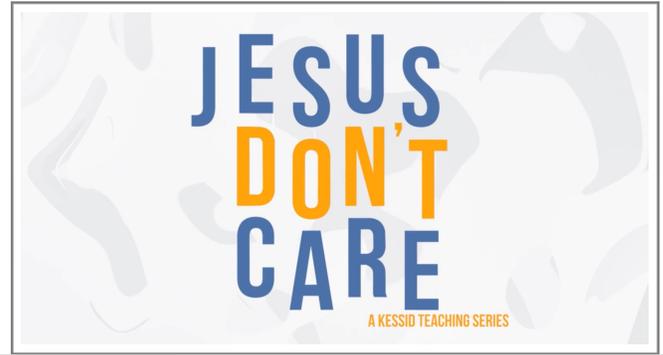


# "JESUS DON'T CARE ABOUT BAD SOIL"

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*(Vs.) Matthew 13:1-9 (ESV) 1That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. 4And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. 5Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, 6but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. 7Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9He who has ears,<sup>a</sup> let him hear."*

**Series – "Jesus Don't Care..."** – that's not the end of the sentence!

## **Definition of Care:**

- Feel concern or interest; attach importance to something.
- The act of meeting a need.

Jesus' life and teachings should be what most informs what we attach importance to and choose to act upon.

**One of the main ways that Jesus communicated his character and gave us instructions for kingdom living was through the telling of parables...**

- There are many parables throughout the Gospels that cover a wide range of topics...
- As we dive into this one today, it is important to take a minute to understand the nature of a parable...

**We are a storytelling culture.... (Movies, shows, podcasts, books, etc.). We are to some degree story experts! Because of this fact though, we must be careful not to project our understanding of how to interpret a story onto Jesus' storytelling method...**

"At its simplest, the parable is a metaphor drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt to its precise application to tease the mind into active thought."

**Parables are meant to de-center us... they don't divulge all of their secrets upon the first read.**

- When Jesus told these parables, He was speaking to an initial audience, and He had a specific reason for those parables for that initial audience.

**Jesus, why don't you just give it to me straight? The disciples, like many of us, wondered why Jesus taught in this way...**

*(Vs.) Matthew 13:13-15 (ESV) 13This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: "'You will indeed hear but never understand and you will indeed see but never perceive.'" 15For this people's heart has grown dull (callous), and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'*

**The type of understanding that Jesus has in mind here, though it involves the mind, it runs much deeper than that... understanding with the "heart"**

**Parables give us a piece of the kingdom a step at a time... they help to distinguish whose hearts may be calloused and whose are open and receptive to respond.**

- We are conditioned to receive info and not do anything!

**So with all that in mind, we look back upon "The Parable of the Sower" from Matthew 13...**

- In each telling of this parable from the Gospels the seed that is sown represents "the Word of God"
- Many of us when we hear "Word of God" we think the Bible, don't just think that...
- John 1:14 tells us that Christ is the Word, and this Word became flesh and dwelt among us...

**It's important to recognize that in this story – "The Seed is Always Good"**

- Christ in us is the hope of glory (Col. 1:27)
- Jesus is not the problem...

*(Vs) Mark 4:26-28, it talks about the mystery of our own transformation. It says.. "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. 27Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. 28All by itself the soil produces grain"*

**The key is this... The seed grows, how? Even the farmer doesn't know..**

- God does the growing!

## Christ lives in you, and the seed will grow, we will become like Christ, when the soil is good!

- The only thing you can control is the quality of the soil...
- Landscape Architect - If you only have a dollar, spend 10 cents on seed, and 90 cents on the soil.

## We see in Mark 4 that when the seed is in good soil, it takes root, grows, and yields fruit.

- We see 4 different scenarios where seed meets some type of soil in our original parable
- Yet in 3 of the scenarios, this combination does not bear fruit? Why, because "the soil is the variable"

## So Jesus tells this beautiful parable that applies to all of us, and he says some of the seed fell on the path and the birds came and devoured them.

*(Vs.) Matthew 13:19 (ESV) "19When 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.*

- Sometimes there is this sense of "What's the point?"
- Bitterness is poison for the soil. Do we stop sowing because some seed will be lost? Sometimes we won't see fruit, but we sow anyway!

## Jesus describes the second soil that fell upon rocky ground, explaining..

*(Vs.) Matthew 13:120-21 (ESV) "20As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, 21yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution (trouble) arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away"*

## The trouble arises "on account of the word"

- Everyday we find ourselves in a crossroads between self-denial and indulgence.
- "My Preference" – Church, preaching, worship....

## As soon as difficulty comes... no depth of soil...

- To follow Jesus for the long haul there will be assuredly be days under the hot sun...
- Joyful experiences and ecstatic worship are not the same as being Rooted

## Jesus describes the third soil that fell among thorns, explaining...

*(Vs.) Matthew 13:22 (ESV) 22As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.*

- Blackberries – My mortal enemy!

## Jesus – The Soil is Yours to Tend

- Listen, don't be hard-hearted!

**Acts 7 the church is brand new, but as it develops it looks less and less like Judaism. The start saying things like, "we don't have to worship in the temple, we can worship anywhere". Not only that, but everyone gets to worship**

- The stakeholders of Judaism are threatened by this, so they bring in this man and accuse him of speaking against the temple. So Stephen basically says, "Lets revisit how the stakeholders treated the prophets... Did people like you (in power) listen to Moses? David? Jeremiah? Isaiah? Ezekiel? Micah? Jonah?"
- Then Stephen accuses this court of being hard hearted, never wanting to be open, listen with their hearts. He tells them they never want to listen, and you know what they do? They cover their ears! "I'll show you!" They then drag him out of the temple and stone him to death.

**God wants to set you free, and we are covering out ears!**

*Eugene Peterson wrote it this way in The Message: "They stick their fingers in their ears so they won't have to listen; They screw their eyes shut so they won't have to look, so they won't have to deal with me face-to-face and let me heal them" (Matthew 13:15)*

**Us - I'll listen to God in every area but this one...**

- My sexuality, its mine! My money, its mine! My gossip, its mine! My unforgiveness, its mine!
- My hatred of my body, its mine!

**What response looks like.**

- Tear Soup
- CR – Monday
- Rooted – Strongholds
- Divorce Care
- Hospitality, solitude, prayer!

**"All transformation is a response to revelation"**

- God is giving revelation, that if we just receive it, will set us free!
- As you tend to the soil your life begins to be governed not by your appetites and desires, but by obedience to Christ. – Freedom!!

**The Soil can be changed!**

- You may have bad soil, but you aren't bad soil.

**The seed is always good!  
The Soil is yours to tend!  
The Soil can be changed!**

**As image bearers of Christ we are called to be fruitful!**