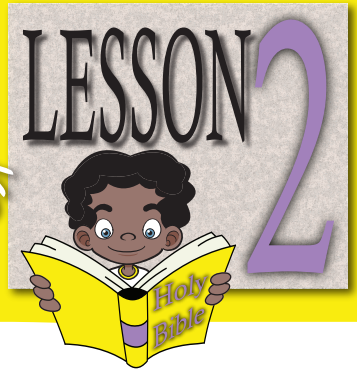


The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1-23



New Testament 5
Part 1: Jesus' Ministry

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 5 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-25; Luke 8:4-15; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:15-17

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "Blessed are those who keep His testimonies..." (Psalm 119:2a).

OLDER CHILDREN: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["Read Your Bible, Pray Everyday"](#)
- ["The Bible is God's Word"](#)
- ["Listen to My Words"](#)
- ["The Bible"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [Jesus' Ministry & Last Week Bible](#) fact cards (provided under "N.T. 5 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- "Summary of the Bible" from "[Kids Prep](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- Parables of Jesus A Beka flash-a-card series: series #1 (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, *not the lesson book*)
- [Map of Palestine](#) (provided in activity sheets)

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: The Bible is God's Word, and I need to read it so I will know how to be like Jesus and so I can go to heaven.



OLDER CHILDREN: I need to study God’s Word every day because it will help me know how to obey God and how to stay away from things and people that could pull me away from Him.

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

The Bible tells us that Jesus did many great miracles to confirm His Word while helping people. Do you remember what a miracle is? Last week we talked about how Jesus healed a man who could not walk. The miracles confirmed Jesus’ claim to be God’s Son, but so did His lessons. Jesus was the best teacher Who has ever lived, and He knew how to use special stories to help people understand how to live for God. Those special stories are called parables. Today we will talk about one of those special parables.

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review last week’s lesson.

Have you ever planted or helped your mom/dad plant flowers or other plants? (Discuss their experiences, focusing on how it’s important to make the soil in which you plant very good.) In our lesson today, Jesus uses a parable to teach how we should be ready to hear and obey His Word. He wants us to keep our hearts pure by reading the Bible daily and paying attention to what it is teaching us.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Many people followed Jesus everywhere He went. Some followed Him to see the great miracles He performed. Some followed Him to try to trick Him so they could have Him arrested; they wanted Him to stop preaching and teaching. Some people followed Jesus just to argue with Him. But many, many people followed Jesus to learn from Him. One day, such a large crowd followed Him as He went to the shore of the Sea of Galilee that He decided to get into a boat, push away from land a little, and talk to the people who were standing on the beach. That day He taught them at least seven **parables**.



Parable: often defined as a story about “earthly things with heavenly meanings,” i.e., things from every day life with which Jesus illustrated spiritual lessons. A parable has also been described as “a story of something real in life or nature, from which a moral is drawn for instruction” (*Master Study Bible*, p. 2076).

NOTE TO PRESCHOOL TEACHERS:

Because preschoolers have a difficult time understanding abstract concepts, the focus of this lesson should not be the parable itself, but the responses to God’s Word:

Jesus taught the people how important it is to study God’s Word and obey it. Some people hear a preacher or read the Bible and decide they don’t want to do what it says. Some hear God’s Word or read it and get excited about obeying, but it gets hard to always do right and they give up. Others hear or read God’s Word and try really hard to obey, but their friends convince them to disobey God. Others hear or read God’s Word, obey it, and keep obeying it even when things get difficult.

2. One of those seven parables is usually called “The Parable of the Sower” (Matthew 13:18). The parable is about the soils, or the four different kinds of hearts that hear God’s Word and respond in four very different ways.



HISTORICAL NOTE: In Palestine, winter planting (barley, winter grains, and wheat) was done in the latter part of October. The summer planting (sowing) began near the end of January.

