

“Parable of the Soils!”

1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. John Gotz – Machaca Camp in Belize [Steve & Selena(Aliya)]
- 1.2. Prayer Cards: Michael & Summer Voss.
- 1.3. Prayer: Nancy Wragg – Greg; Garret & Hilary.

2. **MINISTRY PARTNERS! (1-3)**

- 2.1. **SUPPORTING THE SAVIOR!** (1-3)
- 2.2. A little company of women of wealth, taking care of the group.
 - 2.2.1. **Mary** from Magdala; **Joanna** of the official class(her husband was Herod’s financial minister); & Oh **Susanna**.
 - 2.2.2. I think these ladies will have a special reward for caring for their Lord in this way! [Yet, if you have done this to the least of these my brethren, you’ve done it unto me!]
 - 2.2.3. Ever notice there is no record of any women **hostile** to Jesus in the Gospel accounts?
- 2.3. Isn’t it interesting that the Son of Man was content to be supported in that way?
 - 2.3.1. It is more blessed to **give** than **receive**, & it takes more grace to **receive** than it does to **give**!
 - 2.3.2. He was content to live on charity, while he carried on His ministry!

3. **PARABLE OF THE SOILS! (4-18)**

- 3.1. **THE PARABLE TOLD!** (4-8)
- 3.2. A parable is a teaching device in which a principle is concealed & a truth revealed!
 - 3.2.1. It gives the hearer 1st **sight** then **insight**!
 - 3.2.2. **It is a mirror & a window:** [1] A **mirror** that forces us to look at ourselves; [2] A **window** in which we see God & His truth.
- 3.3. **THE PARABLES TAUGHT!** (9-15)
- 3.4. G. Campbell Morgan opened my mind to something I haven’t thought of before.
 - 3.4.1. **Q:** Did Jesus adopt this **parabolic method** in order to prevent people from understanding Him?
 - 3.4.2. **Not see, not understand...What?**
 - 3.4.2.1. If it is not see nor understand “at all” then why is he saying it?
 - 3.4.2.2. It is not for those who “get it”; & not for those who don’t “get it”...**then why tell it?**
 - 3.4.3. Jesus, in speaking to the **great multitude** said, **“he who has ears to hear, let him hear.”** [**Hear what?** I thought they couldn’t?]
 - 3.4.3.1. **Was he mocking them?** “I have something you can’t hear (understand), so hear this?”

- 3.4.4. The **Not seeing & not understanding** quoted from Isaiah is speaking to not understanding the deeper truths(cuz of their hard hearts)
- 3.4.4.1. Of course “*the natural man can’t understand the things of the spirit, because they are spiritually discerned.*”
- 3.5. A parable then is **not to hide all but to reveal some!!!**
- 3.5.1. A parable was intended to **arrest & lure** by picture method, by story method.
- 3.5.2. He was hiding *the mystery of the kingdom* from these men, **not the fact of the kingdom.**¹
- 3.5.2.1. He was revealing the basics, & hiding the deeper mysteries.
- 3.5.3. He was employing the **last & only method** possible in public teaching, in showing them as much as may be seen.
- 3.5.4. By telling them a story He seeks to hasten their steps toward the heart of God.
- 3.5.4.1. Prov.25:2 “*It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the glory of kings to search out a matter.*”
- 3.6. **EXPLAINED!** (11-15)
- 3.7. **The Sower** – Jesus 1st, Apostles, 2nd, us 3rd.
- 3.8. **The Seed** – The Word as Jesus clearly defines.
- 3.9. **Sowing seed in bible times:**
- 3.9.1. The farmer carried a **large bag** of seed on his donkey. Then he would fill his **leather bag** that he would carry under his arm.
- 3.9.2. The seed was **broadcasted liberally**, & then it was **covered** by the plowing.
- 3.9.3. A **footpath** often times cut across his field which the public would use. As the farmer would scatter seed some would always land on this.
- 3.9.3.1. The birds would be quick to score a free meal.
Often times large flocks would often follow the farmer.
- 3.9.3.2. **Like the seagulls** if you’ve ever been Deep Sea fishing.
- 3.9.4. Rocks were under the soil & couldn’t be seen, thus no deepness of earth.
- 3.9.5. Many **thorn bushes** were present. The native farmer would use these in the summer for outdoor fires for cooking meals.²
- 3.9.5.1. **So, he wouldn’t have gotten rid of all of these.**
- 3.9.6. **Also when they would burn a field, often times it would just burn them to the surface...but their root would remain!**
- 3.10. **The Soil** and its condition - is the human heart!
- 3.11. Jesus’ emphasis was on the **soil**, rather than on the **sower**, or the **seed**...so that’s where we’ll place our emphasis!

