

Sermon Series: The Hard Sayings of Jesus

Sermon Title: Realistic Expectations

Sermon Text: Matthew 13

There are 4 types of soil: The path, rocky ground, weeds/thorns, & good soil!

Jesus tells the crowd this story/parable about the seed/soils, but He doesn't explain the meaning! He says: **Vs. 9 – "He who has ears, let him hear."**

Jesus' original audience, including the disciples, didn't have a clue what He was trying to say! It's why in vs. 10 it says, **"The disciples came & said to him, Why do you speak to them in parables?"** Jesus replied:

"To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, & he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, & hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand." - Vs. 11-13

So... Some will get it, and some will not! And those who get it, will receive more and have an abundance, and those who don't... won't!

But aren't parables supposed to help people better understand heavenly things? For some... but for others it is so that they don't hear/understand/faith. This is a hard saying, but if we think it through it makes total sense!

It's really a question about desire. If a person really desires a thing, they will do whatever it takes to obtain it. But if the desire truly isn't there, they will turn away and choose not to do what is necessary to obtain it!

There is a difference between hearing & listening... knowledge & understanding... belief & faith (living in response to belief)!

Jesus is revealing, thru parables, the reality of our spiritual condition.

- Many will hear His words, but won't listen - like seed sown on a path
- Many will receive the truth (knowledge), but it won't last – like seed sown on rocky soil
- Many will believe, but their faith will get choked out by the things of life – like seed sown among thorns **Vs. 18-22**

There should be **"realistic expectations"**! Some will desire what Jesus has to offer & pursue it at great cost until they obtain it, & others will turn away b/c they desire something else more! Jesus understood this reality! Do we?

Here today, there will be different responses to this message: Some will say:

- "I don't care what you have to say. I'm not here for that!"
- "I get what you're saying, but it hasn't, or I won't let it, affect my life!"
- "Come on pastor, I don't have time for storytelling, I have places to be!"

Do any of these responses describe you today? _____

Some interesting statistics to consider:

- **1 in 6** regular church goers have not returned since covid!
- "Regular" church attenders attend on average 1 out of every **6 weeks!**
- **Of our members/attenders, 72% have missed as many, or more, Sundays as I have this year...** and I was on a sabbatical for 3 months!

Let me ask the question again, **"Do any of these responses/soils describe you?"**

Jesus spoke to the masses, but only a few really desired what he had to offer Jesus drew in crowds in the thousands, but only a few chose to follow Him! Jesus spoke the truth, words of eternal life, but the majority walked away!

This is the reality we live in! It ought to cause us to adjust our expectations! However, **there is one more type of soil that Jesus describes – good soil!**

The good soil represents those who desire what Jesus has to offer, they pursue it above all else, & they receive it in abundance!

The good soil represents the one who listens, understands, & lives by faith!

The good soil represents those whose faith produces fruit 30/60/100 fold!

Fruit can be measured in different ways - life change, growth, multiplication! Let me share with you a few statistics of the "good soil" that makes up BRC.

Of those who are members/attenders of our church (261 adults):

- About **30% (75)** of our people are engaged in "growth groups"!
- Almost **34% (89)** of our people are serving in a ministry of some kind!
- And I can all but guarantee that 100% of those who desire & prioritize these things, that they are receiving from God in abundance!

The question still remains, In Jesus' parable of the soils, which one are you?

- The path represents the person with a **closed mind!**
- The rocky ground represents the person with a **hard heart!**
- The weeds/thorns represent the person with a life that is **too busy!**

The good soil represents a person with an open mind, a soft heart, a prioritized life, and a life marked by **growth and spiritual vitality!**

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- The rocky ground represents the person with a _____
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