

Christians have a BIG difference as to what they believe about how many parables are in the New Testament. For example, in my note file I have 17 total parables listed. But, elsewhere online I have seen where someone had 39 listed, another person 50, and the highest one I have seen was 55. I guess it depends on what you are calling a parable.

Webster's Dictionary defines a parable as "a short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle."

Here is what is interesting, only 3 of the gospels use the word parable, and have what many people believe, all of the parables. They are Matthew, Mark, and Luke. MANY people say that the gospel of John has no parables in it. They may partially base their belief on that because John never used the word "parable," whereas the other 3 gospels do use that word.

As I looked in John I believe there are at least two that might be a parable, but are probably more of an allegory. One is the Sheep and the Shepherd ([John 10:1-18](#)). All I know on it, is it has a lot of symbolism, but not necessarily a symbolic story like a lot of parables. The other is the Vine and Branches. Again, probably more symbolism rather than a parable.

I am going to have us look at, at least 2 parables in the bible, one this week, and one next week. At this time, I do not know if we might add 1-2 more to the short series. But, I do not see us studying all 17 parables I have in my note file. The two, for sure, that I want to look at this week and next week, are, in my opinion 2 of the very important ones. So, we will look at one today, and one next week. Then we will see if we will add 1 or 2 more.

After that, somewhere around the middle of August, or possibly the end of August we will probably start the 9 part Heaven series.

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**Opening Scripture:** [Matthew 13:1-9](#)

*Republic, August 3, 2025*

**Text:** [Matthew 13:1-23](#)

**Title:** "The Important Meaning of the Parable of the Sower"

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**[Matthew 13:1-2](#) (NIV)**

- <sup>1</sup> That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.
- <sup>2</sup> Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore.

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*I see at least 2 good reasons why Jesus might get in a boat to speak:*

1. *Have you ever been around water and noticed how voices of people in a boat seem to get amplified?* So, that is one reason.
2. There are so many people that He is about to be surrounded, which actually would make it even harder to be heard by the crowd. If He got in the boat, He isn't over crowded, and the people do not block the sound of His voice as much.

Both of those reasons have to do with the ability of people to hear better.

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**[Matthew 13:3-9](#) (NIV)**

- <sup>3</sup> Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed.
- <sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.
- <sup>5</sup> Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, they because the soil was shallow.
- <sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, & they withered because they had

no root.

<sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

<sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop--a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

<sup>9</sup> He who has ears, let him hear."

Right after Jesus spoke this parable, look at what the disciples ask Jesus:

[Matthew 13:10-11](#) (NIV)

<sup>10</sup> The disciples came to him and asked, "**Why do you speak to the people in parables?**"

<sup>11</sup> He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.

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I am going to spend just a little bit of time getting away from the parable itself, in order to address this question by the disciples, and also address Jesus' response to them. Then, we will come back to the important meaning of the Parable of the Sower.

So, let's look at verses 10-17:

A Christian is meant to live by hearing God's voice. *In my opinion?* Most do not, and it's their own fault. They make their own decisions in life, they live their life full of themselves.

Jesus said in:

[John 10:14](#) (NIV)

<sup>14</sup> "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep **and my sheep know me--**

[John 10:26-27](#) (NIV)

<sup>26</sup> but you do not believe **because you are not my sheep.**

<sup>27</sup> *(on the other hand-->)* **My sheep listen to my voice;** I know them, **and they follow me.** *(They listen to me and do what I tell them. They do not do their own thing)*

*Why did Jesus use parables?*

**Here is the first principle of seeing and hearing:**

God is simply not going to let people see all they are supposed to see until they have

come to the place they understand that they are **meant to live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.** ([Deut 8:3](#); [Matthew 4:4](#);)

If you think you are smart enough on your own, you are rarely, if ever, going to see and hear things from God's viewpoint, or what God wants.

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[Matthew 13:12](#) (NIV)

<sup>12</sup> **Whoever has will be given more,** and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

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**Here is the 2nd principle of seeing and hearing:** IF you try hard to hear God on everything in your life, He will tell you more about life, more about how He thinks, more about what you should do. THEN, work hard to hear Him, and do what He gives you insight about, He will tell you even more. "Whoever has will be given more..."