3. A “sower” was a farmer (or someone who worked for the farmer) who scattered seeds over a field. He would carry a large bag of seeds on his shoulder, take seeds from the bag by the handful, and then scatter them over a field. Sometimes the seeds went across freshly plowed soil. Sometimes the seeds were sown (scattered) on unplowed/hard soil like a road or path. Packed hard by constant traffic (people, animals, chariots, carts, etc.), birds and insects could easily eat the seeds. And sometimes the seeds would fall on soil with lots of rocks or thorns.
4. Most of the people of Palestine were farmers or had some connection to the land. Everyone who heard Jesus talk about a man going through a field scattering (sowing) seeds had seen this happen themselves. Even so, most of the people did not understand what the parable meant. After Jesus told this parable, He took the 12 apostles aside and explained it to them.
5. The seed represents the Word of God. The sower was anyone who spreads the Word of God by preaching and teaching. The soil beside the road or walking path represents someone who hears the Word of God and does not understand it. The devil (or anyone who lives for him and not for Jesus) wants us to stay away from the Bible as much as possible. He knows that the more we read and study God’s Word, the stronger we will be, and the more we will make good choices and not bad ones. So, he does not want God’s Word to “take root.” [Many of the Jews who followed Jesus refused to listen, just as they had refused to listen to the prophets of the Old Testament (Isaiah 6:9-10). They were like the hard roadside soil.]
6. Rocky soil was also very common in Palestine. Nothing could grow in rocky places because a small plant could never push its roots past the rocks and deep enough into the Earth. Jesus said that the rocky soil represents someone who does not have a very strong faith. So, when bad things happen to him (as they do to everyone), he will give up on his faith in God. This kind of person chooses to live for Jesus when things are going well, but “when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, he immediately stumbles.”
7. Jesus said that the seed that falls among the thorns is like a man who hears God’s Word and believes and obeys. But he allows worry, and wanting more and more money and wealth to take over his life—instead of depending on God. He looks for happiness, fulfillment, and contentment in more and more things. The man whose heart is like the thorny ground doesn’t study God’s Word every day so his faith in God doesn’t grow. He is never happy or satisfied. He thinks so much about what he wants that he doesn’t think about how he can help other people or teach them about Jesus.
8. The good ground, Jesus said, is like someone who is hungry to learn more about God’s Word each day. That kind of person not only studies the Bible, but he practices every day what he learns. Seed planted in good soil yields “one hundredfold,” i.e., for every 100 seeds sown, 100 times that many are harvested. The person with the good heart, who puts into practice what God teaches in the Bible, will teach others, will look for ways to help others, and will be blessed by God.
9. If I study God’s Word every day and do what God asks me to do, I will not only be happier, but I will also know that I’m going to heaven. If I study God’s Word, I will know how to stay away from bad

things and people who don't want me to follow Him. If I study God's Word, I can tell others how they can be happy in this life and how they can go to heaven, too.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#)

Ages 2-5:

- [“Parable of the Sower Coloring Sheet”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Planting seeds: You will need one Styrofoam or plastic cup for each child, as well as potting soil and seeds. (Lettuce seeds will grow very quickly.) On each cup, write “I am good soil.” Fill each cup $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ full of potting soil, and let the children plant the seeds. Either let the children take the cups home to watch the seeds grow, or keep the cups in the classroom on a window sill.
- Bag of seeds: Draw an outline of a bag on a piece of cardstock or construction paper; make a copy for each child. Write “Parable of the Sower” at the top of each page. Let the children glue seeds onto their papers. **Or** cut out small felt bags for the children and let them stitch two cutout pieces together with shoestrings. [Make sure that you use shoestrings with plastic tips.] Put a packet of seeds inside. ([“Bag Cutouts”](#) provided in activity sheets)
- Review game: Cut big “seeds” out of tan construction paper or cardstock. On each seed, write reasons to study and obey the Bible—some “good” reasons and some not good reasons. (Example of a good reason: “So we know how to get to heaven.” Example of a not good reason: “So we will have lots of money.”) Laminate the seeds. Bring a brown paper sack (lunch size) to class. Pass out seeds, read each seed, and let the children decide if that is a reason to study the Bible or not. Put the seeds that are “good” reasons in the bag, and throw the others on the floor. Make sure you play a few times so everyone gets a “good” seed. (With two- and three-year-olds, every seed could be a good reason.) ([“Seed Cutouts”](#) provided in activity sheets)

1st-2nd Graders:

- [“Parable of the Sower Word Search”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Show the children pictures of each type of soil. Let the children tell what type of soil it is and what happened to the seed that fell on that soil.
- Show the children what happens to seeds in the four soil types: Put lots of rocks with a little soil in one Styrofoam cup; put very dry, hard-packed soil in another cup; put soil with lots of thorns in another cup; and put **very** good soil in another cup. Have the kids help you plant seeds in each cup. Water the soil and put the cups in good sunlight. Over the next couple of weeks, have the kids watch what happens to the seeds. Talk with them about what kind of “soil” we should be when we read/hear God's Word.
- [“Four Soils Activity”](#) (provided in activity sheets): Have pictures of each type of soil. Let the children tell what type of soil it is, what happened to the seed that fell on that soil, and the application that Jesus gave of that type of soil.

