Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs.

<sup>7</sup>He touched my mouth *with it* and said, “Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.”

<sup>8</sup>Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

<sup>9</sup>He said, “Go, and tell this people:

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'Keep on listening, but do not perceive;

Keep on looking, but do not understand.'

<sup>10</sup> "Render the hearts of this people insensitive,

Their ears dull,

And their eyes dim,

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,

Hear with their ears,

Understand with their hearts,

And return and be healed."

(Isaiah 6:1—10)

God uses the phrase "this people" to describe Isaiah's audience.

God was letting Isaiah know that his message would do nothing but harden the hearts of those who would hear it. Instead of bringing conviction, a humble spirit and confession of sins it will demonstrate that the hearts of the hearers were already well along the hardening process and unwilling to respond to God's words. This is a case where God is judging the nation for their sins. God is not happy about this but it is the path the nation has chosen.

Jesus knows the nation has rejected Him just like those in Isaiah's time rejected the truth also. Matthew 11:16—24

<sup>16</sup> "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other *children*,<sup>17</sup> and say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'<sup>18</sup> For John came

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neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon!' <sup>19</sup>The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

Jesus uses parables to not disclose truth to those who will not believe.

Each one of these soils is a response to the word of God—so the question becomes for each individual within the church "How do you handle the truth revealed to you?"

So with that let's look at the four different soils.

**The Hard Soil**

Sometimes we hear the truth and we reject it because it doesn't apply to us, but we all know someone who really should hear this message. Or we reject it because the truth pokes at a secret sin that we have and are not willing to give up. Or we reject the truth because we are nursing a hurt that happened years ago that we just can't forgive. Who knows what the reason is but we refuse to hear the truth. (Share Seashore story)

**The Rocky Soil**

For anyone who has tried to dig deep into the ground in Tucson, you have discovered there is this stuff under the first 6 inches or so of dirt called Caliche. Caliche is usually found as a light-colored layer in the soil or as white or cream-colored concretions (lumps) mixed with the soil. Layers will vary in thickness from a few inches to several feet, and there may be more than one caliche layer in the soil.

What Does Caliche do to plants?

Caliche causes three problems in the yard or garden.

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The caliche layer can be so tight that roots cannot penetrate through it. The result is that plants have only the soil above the caliche to use as a source of nutrients and water and normal root development is restricted.

The same conditions that restrict root penetration also reduce water movement. Water applied to the soil cannot move through the profile if a restrictive caliche layer is present. The restricted water penetration can contribute to problems arising from inadequate root aeration and can lead to accumulations of salt in the soil surface. Both problems, lack of aeration and salt accumulation, reduce the vigor of growing plants.

The pH (acidity or basicity) and free calcium carbonate in a caliche soil are often high enough to cause iron to become unavailable for plants.

This person hears the truth, tries to follow and it becomes too much work and gives up. He will never reach his full potential in Christ and stagnates. (Baseball story)

**The Thorny Soil**

The person who reacts positively to the truth, but the worries of the world cause them to choke their growth. They can't trust enough to give all control over to God. (Me and tithing)

**The Good Soil**

This is a soil that has been turned over to God, conditioned by the Spirit where the truth can take hold and flourishes with fruit.

**The So What**

"Truth must be acted upon in order to be retained" or "Truth rejected or unused is lost."

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How do you handle the truth revealed to you? Some of us will need to do some business with God today.

If you have a hard soil in your heart willingly let God deal with it. (1 Corinthians 5)

If you have the rocky soil in your heart get it transformed (Romans 12:1—2)

If you have the thorny soil in your heart stop worrying (Matthew 6)

If you have the good soil in your heart be the church!