

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

I praise you today for your Word, which has taken root and bears fruit in my heart. It is breathed out by your Spirit and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16). It is health to my soul and strength to my spirit. It testifies of you and brings me into your glorious presence. Praise the Lord!

Today in Your Word

Today you shared with me some of Jesus' parables. Jesus taught the people using parables, not because they were the clearest form of teaching, but because *parables were not readily understood*. He did this in order to fulfill Scripture: "I will open my mouth in parables" (Matt 13:35; Ps 78:2) and "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive" (Matt 13:14–15; Isa 6:9–10). Jesus was led by the Spirit to speak in parables so the truth would be hidden from those who didn't want to see, yet open to those who did. Although Jesus' disciples didn't always understand every parable, they got better with practice (Matt 13:51), and Jesus told them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables" (Mark 4:11). This teaches me the importance of having a heart that is open to the truth. Indeed, the parable of the soils makes that very point, and it teaches me that there are forces at work which try to keep your Word from bearing fruit. First, Satan and his demons try to keep the Word from taking root in people's hearts. This shows me that I must be persistent in my efforts to win the lost. Second, affliction and persecution try to uproot the faith of new believers. This shows me that I must be diligent to disciple and care for those who are newly saved. Third, the worries and riches and pleasures of life try to choke the faith of believers. This shows me that I must be on guard against the deceitfulness of riches and the busyness of life. If I want to be good soil, someone who hears the Word with an honest and open heart, then I must hold fast to the Word, water it with obedience, and persevere to the end by faith. Jesus wanted his disciples to realize that your kingdom was first and foremost a spiritual kingdom. In the future, it would be an earthly kingdom with a king (Jesus), a land (Israel), a people (the righteous), and a capital city (Jerusalem), but it was present now in the hearts of those who believed. That's why Jesus talked about the kingdom of God as being present, yet future; revealed, yet a mystery; among us, yet not of this world; like a small seed, yet pervading everything. Indeed, it is a treasure worth buying and a pearl worth possessing. When the end of the age comes, I want to be found as a stalk of wheat bearing grain for Jesus, for then "the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt 13:43).

Reflection

Jesus said, "For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away" (Mark 4:25). Am I holding fast to the truth of your Word? If I am, I will receive even more, but if I'm not, I will lose everything.

Request

Father, help me to be good soil for your Word. Enable me to endure persecution, resist the riches and pleasures of life, and hold fast to the truth. Give me a heart that desires to please you in all things!

Thanksgiving

Thank you for sharing with me the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven! I'm blessed to be able to hear what many prophets and righteous men desired to hear!

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: "[A Sower's Seed Fell on a Path](#)" – Herman G. Stuempfle.

Meditation Verse: Matthew 13:9.