

"Seed in Our Hearts"

Have you considered that God wants to plant the seed of the kingdom in your heart? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're considering how people respond to the seed of the kingdom.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God wants your heart; He wants your whole heart; and He wants the hearts of those you know and love. Unless God has your heart, He will never have you. Proverbs 4:23 reminds us, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life." Yes, your heart determines what matters to you. And when your heart is right with God, you'll prosper; but if your heart is far from God, you'll find your soul empty. We want something better for you. Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

There is a message you must hear, a seed that must be planted in your heart. 1 Peter 1:22 to 23 says, "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God." The seed of God which causes us to be born again is the living and enduring word of God. And we're born again by hearing and obeying the gospel.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:21, "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." Yes we come to know God when we listen to the gospel message preached in the first century. It "is the power of God for salvation" according to Romans 1:16. And if this is the case, then we must pay close attention to the gospel.

Now we offer this study on the seed in our hearts free! If you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have many free programs and materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. And you can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from Luke 8:4 to 8, and examine reactions to that seed of the kingdom that's planted in our hearts.

Our reading is from Luke chapter 8 verses 4 to 8. And here Jesus is telling one of His parables. The parable of the sower.

When a large crowd was coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable: "The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. Other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out. Other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great." As He said these things, He would call out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

That's a reading from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're so grateful for Your love. And we're thankful Father for the parables of old. That help us to see ourselves. And Father help us always to love You and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 13 verses 18 to 19 describing the people in the hardened soil, "Hear then the parable of the sower. 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.” Mark 4 and verse 13 explains that Satan immediately takes away the word that was sown. Luke 8:12 says the devil takes it away from their hearts, so that they will not believe. This seed sown along the path, where people walk and harden the soil, would be easy for birds to come and eat.

Luke 8 and verse 11 simply says that, “the seed is the word of God.” Some are not willing to hear what the Bible actually says. Satan has snatched the word away. Millions of people in America have never owned or never read the Bible that they do own. They don’t know some of the simplest Bible stories. Others have read the Bible but refused to believe it. The evil one snatches away the truth from their hearts. Some don’t believe in God, some don’t think that you can know for sure whether there is a God, and some don’t care whether God exists.

My friend you need the Bible message, everyone does. The gospel still has God’s power to save. And John 6 and verse 68 reminds us the Lord Jesus has the words of eternal life. Jesus said in John 14 and verse 6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” No one but Jesus went to the cross to die for your sins. No one but Jesus prophesied His resurrection and then rose again on the third day. Yes He was truly raised from the dead. No one but Jesus will judge you by His words on the last day. The gospel message is your only hope of living with God in heaven for an eternity.

The Lord described a second group, that is with the rocky soil in Matthew 13 verses 20 to 21 that, “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; 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. Some hear the Word and receive it with great joy, yes. They have an emotional reaction to the good news of Christ but they lack a strong foundation in the word of God. God’s word gives us the strong foundation that we need to remain faithful.

The gospel message is truly good news of salvation and eternal life. And anyone who hears and accepts the word of God will rejoice. Being a Christian, however, is not always easy. It can challenge one to his very soul. And Luke adds that the word temptation to the tribulation and persecution that challenges can cause one to fall away. One who has not allowed the word to deeply root in their hearts can easily grow discouraged and fall away from the faith. All Christians face some disadvantages in this world. 2 Timothy 3 and verse 12 says, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Well, many souls are weak to problems and persecution. And when they find that their faith is challenging and demands sacrifice, they sadly are unwilling to remain with the Lord. Even people that we think are strong in the faith can fall to the temptation of keeping silent if their faith is challenged by others. John 12:42 to 43 says, “Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.” Many today put relationships with people as more important than their relationship with God. They choose to follow people that they love more than the God who loves them.

I’ve known new converts who were rejected by their families for coming to the Lord Jesus. And the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 10:34 to 39: “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s enemies will be the

members of his (own) household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.” The Lord demands first place in our lives, and sadly many people choose others over Jesus Christ.

Many congregations throughout our land were once full and now are smaller, while others have grown. According to Gallup, the number of people who are religiously affiliated and attending church at all, just going at all, is less than fifty percent of the population. According to the Epoch Times, “At least 915 acts of hostility were carried out against U.S. churches between 2018 and 2023.” Many in our culture no longer feel it necessary to remain loyal to the church. They don’t realize that when they leave the church, they are also leaving God’s will for their lives.

