

CAPTURED BY THE WORD PRT 7

Matthew 13:1 In that day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the seaside. 2 And great crowds were gathered to Him, so that He went into a boat and sat. And all the crowd stood on the shore. 3 And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth. And they sprang up immediately, because they had no deepness of earth. 6 And the sun rising, they were scorched, and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns. And the thorns sprung up and choked them. 8 And some fell on the good ground and yielded fruit, indeed one a hundredfold, and one sixty, and one thirty. 9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

- One would think that when two people who find themselves in the exactly the same conditions will end up the same in life.
- Well, there is nothing that is far from reality as that – I have observed something strange under the earth; you can have 2 children growing up in the same family, eating the same food, being taught the same values but one ends up in prison and the other ends up conducting surgery as a surgeon in a hospital somewhere.
- The question is this; why is that the case – why is it that we can sit under the same anointing, the same teaching of the word and yet some people seem to be going backwards whilst others are going full steam ahead.
- When it comes to walking with God, it is not a matter of how many years you have been in the Lord but rather how much of God has been in the years
- You might have been a Christian for 10 years but only having experienced God for a total of 2yrs only – this still makes you a baby in the things of God.
- The answer to the reason why others grow, whilst others remain baby as baby Christians is the subject matter of my teaching this morning. The title of my message this morning is **HOW TO RESPOND TO THE WORD.**
- We read a profound parable given by the Lord Jesus and in it Jesus gave us ways in which people respond to the seed, which is the word.
- We don't need to do a lot of interpretation on this one because the great teacher himself gave us His interpretation. What is left is for us to intently and carefully examine what Jesus said.

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- According to the interpretation of our Lord Jesus, there are four ways in which people can respond to the word of God. In this parable, the word is symbolized by the seed and the people's heart is symbolized by the type of soil.
- Of the four responses, there is only one that results in the desired outcome. If you like, you can say that on average a quarter of people that hear the word have the correct response to what they hear.
- The way you respond to the word of God determines its level of fruitfulness in your life.
- Talking about the Israelites, we are told of how they responded to the word and how much impact the word had on them.

Hebrews 4:2 (KJV) For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

- Your response to the word is largely a factor of the condition of your heart – the soil. Let's explore the characteristics of the four types of soils or types of hearts.

Matthew 13:18 Therefore hear the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown by the wayside.

- Jesus talks about anyone who hears the word of the kingdom – this means that it could be that one who hears the word of salvation for the first time or that one who has been around the block and is listening to the word of life being taught to them.
- Both the unbeliever and the believer will respond to the word in one way or another, depending on the type of heart one possesses.

1. Soil type 1: The Highway soil

- The heart of man has the ability to work on the seed of the word in order to make it fruitful. One heart differs from the other and that goes for the results of the seed.
- There are a lot of fruitless hearers and even among those who heard Christ Himself. The highway hearer is a typical fruitless hearer – how does a typical highway hearer behave like?
- If you grew up in the rural areas, you will agree with me that some walking paths would go through a field. With feet hammering on the ground beneath, the surface becomes hard and impenetrable.
- With that type of soil, when seed falls on it, the soil has no ability to receive the seed and therefore the seed remains open to be snatched by the birds of the air.

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- The highway hearers are those who hear the word but do not understand it. There is no effort from highway hearers to seek understanding of the teachings of the kingdom.

1 Corinthians 1: 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

- The highway hearers don't pay attention to the word, they do not take hold of the taught word.
- Highway hearer sits like any other person seating in the congregation but for him it is a mere formality (box ticking exercise, for public appearance).
- As soon as the word drops on the heart of the highway hearer, the devil comes immediately and takes away the word. The highway hearer forgets immediately after listening to the word.
- A highway hearer is like that teenager who is in church sulking because the parents forced him to be there.
- There is a carelessness that accompanies the highway hearer, this hearer would rather chat to friends on Facebook whilst the preaching is ongoing.
- The story of Elisha and the besieged city of Samaria gives us an example of what happens in the life of a highway hearer.

2Kings 7:1 And Elisha said, Hear the Word of Jehovah! So says Jehovah, Tomorrow about this time a measure of fine flour will be sold at a shekel, and two measures of barley at a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. 2 And the third officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if Jehovah would make windows in heaven, then this thing might be. And he said, Behold, you shall see with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.

- The great thief of sermons will be sure to rob you of the word, if you don't care to keep it.

2. Soil Type 2: The stony ground

Matthew 13:20 But that which was sown on the stony places is this: he who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy. 21 But he has no root in himself, and is temporary. For when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the Word, he immediately stumbles.

- This stony soil is better than the highway soil – the stony hearer goes beyond the highway hearer.
- The stony hearer is better than the highway hearer but is not good enough – this one goes beyond his neighbor but falls short of heaven.

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- The stony hearer has a great initial impression – this is the guy who spins around when the word is being preached. He receives the word with much excitement – the only issue is that it is only momentarily.
- What is it about the stony ground - I have observed maize plant growing in a stony place – the plant looks sick and yellowish? It does not have the deep green color of a healthy crop.
- The reason why it looks sickly is because the soil is shallow and as such the plant cannot take root. The absence of deep roots means that the plant can't reach the nutrients that are found in the soil around it.
- Stony hearers are not averse to the word, they listen to the word, they are involved with bible studies but that is where it ends.
- They are quick to receive the word and, in that regard, it springs up very quickly – when you hear them talking, you could mistake them for a mature believer but they lack deep roots.
- Stony hearers do not take time to meditate upon the word, they don't try the word in their own lives.
- Many are excited by a great sermon but do not allow it to influence their lifestyle
- The initial excitement at hearing the word slowly turns into offense after the word starts challenging their ungodly ways of life.
- The absence of roots means that the stony hearer can endure hardships for a little while but further hardships will cause him to forsake the faith.
- The stony hearer has no fixed principles and habits such as prayer and meditation that allow the word to take root.
- A principled hearer of the word will persevere in the face of persecutions – whenever the enemy sees signs of the word, he will come to test the authenticity of the word.

Matthew 13: 21 But he has no root in himself, and is temporary. For when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the Word, he immediately stumbles.

- An increase in revelation will attract an increase in persecution that tests one's sincerity in the word.
- When you lack deep roots, you will quarrel with the word whenever persecution comes your way.
- The stony hearer can also be equated to that one who hears the word but does not bother to put it into practice.

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Matthew 7:26 And everyone who hears these sayings of Mine and does not do them shall be compared to a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the wind blew and beat on that house. And it fell, and great was its fall.