3rd-4th Graders:

- Divide class into groups of three or four. Give each group a concordance and have them look

up scriptures on “seeds.”

- “[Parable of the Sower Word Search](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- “[Four Soils Activity](#)” (provided in activity sheets): Have pictures of each type of soil. Let the children tell what type of soil it is, what happened to the seed that fell on that soil, and the application that Jesus gave of that type of soil.
- Show the children what happens to seeds in the four soil types: Put lots of rocks with a little soil in one Styrofoam cup; put very dry, hard-packed soil in another cup; put soil with lots of thorns in another cup; and put **very** good soil in another cup. Have the kids help you plant seeds in each cup. Water the soil and put the cups in good sunlight. Over the next couple of weeks, have the kids watch what happens to the seeds. Talk with them about what kind of “soil” we should be when we read/hear God’s Word.
- Have the children read the following:
 - Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8
 - “The Proper Soil” article from the [November, 2000](#) issue of *Discovery Magazine*
 - *Jesus Teaches His Disciples*, Contemporary Bible Series, Scandinavia Publishing House (DISCLAIMERS: skip pp. 26-27, 40-41; change “hell” to “Hades” on p. 50)
 - *The Parable of the Seeds*, by Joanne Bader, Arch books (DISCLAIMER: skip the note to parents)

SONGS:

“READ YOUR BIBLE, PRAY EVERYDAY” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

If you read your Bible and pray everyday, you’ll grow, grow, grow. (REPEAT)

Grow, grow, grow, grow,

Grow, grow, grow.

If you read your Bible and pray everyday, you’ll grow, grow, grow.

(Make hand movements as if reading, praying, and like a child growing.)

If you neglect your Bible and forget to pray, you’ll shrink, shrink, shrink.

(Make hand movements as if closing Bible, head gesture saying “No,” and like a child shrinking.)

(REPEAT)

Shrink, shrink, shrink, shrink,

Shrink, shrink, shrink.

If you neglect your Bible and forget to pray, you’ll shrink, shrink, shrink.

(Make hand movements as if closing Bible, head gesture saying “No,” and like a child shrinking.)

So read your Bible and pray everyday, and you’ll grow, grow, grow.

(Make hand movements as if reading, praying, and like a child growing.) (REPEAT)

Grow, grow, grow, grow,

Grow, grow, grow.

So read your Bible and pray everyday, and you’ll grow, grow, grow.

(Make hand movements as if reading, praying, and like a child growing.)

“THE BIBLE IS GOD’S WORD” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook

(Tune: “Farmer in the Dell”)

The Bible is God's Word.
The Bible is God's Word.
It tells us that God made us.
The Bible is God's Word.

The Bible is God's Word.
The Bible is God's Word.
It tells us that God loves us.
The Bible is God's Word.

The Bible is God's Word.
The Bible is God's Word.
We will study and obey.
The Bible is God's Word.

“LISTEN TO MY WORDS” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: London Bridge)

God gave me two ears to hear, ears to hear, ears to hear.
God gave me two ears to hear, I will listen.

God says, “Listen to My words, to My words, to My words.”
God says, “Listen to My words,” in the Bible.

“THE BIBLE” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: “Go In and Out the Window”)

I love to read the Bible, (REPEAT twice)
Because it is God's Word.

I will not tear its pages, (REPEAT twice)
Because I love God's Word.

I love to hear its stories, (REPEAT twice)
Because I love God's Word.

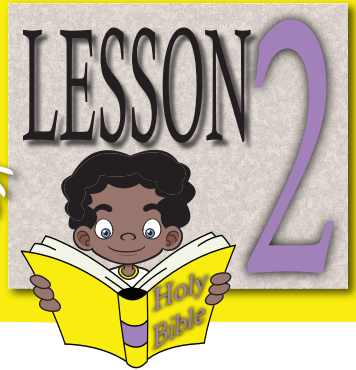
*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1-23



New Testament 5
Part 1: Jesus' Ministry

WEDNESDAY EVENING

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OLDER CHILDREN: I need to study God’s Word every day because it will help me know how to obey God and how to stay away from things and people that could pull me away from Him.

INTRODUCTION:

Review [N.T. 5 Bible Fact Flash Cards](#) (provided under “N.T. 5 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

Review Sunday’s lesson (see [N.T. 5 Review Questions](#) for example questions)

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning’s lesson.

Preschoolers and 1st-2nd graders: Provide each child with a round or square foil pan. Give each child several dried pinto beans. Let them cover the beans with 2-3 wet paper towels. By the next class period, each bean should be splitting open and have sprouts.

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