

**19 September 2021**

## **When God sows into our lives, what happens next? – Matthew 13:1-23**

### **A lakeside encounter with Jesus**

(vv1-3) That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup> And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup> And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow.

- The setting is historic and evocative
- The sower is generous
- The seed is good

*Question 1 (icebreaker):* Have you ever been involved in sowing and reaping? What did you discover?

### **A countryside encounter with the forces of destruction**

(vv4-9) And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup> Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, <sup>6</sup> but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup> Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup> He who has ears, let him hear.”

(vv18- 22) “Hear then the parable of the sower: <sup>19</sup> 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 what was sown along the path. <sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup> yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup> As 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.

*Question 2:* Does anything strike you about the description above?

- The soil is good
- Different forms of attack
  - Birds devour (evil one)
  - Sun kills (tribulation/persecution)
  - Thorns choke (lifestyle distractions/deceitfulness of riches)

*Question 3:* Which of the forms of attack is the biggest issue for you?

### **A personal encounter with God**

(vv10-17) Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” <sup>11</sup> And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup> For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup> Indeed, 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.

<sup>15</sup> For this people's heart has grown dull,  
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.’

<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. <sup>17</sup> For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

- If you refuse to take one step of faith and obedience, parables hide all understanding
- If you take one step of faith and obedience, parables unlock your understanding

*Question 4:* Does this all seem a bit hard?

*Question 5:* What are the most difficult things about being a Christian?

*Question 6:* what are the most encouraging things about being a Christian?

(v23) As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

- The extraordinary fruitfulness of the believer.

*Question 7:* How do you measure the impact of one believer on the world?

### **A Prayer**

Loving Lord, thank you for the teaching us through your Son Jesus Christ, that the sower is generous, the seed good, even the soil is good, but we suffer many forms of temptation and attack. As seed falls now across your fields, help us put away our small spiritual ambitions and step forward in faith and obedience, recognising the extraordinary fruitfulness of the faithful obedient believer, which will only be measured in eternity, for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, Amen.