

# Parables

## Heart Conditions

Matthew 13:1-9

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brian Fannin / June 26, 2016

Parables are stories Jesus told and it's one of the main ways he taught. They are stories that "parallel" a truth.

In Matthew 13 the battle lines are being drawn as Jesus teaches, and we like the original hearers must ask, who is this Jesus and what is the nature of His teaching?

Jesus' parables are word pictures that demonstrate truth, in this case, how the word of God is received and applied; by the difference it makes.

Remember, when Jesus told a parable, he was laying kingdom truth alongside a story that the listeners could identify with. Often, these were told in stark contrast to the normal picture. They regularly stunned and shocked those listening.

### What is *your* heart condition?

Paul Tripp says, "the heart is the casual core of your personhood".

However, Scripture is clear about the "heart" and it is NOT to be trusted:

**Jeremiah 17:9 ESV** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick (meaning without cure NASB); who can understand it?

#### 1. When your heart is hard, you reject truth. (vv. 4 & 19)

God's word just bounces off, and what's worse is that it's snatched away. There are enemies to the soil of your heart: you and a real, supernatural evil that snatches away truth (inside you and outside of you).

Often, the rejecter of truth calls himself or herself a cynic. The life of a **cynic** believes little, consistently doubts the existence of truth, trusts few if any, and does not see the need to change within themselves.

The hard heart believes only what's "factual" or "measurable." If something is not understood, it is disregarded as foolish or superstitious.

#### 2. When your heart is shallow, your heart moves toward what feels good and is easy. (vv. 5 & 20-21)

Unlike the hard soil, this soil wants to hear things that bless them. V. 20 says the word is received with joy!!

Shallow (rocky) soil is not interested in facing difficulty. They think that God, if He is

trustworthy, must do good from *their* perspective. Depth is not the goal of the shallow heart; ease is the goal.

Rocks can show up in our lives in strange ways like not enjoying being around people different than you, circumstances that make you uncomfortable, music not being to your liking, or people having different opinions than yours.

### 3. **When your heart is crowded, you worship multiple things. (vv. 7 & 22)**

Is your heart crowded? Jesus spelled out two indicators:

- a. **cares of the world:** Greek word for “worry” or “anxiety”
- b. **deceitfulness of riches:** deceit means it lies to us and we believe it. Money mimics God. It is a substantial “god-like substitute, and gives us the illusion of insulation from problems that arise or through “prestige and power,” all of which choke out the truth; the truth—there is only one God and your possessions do not make your life. (Luke 12:15)

As we see in v. 22, thorns do not choke out your life overnight. It takes time and the roots grow until life is simply choked off.

### 4. **When your heart is truly receptive to Christ reigning on the throne of your life, your life can be fruitful and full! (vv. 8 & 23)**

**Hosea 10:12 ESV** Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

Fruitful hearts move from being *believers in Jesus* to *FOLLOWERS OF JESUS*.

“Sin lives in our hearts. We were created to be servants of God but sins makes us lovers of self. We were designed for God’s glory, but sin makes us live for our own glory. And, unless things change in our heart, our behavior won’t change at all, and if it does change, it won’t change for long.” - Paul Tripp, *New Morning Mercies*

The seed is constant and good. The only variable? The soil condition.

What will you do with the eternal truth of God’s word, new life in Christ and the call to surrender your life to Him?