Hebrews 10:25 reminds us that we’re not to forsake “our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” Sadly some people give up on faith in Christ and on the church. This has happened in every generation, but it seems more noticeable these days, since our culture has changed. Hebrews 3 verses 12 to 13 warns that those who abandon their faith need to take care: he says, “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

Third, the Lord described the hearts of people in the thorny soil in Matthew 13:22. He said, “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.” Luke 8:14 warns that the pleasures of sin along with the cares of the world and a delight in riches can cause a Christian to choke out faith and devotion to God. Yes sin can harden our hearts and rob us of our faith. You know even things that are not sinful can cause us to drift away from our commitments to the Lord and to His church.

The Lord Jesus spoke clearly about the person who lives faithfully and the person who assumes everything is okay, while living a rebellious life. Luke 12:42 to 46 says: And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says in his heart, ‘My master will be a long time in coming,’ and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.”

The Lord Jesus warned us not to allow the worry of this world to lead us away from our devotion to Him in Luke 21 and verse 34 Jesus said, “Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.” Since we will all face the Lord at the end of time, we need to keep our hearts devoted to Him. The cares of the world, riches, and the pleasures of sin can choke out our love for God. Oh you can easily lose your moral restraint if you allow drunkenness to overcome you.

Fourth, the Lord described the hearts of people in the good soil in Matthew 13:23, “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.” Luke 8:15

describes the fourth group, "But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance." Yes they hear and understand the word. And they're willing to allow the word to work in their hearts and lives. Because they have good and honest hearts, they hold fast, they bear fruit, and they remain steadfast. Just as Christ did not quit on them, they did not quit on the Lord Jesus.

Because their faith is strong and enduring, they bear fruit in their lives. They stand strong with the Lord, they reach out to others with the gospel, they do good works, and they share with those in need. Jesus describes the His godly disciples in Matthew 5:13 to 16, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

When Christians live faithfully they show the fruit of the Spirit and are a blessing to everyone. Galatians 5:22 to 23 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." The world in which we live could do with more of these qualities. The fruit of the Spirit makes the world sit up and take notice of the good that's found in Jesus Christ. They make people want to have those very qualities in their own lives. Paul explained what Christians should do in Romans 12 and verse 2. He said, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Now every person listening to me today can be put into one of these four categories of soil. The sower's seed is the same to all of them, but how they react to the gospel seed in their hearts differs. Some are so hard-hearted they never let the seed enter. Some hear with joy but are unwilling to hold on to the Lord's promise when tough times come. Some are too busy with their own lives to have room for God in them. But others love the Lord, hold fast to His word, and they live for the Lord, and they produce fruit. Which one of these heart soils describes you? Which one of them really describes how you live and how you think? Do you love the Lord? Do you serve Him? Are you, by your light, producing fruit? Because that seed of the kingdom was planted in your heart to do just that.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You have given us a seed in our hearts. And we pray Father that we may let it grow as it should and produce fruit. And to do Your will always. In Jesus name, Amen.

When Jesus finished telling His parable of the Sower, He cried out: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Matthew 13 verse 9). Do you have ears? How well have you listened to Jesus? If you were to pick one of these four types of hearts, which would you be? If you have a good and honest heart, God bless you! But if your heart is hardened, if your heart is heavy, or if your heart has been crowded out by the worldly things, then you need to soften your heart to Jesus, and look at the cross, and remember God's promises.

Some of you may have good and honest hearts, but you have listened to the wrong things. Many follow the wrong teachers who fail to teach Scripture. Some believe they can prophesy, and others follow human traditions and creeds. Examine everything you hear by the Scriptures. Read the New Testament for yourselves and compare what it says with what your leaders are saying. Some pick out the passages that support their views while they ignore the other teaching of the Lord. The whole truth is never found in just one passage. We need to take all that the Bible says on any topic.

In the first gospel sermon in Acts chapter 2, Peter convicted the people of crucifying Jesus, whom the Father had made Lord and Christ. They were pierced in the heart with guilt and they asked what to do. Peter said to them in Acts 2:38, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." You cannot be forgiven unless you too repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. You see baptism into Christ is an immersion in water, and 1 Peter 3:21 says that, "baptism also now saves us."

We hope that today's study about the seed in your heart has helped you focus on doing God's will. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. And you can watch SEARCH on YouTube any time! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and like the programs you watch. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

Show God your love by worshiping at church. You need a church family. Yes. If you can attend, don't neglect worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. And as always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.