If you refuse to check with God on things in life, because you think you are so smart, you will hear from Him less and less, to the point that, whatever you were getting "will

be taken from you." So, in other words, **IF have been** LUCKY ENOUGH to occasionally hear some from Him despite the fact that you live your life by your own ideas, it will be taken away to the point that you hear less and less.

Plus, keep in mind that if your desire about God is selfish, you will hear less from God.

*How can I be selfish?* You want God mainly on the things you want in life. That can even include just wanting Him as your protector, or mainly your help when you get in a bind, or you want God to bless you with something. You really do not want to follow God to find out what He wants. You just want something from God.

In other words, life for you is all about what God can do for you, or what you think needs to be done.

Jesus was saying "as you get real serious about making everything about Him, that will be what causes you to hear Him better and better. But, if you don't do that, you will be like the parables, where you hear and see things, and do not get it.

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You see this in the next 2 verses.

**Matthew 13:13-14** (NIV)

<sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables: **"Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.**

<sup>14</sup> **In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:** "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

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In verses 13 to 17, Jesus keeps using two words: **Seeing and Hearing.**

Seeing means you can see what God is doing, or wanting to do. Hearing is your ability to hear what God is saying to you, or saying about the situation.

He is making the point here that even though you see with your physical eyes, and even though your physical ears work, and you hear words, you are not seeing and hearing what God is truly saying. Jesus quotes Isaiah about this.

If you are not seeing and hearing from God's viewpoint, it is your own fault.

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Let's pick back up at verse 15 as Jesus is still quoting Isaiah:

**Matthew 13:15** (NIV)

<sup>15</sup> **For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear** with their ears, and **they have closed their eyes.** Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'

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The implication is that at one time, these people might have been able to hear and see. And, chances are high God tried to get through to them by many different methods. But, they continued to not use what God was saying to them, and as a result, their heart has become calloused, & they eventually lost that ability to hear and see spiritual things.

The same thing can happen to us. Your heart becomes calloused, hardened, when you keep refusing to get ahold of what God keeps trying to teach you, or say to you.

Eventually, you will continue down your own path in life, one of making messes.

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The last 2 verses about Seeing and Hearing and why He used parables:

**Matthew 13:16-17** (NIV)

<sup>16</sup> **But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.**

<sup>17</sup> For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

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Jesus tells the disciples that they are blessed because of how much they see and hear. *Why were they able to do it?* Because they wanted whatever Jesus wanted. They did not see themselves as so smart they could do things on their own.

So from verses 10 to 17 Jesus explains the reason He spoke in parables. It has to do with the desire of the person hearing. "If you think you are smart enough, fine, then do it yourself, then. But, if you really want me, and are glued to every word that comes out of my mouth, I will talk to you, and show you, more and more."

Now, let's look at what this very important parable tells us about 4 types of people who hear about God:

**Matthew 13:18-19** (NIV)

<sup>18</sup> **"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means:**

*Here is what is going to happen to 4 types of people who have heard about Christ:*

<sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown (*the seed*) in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

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**So, "the seed" in the parable represents God reaching out to us. He wants the seed to get rooted in our soil.**

**"The soil" represents our heart and how determined we are to seek God, to find out what He wants on everything, and then for us to join Him in doing that.**

So, our soil, is our heart's determination to stay constantly close to God, to always hear Him, to seek Him in all of our decisions. This is what will determine which of the 4 types of people in the parable that we will become.

With this first person, the path represents the person going down the same direction as the rest of the world. Because of that, the soil is beaten down because of how many people in the world who are walking down the same road.

"The seed's" ability to grow in our heart is limited because of the worldly, one-sided, self-centered, path we are on. This person is too concerned about the world & what they want in life.

This person hears about Christ, and does not understand it all because they are not serious about seeking God. They want their own life. They are skeptical about this God stuff.

Here is the point: God will reach out to people, but only those who totally open themselves up to consider God, will be reached.

This person may, or may not, have some interest in God. But, because they are not serious about it, and are too concerned about this world and what they want, they are not going to accept Jesus into their lives.

They don't know this, but their lack of openness to following God becomes Satan's opportunity to come along and steal the seed away. This person never got saved.