¹ G.Campbell Morgan; Gospel of Mark; pg.94

² Manners & Customs; pg.175

3.12. [1] WAYSIDE – THE HARD HEART!

- 3.13. This seed had **no shelter**. It was **exposed** instead of buried within the heart!
- 3.14. I have normally blamed Satan for this. But I loved **Spurgeon's** perspective...
- 3.15. It's easy for birds to pick up seed which lies exposed on a trodden path.
- 3.15.1. If the **soil** had been **good** & the seed had entered it, he would have had far greater difficulty.
- 3.15.2. **But a hard heart** does the Devil's work for him.
- 3.15.3. There lies the un-received word on the surface of the soul, & he takes it away.
- 3.15.4. The power of *the evil one* largely springs from our own evil!
- 3.16. **Then the Devil comes & takes away** – We may be careless about souls, but the Devil never is.
- 3.16.1. Although the seed lay there on the surface & had never penetrated the soul, & although that grain had been trampled, Satan was not satisfied.
- 3.16.2. He said, "there may be life in it, & if there is, it is dangerous to have it lying there, for it may grow." So he takes it away altogether.³
- 3.16.3. The thief hear is **Punctual**("immediately" Mk.4:15); **Powerful**("takes away"); **Practical**("lest they should believe").
- 3.17. **Biblical Examples:** Pharaoh & Felix.
- 3.18. **Hard hearts can be plowed up!**
- 3.18.1. Hosea 10:12 " **Break up your fallow**(untilled) **ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.**"
- 3.18.2. **Q:** Did the Lord have to **plow up** some things in your life to get your attention right before you got saved?
- 3.18.3. Let's pray this for our **friends** who have **hard hearts**.
And for **our own hearts** when they go through **calloused times**.

3.19. [2] ROCKS – SHALLOW HEARTS!

- 3.20. **Fat heads & short bodies!** – My **carrots** in my garden, because I didn't go deep in my rocky soil.
- 3.21. **An emotional hearer!** - Easily swayed by "a tender appeal, a good sermon, or a sweet melody."
- 3.21.1. This person lives on "impulses, impressions, intuitions, instincts, & largely on their circumstances!"
- 3.21.2. They **joyfully accept** God's Word, but do not really **understand** the price that must be paid to become a **genuine** Christian.
- 3.21.3. **They're like** the **Salmon that leaps** out of the water w/great energy, **but** it would be foolish to think that he has left the water for good!
- 3.21.3.1. In a moment the fish is swimming again as if it had never left the stream. The water is still his home.

