

FARMERS FOR THE LORD

DAY TWO: THE STONY GROUND

*THE RICH, YOUNG RULER - WENT AWAY SORROWFUL
DEMAS - LOVED THIS PRESENT WORLD*

Matthew 19:16-22; 2 Timothy 4:10

This lesson will study the example of the “rich, young ruler” who heard Jesus, but went away sorrowful because he loved possessions. This lesson will explore the example of Demas who was a Christian who abandoned Paul because of his attachment to this world. It will help us to see what the Lord meant when he talked about “stony soil” and how it represented a shallow heart.

Introduction:

1. The Parable of the Sower teaches us about the kinds of hearts that men may possess.
2. These types of hearts are illustrated by four different types of soil onto which seeds fell.
3. The success or failure of the planted seed was dependent upon the kind of soil in which it was planted.
4. By learning about these soils, we can learn the kind of heart (mind) that is needed to bear fruit for the Lord.
5. The first type of soil was the **wayside ground**.
6. The second type of soil is the **stony ground**.

I. The Description of the Soil

(Matthew 13:5-6)

- A. “Behold, a sower went forth to sow.”
 1. In the days before farm machinery, seeds were sown by hand.
 2. Sometimes, this would involve making a hole in the ground and planting one seed at a time.
 3. However, Jesus describes a man who is scattering seeds by the handful upon a field that has been prepared by being broken up.
 4. In this means of spreading seeds, many would land upon the prepared soil; but, some would fall outside of the field...
 - a. Some on the wayside soil
 - b. Some on stony ground
 - c. Some among the thorns
- B. Jesus spoke of seeds that fell upon the ground that was stony.
 1. The rocky soil was not a part of the prepared field.
 2. In order to prepare a piece of land for cultivation, the rocks must be removed.
 3. This requires hard work and much effort.
- C. Because the rocks were not removed from this soil, the seeds that fell there “had not much earth.”
 1. This means that there was a little soil – enough for the seeds to germinate.

- 2. However, the soil was not deep so there was no room for roots to develop.
- D. As a result, the seeds sprang up and new plants were formed.
- E. But, when the sun rose in the sky, the heat was too much for them and they withered and died.
 - 1. Matthew's account says this was because they had no root.
 - 2. Luke's account states that it was because they "lacked moisture" (Lk. 8:6).
 - 3. Because they had no roots, they could not reach deep into the earth to find water.
 - 4. This made the heat of the sun unbearable, resulting in death.

II. The Explanation of the Heart (Matthew 13:20-21)

- A. "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower."
 - 1. Jesus wanted those who heard to understand His teaching.
 - 2. Thus, He explained the meaning of the parable.
- B. This description of soil is meant to illustrate the heart of man.
- C. Just as soil can be shallow and filled with rocks, so man can allow his heart to be the same.
- D. This means that a man may have enough openness and honesty in his heart to hear and believe the Gospel.
 - 1. In fact, Jesus stated that they received the Word with joy!
 - 2. They were happy to have heard the Gospel and glad to obey it.
- E. However, this same person does not let the Word of God penetrate deeply into his mind.
 - 1. He is willing to accept the Gospel, but only on a surface level.
 - 2. He does not dig deeply into the Word, nor does he allow it to sink deeply into his thinking.
 - 3. He is quick to obey, but also quick to stumble and fall away.
- F. Thus, he "endures for a while" – literally, "He is temporary."
- G. When tribulation or persecution comes, he quickly abandons the Word and the Lord.
 - 1. Tribulation refers to pressure or trouble.
 - 2. This type of persecution comes "because of the word."
 - 3. This means that he is persecuted for being a Christian and living in obedience to the Gospel.
 - 4. Instead of enduring the difficulty, he gives up the Word of God and his faith.
 - 5. This is because his faith has no roots, for he did not let the word penetrate deeply into his heart.
- H. As a result, he is offended – meaning, "Made to stumble; enticed to sin."

III. The Illustration of the Rich, Young Ruler (Matthew 19:16-22)

- A. The story of this man is also found in Mark 10:17-22 and Luke 18:18-23.
 - 1. In all three accounts he is described as being rich.
 - 2. Matthew's account teaches that he was a young man.
 - 3. Luke's account states that he was a ruler.
- B. This man came to Jesus and asked a very important question: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
 - 1. We can learn much from the example of this young man.
 - 2. He was concerned about his soul and its eternal destiny.
 - 3. He was willing to seek for answers to spiritual questions.
 - 4. He went to the right source for answers about eternal life.
 - 5. He came to Jesus with humility, kneeling before him (Mark 10:17).

- C. In answer to his question, Jesus told him to keep the commandments of God.
 - 1. Remember that at this time, the Jews still lived under the Law of Moses – the Old Testament was still in force.
 - 2. So, Jesus listed several of the 10 Commandments, reminding him of the moral code of the Law of Moses.
- D. The young man replied that he had kept these commandments from his youth.
- E. Mark emphasizes that as Jesus looked upon this young man, He loved him.
 - 1. This reminds us that the answer Jesus gave to him was given out of love.
 - 2. He knew that it was not what the man wanted to hear, but it was what he needed to hear.
 - 3. Because He loves us, God always tells us the truth!
- F. In spite of all that the young man had done, Jesus said he lacked one thing if he wanted to be perfect.
- G. Jesus commanded him to do three things:
 - 1. Sell his possessions.
 - 2. Give (distribute) them to the poor.
 - 3. Come and follow Jesus.
- H. Those three things actually amounted to one thing – he needed to love God more than he loved money and material possessions.
 - 1. Jesus assured him that he would have treasure in Heaven.
 - 2. However, he desired to have wealth here upon the earth.
- I. When the young man heard this, he became exceedingly sorrowful and went away.
- J. He refused to obey and follow Jesus because of his love of money.
- K. The stone in his soil (heart) was materialism.
- L. Because of this hardness of heart, the Gospel could not take root and he very quickly stumbled and fell away.

III. The Illustration of Demas

(2 Timothy 4:10)

- A. The man named Demas is mentioned three times in the New Testament.
 - 1. In Colossians 4:14, he is simply called by name – Demas.
 - 2. In Philemon 24, he is referred to as Paul's "fellow-laborer."
 - 3. In 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul declared that Demas had forsaken him.
- B. Thus, a man who was once a faithful Christian and worker with the apostle Paul, became a deserter – leaving Paul (and Christ) behind.
- C. The reason for his abandonment was because he "loved this present world."
 - 1. Perhaps this means that he chose materialism over faithfulness to God, like the rich, young ruler.
 - 2. However, it seems to mean that he was not willing to suffer persecution, imprisonment, and death like Paul.
- D. This is exactly the kind of heart that Jesus described as stony.
- E. He was faithful until persecution and suffering arose; then, he abandoned the Word.

Conclusion:

- 1. From this part of Jesus' parable, we must learn to let the Word of God take root deeply in our hearts and minds.
- 2. It must be more important to us than anything in this world.
- 3. There is nothing more valuable than your soul! (Matthew 16:26)