Another bible verse says "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." The first person in this parable is not serious enough about drawing near to God. He reached out to them, but the seed never took hold in their lives.

You see, when you come to God for salvation, you must come in a very humble manner. You must KNOW that you need God in your life. So, until you are willing to come that way, you are not going to "get it." Satan will come along and steal the seed because the hardness of the path (our own heart) and God's reaching out to us never goes anywhere. This describes MANY people in this world. *Are you that one?*

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Look at the heart of the 2nd person in the Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:20-21 (NIV)

<sup>20</sup> **The one who received the seed** that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once **receives it with joy.**

<sup>21</sup> But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.

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This second person receives God with joy. The implication is they became a Christian. The problem is they never got prepared for persecution in their faith. They are not very grounded in their faith. They did not allow themselves to get strong.

From the beginning of salvation a person must show God that they are willing to continue to seek Him with all of their might. "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength." As they do this, they will be removing the rocky places from their heart (soil). They are changing, and cleaning up the soil in order to grow. The plant gets stronger & stronger.

Maybe they did not attend Church consistently, for a long enough time in order to learn the things they needed to learn. Maybe sleeping in, or going to this fun event or that fun event was more important to them. They wanted SOME of God, just enough of God.

Maybe they did not read the bible often enough. Regardless of the reason, they were not prepared for what Satan was going to throw at them. So, Satan helps to bring troubles and persecution, and this Christian gives up.

Had they been extremely serious about God in the first 1-2 years of their new Christian life they would have learned the techniques that Satan uses. They would have learned all the ways Satan will try to defeat people.

They failed in their Christian life in the early years because they placed higher priorities on other things, instead of God. They did not have enough time for God in order to get grounded.

As a Pastor, I have seen MANY, MANY new Christians come and go where this was the very reason they fell away.

They fell away because their pursuit of God became lackadaisical. They thought they could stop pursuing God, and it was no big deal. The result was they became weaker and weaker.

Understand that Satan has been around for thousands of years. He is an absolute master at how to defeat people. If you do not stay close to God, to God's people, to reading your bible, to being in church, you are a perfect candidate for Satan to defeat.

#### **Illustration -**

The story is told of a preacher who went over to a man's house who had been skipping church for awhile. It was in the winter time, and the man had his fireplace going. The fire had dwindled down some, and probably needed more wood. The preacher got up from his seat, walked over to the fireplace, grabbed a fireplace tool, and separated the coals. Then he walked back to his seat again. Quickly the red coals started to burn out. The preacher just sat there, never saying a word. The man was waiting for some kind of explanation, but then he saw the point. He had not been giving it more wood, nor was it keeping its fuel by staying close to the other embers of the fire. He literally was burning out, fading away

When Jesus said "When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he (or she) quickly falls away," I believe that means they ultimately lost their salvation.

**Salvation is a continuous act of following hard after God.** It is not an act we did in the past and we don't have to do anything else. It is meant to be continuous.

This 2nd person in the parable did not remove things (rocks) in their life that kept them from growing. They left the rocks in the soil, it stopped their growth, and it made them easy targets for Satan to take out, to remove the embers of the fire until they died out.

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*The 3rd person in the Parable of the Sower does well for awhile:*

**Matthew 13:22** (NIV)

<sup>22</sup> The one who **received the seed** that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.

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This third person receives the seed, receives Christ as their Savior. They start getting solid in their faith. **They do "well" for awhile.**

Here is where they make their mistake: They allowed the world back into their life. God was no longer first. They start pursuing worldly things, worldly fun, worldly pleasures. They got overly involved in jobs, relationships, maybe even going to worldly places, or maybe just chasing after wealth. Their relationship with God becomes 2nd, or 3rd, or 4th importance in their lives.

**Example:** I watched a family that I used to go to Church with in St Louis be on fire

for God. The parents had teenage kids who were my age. The whole family was a great example to the entire Church. Then the Dad developed a business that grew like

crazy. They ended up moving away from our church as he chased his business. God and the Church became a low priority for him. They had lots of wealth and worldly success, but God dropped to the bottom of their priority list.