³ Spurgeon At His Best! #1824

- 3.21.4. They've only been "brushed" by Christianity!
 3.21.4.1. It's the person who was touched by a sermon on Sunday, but forgot it by Monday!
- 3.22. **Biblical Examples:** Rich Young Ruler. The son that told dad "*I go sir & went not*".
- 3.23. You see **great enthusiasm** for days, weeks, months; but when the sun of **persecution** or **difficulty** comes out, enthusiasm wanes & the joy disappears.
 3.23.1. This is where so many of the **enemies of the faith** come from!
 3.23.2. Man is pretty good at **counterfeiting** religious **feelings!**
- 3.24. **[3] THORNS – CROWDED HEARTS!**
- 3.25. The preoccupied heart!
- 3.26. There is a crowd: **Cares & Riches & Pleasures.**
 3.26.1. **Cares & Riches** – (exact opposites)
 3.26.1.1. **Cares** - poverty & the anxiety/worries it creates.
 3.26.1.2. **Riches** – wealth, with the dissatisfaction it creates.
 3.26.2. **Pleasures** – the pleasures of life.
- 3.27. Lack of weed killer! [They need a good dose of Round Up!]
 3.27.1. He or she receives the Word, but does not truly **repent & remove** the weeds out of his or her heart!
 3.27.2. See, a gardener must not only love flowers & fruit, But **hate weeds!**
- 3.28. **No fruit to maturity** - "Fruitless Christians"...an oxymoron? [it never ripens!]
- 3.29. Jer.4:3 "**Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns.**"
- 3.30. **Biblical Examples:** Achan; Gehazi, Judas, Demas.
- 3.31. Note the **3 fruitless hearts** each were influenced by a **different enemy**:
 3.31.1. [1] **Hard Heart** – The **devil** himself snatches the seed.
 3.31.2. [2] **Shallow Heart** – The **flesh** counterfeits religious feelings.
 3.31.3. [3] **Crowded Heart** – The things of this **world** smothers the growth & prevent a harvest!
- 3.32. **[4] GOOD GROUND – FRUITFUL HEARTS!**
- 3.33. Here are the **fantastic Four**: Ground cleared; ploughed; softened; watered.
- 3.34. **This is the Honest Heart!** – Recognizing, Receiving, Returning, Reproducing.
- 3.35. These are **true believers**...they have a **changed life**. They **bear fruit** which is evidence of the true believer!
 3.35.1. The other 3 hearts produced **no fruit!**
- 3.36. None of these soils are hopeless! 😊
 3.36.1. The **fallow**(untilled) **ground** – can be **broken up**.
 3.36.2. The **rock** - can be **shattered**.
 3.36.3. The **thorns** - can be **uprooted**.

- 3.37. This parable helps **us** to examine our hearts to see how **we** respond to the Word.
- 3.38. **Q: How is the soil of your heart today! Can His word penetrate it?**
- 3.38.1. Note the 3 different prepositions: “**by the wayside**”; “**on the rock**”; “**among thorns**”; “**into the good ground**”(in the lit.).
- 3.39. **Q: What can you do to become the kind of soil Jesus is looking for?**
- 3.39.1. It is not just **what we hear**(Gospel message, good doctrine, inspirational challenge); but **how we hear!** (simply, sincerely, sympathetically)
- 3.39.2. **The seed of truth will grow only in receptive soil!**

4. PARABLE OF THE LAMP! (16-18)

- 4.1. This parable is to **reinforce** the message of the parable of the Soils!
- 4.2. The **lamp** is for **seeing**, & **truth** is for **hearing!**
- 4.3. Those who have **heard** the word w/faith & commitment have the light, & the light is for sharing that others may **see**.
- 4.3.1. God intends that light to be **seen**, not **hidden**.

Eugene O. Peterson wrote a book entitled *Run With the Horses*, that I dare you to read sometime. In the book he makes this statement: **The puzzle is why so many people live so badly. Not so wickedly, but so inanely. Not so cruelly, but so stupidly. There's little to admire and less to imitate in the people who are prominent in our culture. We have celebrities, but not saints. Famous entertainers amuse a nation of bored insomniacs. Infamous criminals act out the aggressions of timid conformists. Petulant and spoiled athletes play games vicariously for lazy and apathetic spectators. People aimless and bored amuse themselves with trivia and trash. Neither the adventure of goodness nor the pursuit of righteousness get headlines.**