

# sermon study guide

Pastor: Henry Schorr

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Sermon Title: The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like... A Matter of the Heart: Parable of the Sower, Seed & Soil

## IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Gardening or growing indoor plants takes skill but also involves many uncontrolled factors. Share one of your successful or not so successful experiences with gardening.
2. Have you ever questioned your salvation? How did you work through it? What do you now conclude?

## UP - PURSUE GOD

*Read Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23*

3. Summarize the four conditions of the heart that Jesus described in this parable. What growth, if any, occurs with each of the four conditions? Can you give an example from your own life or the life of someone you know that represents one of these conditions?
4. Read John 15:8; Heb 13:15; Col 1:10; Gal 5:22-23. What “fruit” does Jesus want believers to yield? What rocks/thorns/weeds creep in to your garden, hindering growth?

## OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. What do you sense God is calling you to do about one of these hindrances? What would it look like to submit/surrender to God so “that you bear much fruit” (John 15:8)?
6. What role can you play through your life, words and actions to help prepare soil in others that will yield a crop?

### **For Personal Reflection/Prayer:**

Read 2 Corinthians 13:5. Pastor Henry reminds us, “You are surrendering your life to A PERSON---Jesus Christ. Eternal life is an ongoing and growing friendship with Jesus.” Take time to examine the state of your heart and whether you are growing complacent or giving God room to produce spiritual fruit in and through your life.

For Daily Reflections from CSC, visit  
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## THE WORD (NIV)

**Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**

**John 15:8**

This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

**Heb 13:15**

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.

**Col 1:10**

so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God

**Gal 5:22-23**

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

# sermon study summary

## The Kingdom of Heaven is Like – Part 2: A Matter of the Heart: Parable of the Sower, Seed & Soil

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Many Christians worry about losing their salvation. The Apostle John disputes those assertions (1 John 5:11-13). The question we should be concerned about is not whether one can lose their faith but whether one is a true follower of Jesus (2 Cor 13:5). Is our faith genuine or counterfeit?

In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus is inviting people to know how one enters the Kingdom and become a part of that Kingdom Family. He explains (13:18-23) that the seed is the Word of God (the gospel) and there are four responses that the soil (the human heart) can make.

1. **Hard soil.** This represents a heart hardened over time that is unresponsive to the gospel message (vs 19). This person does not want to understand, often seeking reasons not to believe (Psalm 14:1).
2. **Rocky or shallow soil.** This represents a heart that has based its response to the gospel on the benefits of embracing Christ without counting the cost (vs 20-21). Earlier Jesus cautioned an enthusiastic follower with that cost (Matt 8:19-22). Being ‘all in’ with Jesus is not a consideration; they are there for what Jesus can do for them.
3. **Thorny or weedy soil.** This heart wants all that God and the world has to offer. They add Christ to their already busy life, serving where it is convenient. They follow the God they want rather than pursuing the God who is (Matt 16:26). Here the ‘seed’ of God’s saving grace is being choked out of their heart (1 John 2:15) by the thorny garbage and weedy idols (Matt 6:24) instead of first and foremost seeking Him (Matt 6:33). Jesus is Savior but not Lord.
4. **The good soil.** This refers to an open, humble heart which hears and understands the truth of God’s Word and receives the gospel message (vs 23-24).

What is the gospel or good news? All of us are flawed with sin which separates us from God (death) and there is nothing we can do on our own to fix that. Our loving, just God sent His Son Jesus to take our punishment on Himself and make possible a way for us to be alive again with God. We do this when we put our trust in Jesus and accept His grace (Eph 2:8-9). God will then produce spiritual fruit through us when we surrender our lives to Him (vs 23-24, John 15:8). What is this fruit?

1. **Worship.** When He is our highest affection we will worship and praise Him (Heb 13:15).
2. **Fruit of the Spirit.** Your spirit and attitudes begin taking on the character of Christ (Gal 5:22, Matthew 5:1-10). The Holy Spirit will do His work in and through us as we daily surrender to Him and cultivate our friendship with Him.
3. **Godly behavior.** We are living our lives to please Jesus in every way (Col 1:10, James 1:22). True faith is accompanied by a desire to follow and obey Jesus (2 Cor 5:15).
4. **Representing Jesus to others.** Use your life, words and actions to forever change the trajectory of someone’s life and eternity.

What is the state of your heart? God can change your heart and your life from the inside out and give you a new start, a new life with beautiful fruit. Surrender to Him.