A few years later I heard about how the kids were chasing drugs. And, then many years after that, when I was teaching my DWI programs, I even had one of them attend my class for a DWI. I tried to talk to him as best I could.

The dad and mom allowed this to happen. They allowed the thorns of the world, the

wrong pursuits of other things to control their lives. They made decisions that were not God's decisions. The thorns literally choked out their faith. And, not only did the parents pay for it, but the kids did, as well.

The spiritual mistakes you make will not only damage you, but it will damage your spouse, and it will damage your kids, and even your own effect on the world.

For this 3rd person, the point is GOD is NO LONGER # 1. Their own pursuits of what they want, which can include worldly stuff becomes #1. They are no longer praying about their decisions. Church isn't a priority, praying about their decisions is not a priority, reading their bible is not a priority. Their life has come down to this: They believe in God but they are no longer pursuing what God wants for them. They are pursuing what they want.

Most of the time this starts very small. It is a gradual process of falling away. They probably do not even see it happening, until one day they wake up and their life has become a mess. *How did it happen?* One bad decision at a time. One decision of not asking God what He wants, at a time.

Their life has also become unfruitful. No one is getting saved from their life. God is not working in their life like **He wants** to work. There really is not a whole lot of difference between them, and the thinking of the rest of the world.

This 3rd person COULD ALSO be the Christian who DOES go to Church every Sunday. But, they have gotten comfortable in Church life to the point they do nothing for God. They are nice. And, they help around the church. They don't really chase after the world. What their problem is they are too busy with life to reach the lost. They fail to understand that we are meant to multiply. *Who is getting saved from our life?* I don't care what things preoccupy your life that you do FOR GOD. If you are not directed by God, where you multiply, the stuff you do does not matter at all.

Jesus said two things about this person. Look closely in verse 22 for those two things.

Here are Jesus' words:

**"the worries of this life"** (that describes the person too involved with other things to be fruitful)

**"and the deceitfulness of wealth"** (basically chasing after the world for whatever they want)

Then Jesus says that either of those two things **"choke it, making it unfruitful."**

The end result of either of those two things: either chasing the world, OR JUST, being too busy, CHOKED their Christian life. *The result?* It is not producing fruit, it is not producing salvations. They are unfruitful.

For either person, whether it be one who is chasing the world, or one who is just too busy to reach others, or even one who does not live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, the point is their lives are not producing salvations for God. No new salvations. This is what it means to be unfruitful. Satan has them right where he wants them - basically doing nothing fruitful that God wants done.

*Who is getting saved because of your life?*

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**Our last person in the parable, is the one whom God wants all Christians to be like. This is God's goal for every single Christian.**

Look at what Jesus says about this person:

**Matthew 13:23 a (NIV)**

<sup>23</sup> But the one who received the seed **that fell on good soil** is the man who hears the word and understands it ...

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*Why do they understand it?* Because they truly are chasing after God. They are a man or woman, like David, they are after God's own heart. They want what God wants.

*So, what does God want?* Look at the rest of verse 23:

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**Matthew 13:23 b (NIV)**

... He (*this 4th person*) produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

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They "hear the word and understand it." They "get" what God really wants from **every** Christian. They know why they are here on earth, and it isn't at all about themselves.

It isn't at all about what God can do FOR THEM. **It is about seeking after what God wants, trying to hear Him in everything. Putting ourselves and our own desires to the side, and living solely for what God wants us to do each day. It is also learning our own lessons in life, and constantly changing to become a better Christian.**

**As a result**, some win 100 people in their lifetime, some win 60 people, some win 30 people. Either way, their life **produces** salvations.

If your life is not producing fruit, producing salvations, I don't care what else you feel you are accomplishing. You are not truly doing God's will.

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**Here is how we need to apply the "Parable of the Sower" to our lives.**

**This is what we really need to get from this message this morning:**

**# 1- Always check your own life, as to how well you are living for God, based on the 4 types of people in this parable. God threw the seed in their direction. But, each person's soil, each person's true desire to seek hard after God, would make the difference on success as a Christian, or failure, and even falling away.**

**Ask yourselves "Which one am I?"**

- 1. Am I the one** who had some interest in God, but never really accepted Christ because I am going down the same path as the rest of the world, and I really didn't want to change that path to fit Jesus in it? So, the seed never got into my heart?
- 2. Am I the one** that never got serious enough about trying to **learn everything** I could about God. I took my time learning. I slept in on Sundays. I didn't read my Bible. And, then Satan helps send troubles and persecutions and temptations into my life? Therefore, I fell away? Or, maybe I haven't fallen away quite yet, but I am in the process right now of falling away? I am going down that direction?



3. ***Am I the 3rd person, that at first, was serious about God, but I started allowing the world back into my life? Chasing after God, and what HE WANTED, was not as important as what I wanted?***

OR, maybe I was just got too busy to truly follow after the heart of God.

*Either way, I was not chasing the reason God put me on earth?*

4. ***Or, am I the 4th person, who is chasing God with all my heart? I see what God sees. I want what God wants. My heart, my soul, is after God's own heart. I realize how vitally important it is to God that the lost gets saved. I want to help with that.***

I want, as our former D.S. always said, to de-populate hell. I want people to know what I know about God.

You see, the truth of the matter is this. there are dying people out there, not living for God, and doing stupid things every day. This world is a mess. And, unless we are helping do our part to reach the lost and the unchurched, WE ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM. We cannot just sit in the safety of the church walls and think we are ok.

God did not save us to make us self-centered Christians where we think the Christian life is all about what God does for us, or we think it is just about being nice to other Christians.

If you say you love God, then prove it. Pursue the things that are most important to Him, which is hearing His voice on everything, which will be a lot about winning the lost.

We have to care about it. We have to think about it. We have to be praying about who. We have to be looking for the lost. "God, who do you want me to reach?"

*You have to ask yourselves these questions:*

*Who has come to salvation because of me? Who am I hanging around with at least a couple of times a month, who is unchurched? Who am I praying for, for their salvation? Am I asking God WHO He wants me to reach out to?*

**Jesus said OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK.** In other words, they are there.

**So, the first way we apply the parable of the sower is to use it, all the time, as a gauge on where our own Christian life is going.** If we are not the 4th person, we are not doing the job God called us to do. If we are not the 4th person, then we truly do not have a heart after God's own heart.

Jesus, in the parable of the vine, said that those who do not produce salvations, will be cut off and thrown in the fire. That is a strong comment for Him to make.

In order to win the lost, we have to spend time with the lost, or unchurched.

Ask yourselves: *Am I spending time with the lost? How am I reaching out to them?*

You may say "Well, I just don't have time." Then, you need to ask yourselves what worldly stuff is going on in your life that is taking all your time.

*We can also use the Parable of the Sower, to*

**# 2 - Help us realize where other people are in their own spiritual walk.**

NOT to judge them, but rather to pray for them, or reach out to them to encourage them to stay on track. There may be times we have to caution them. If the soil of their heart is not in the right place, expect that nothing is going to change in their life.

The soil of a person's heart is going to determine whether they make it to heaven, or not. And, it is going to determine whether they are about to make lots of mistakes. At least 2 of the 4 people in the parable did not make it to heaven. The 3rd person with the thorns is very questionable. If they do make it, it will be barely, with not many rewards.

*We need to use the Parable of the Sower, to:*

**# 3 - Remind us that once a person is saved, each of us needs to help them get grounded quickly.**

The soils of the first 3 people was messed up. We have to help people to SEE.

We need to help them see that they are probably not going to make it if they aren't heavily involved in Church, bible reading, daily prayer, and checking all of their decisions by praying about them first. We need to remind them about hanging around worldly places is not wise, and doing worldly things is not wise. We need to remind them that they are to witness to the lost, but not be unequally yoked with the lost.

So, the parable of the sower reminds each of us **to help** ground the new Christians.

The Parable of the Sower is important because it really describes every potential Christian. You are going to fall into one of these categories. If you are not producing fruit, you are not the 4th person in the parable. You will be one of the other 3.

God is wanting to plant the seed in you. He has that desire. Your heart, your soil, your way of thinking, your priorities, will determine which of the 4 people you become. And, oh, by the way, only one became what God wanted. Only 1 out of 4 got it right. The rest never did get it right. *Will you be the one out of 4, or one of the other ones who never got it right?*