

Group Resource

## Sermon Notes – Sunday, November 09, 2014

Series: From Promise to Provision

Message: Planted in Good Soil

Scripture: Matthew 13:10-23

- I. Last week, we began a series entitled “From Promise to Provision,” which explores the process of living in God’s **very great and precious promises**. (2 Peter 1:4) We must recognize that **seedtime and harvest** is a fundamental precept of God and includes the seasons of sowing and reaping.
  - a. God operates by the following pattern:

**Seed** (Word of God) – **Planting** (Understanding) – **Nurturing** (Faith) –  
**Pruning** (Growth) – **Fruit** (Harvest) – **Producing more seeds** (Multiplication)

- II. In Matthew 13, the Scriptures describe three types of soil that that didn’t produce fruit that remained.
  - a. **Seed sown along the path - 19** When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.
  - b. **Seed sown along rocky soil - 20** 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. **21** 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.
  - c. **Seed sown along the thorns - 22** 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.
- III. In this week’s sermon, we focused on the 4<sup>th</sup> soil: **Seed sown on good soil – 23** *But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.*
  - a. In a parallel passage in Luke, we read this description of the good soil: *LUKE 8:15 But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.*
- IV. Nurture means to feed and protect, support and encourage, or to foster growth. Those with ‘good soil’ create an environment that is conducive to growth of the seed.
  - a. We must learn how to rejoice in every season of seedtime and harvest. We can rejoice in the season of planting because we know that God will be faithful to bring forth a harvest. We can rejoice in the nurturing season because we know that our labor will produce a harvest. We can rejoice in the harvest season because we know that it is the Lord’s faithfulness that has made a way for our harvest.
  - b. Hebrews 11:1-2 reminds us that <sup>1</sup> Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. <sup>2</sup> This is what the ancients were commended for.
- V. There are two important aspects that are required for us to be ‘good soil’ that God can plant his promises in to produce a good crop. To go from promise to provision, we need:
  - a. (1) a noble and good heart, and
  - b. (2) to hear, retain, and persevere in the journey of seedtime and harvest.

- VI. 1 - Good soil represents those with a noble and good heart.
- a. God plants His promises in the soil of our heart. It is easy to think that all of us basically have a 'good heart.' However, the Scriptures remind us that "There is no one righteous, not even one.
  - b. The first and primary seed that God plants in our lives is the seed of salvation. This seed blossoms into a fruit of righteousness when we believe upon the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary. This fruit produces a regenerated (noble and good) heart that is necessary for us to walk in the fullness of God's promises.
  - c. God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel about the process of heart transformation. **Ezekiel 36:22-27**: *"Therefore say to the Israelites, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: ...<sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.<sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.<sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*
  - d. We are not only dependent on God's transformational work in regenerating our hearts, but also to cleanse our heart daily from the decay of life.
    - i. The nature of things in our fallen world is to go from order to decay. We must ask God to renew our hearts on a daily basis so that the corruption of life doesn't cause our transformed hearts to become calloused and hardened.
    - ii. **Proverbs 4:23** reminds us to *"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."*
    - iii. We must learn to pray as the Psalmist did in Psalms 139: <sup>23</sup> *Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.<sup>24</sup> See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*
- VII. 2 - 'Good soil,' represents those who **hear** the Word, **retain** it, and **persevere** in it.
- a. *Faith waters the promises of God.* The Faith that God desires within us is faith that leads to obedience. True faith doesn't just say "I believe" and go back to business as usual, but the faith that God desires will cause us to hear, retain and persevere in the promises of God..
  - b. **Hearing and understanding the Word of God allows Godly seeds to be fully planted.**
    - i. The Word of God, though potent, will not fully produce fruit in our lives until it is planted. When a person hears, understands and believes the Word, then the seed is planted and rooted in the good soil of their hearts.
    - ii. The Apostle Paul spoke highly of those in the church in Thessalonica who planted the Word of God in their hearts. **1 Thessalonians 2:13**: <sup>13</sup> *And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.*

- iii. In Matthew 13, Jesus taught the disciples that there would be those who heard the Word but never put it into practice.
  - 1. *14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: “ You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. 15 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.’*
- iv. We must guard against hearing the promises of God but neglecting to put His instructions into practice. **JAMES 1:22** *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.* <sup>23</sup> *Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.*
- c. Retaining the Word of God requires us to continually elevate God’s Word above our own thoughts and patterns.**
  - i. To retain means that we: “keep hold of, or hold on to” the Word of God. It is a continuous action of seeking God and His Word through each season of planting, nurturing, pruning, and harvesting the promises of God in our lives.
  - ii. Joshua was encouraged to <sup>JOSHUA 1:8</sup> *Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*
  - iii. We will always be tempted to abandon Godly methods for seemingly quicker or easier methods, but retaining the Word of God means that we hold on to God’s instructions regardless of the present circumstances.
- d. Persevering in the Word of God requires us to endure through the various seasons of seedtime and harvest in full assurance that God will produce the fruit in our lives, even when we don’t see what we have asked for.**
  - i. Jude 20 reminds believers to: <sup>20</sup>...build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

## Group Resource

# Let's Talk Notes– Sunday, November 9, 2014

**Series:** From Promise to Provision

**Message:** Planted in Good Soil

**Scripture:** Matthew 13:10-23

- 1) As you reflect back on last weekend's sermon, what one principle or insight stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful or difficult to grasp?
- 2) The parable of the sower reminds us that God plants His promises in our heart. The seed that was sown on 'good soil' represented those with a noble and good heart. Pastor Joseph identified that the only way to have a noble and good heart is to allow God to transform your heart. How does salvation change our heart from a heart of stone to a heart of flesh? Can you identify practical ways that your heart has changed since you have been saved?
- 3) We are dependent on God's transformational work to not only regenerate our hearts at salvation, but to also cleanse our hearts each day from the decay of life. In explaining the parable of the sower, Jesus explained how the corruption of this life can cause hearts to become calloused and hardened. What are things that can corrupt our heart? **READ PSALMS 139:23-24 aloud.** How does praying this prayer bring freedom and liberty?
- 4) True faith will always challenge us. **READ JAMES 2:14-26.** How was Abraham challenged by his faith? How did he hear, retain, and persevere in the promises of God? What was the fruit of Abraham's obedience? Describe a situation that you have found challenging and whether your faith in God lead you to make different choices or to re-prioritize. What was the outcome of your choices?
- 5) James 1:22-23 challenges us to not only listen to the Word of God, but to do what it says. Pastor Joseph shared that "The Word of God, though potent, will not fully produce fruit in our lives until it is planted. When a person hears, understands and believes the Word, then the seed is planted and rooted in the good soil of their hearts." How can we *plant* God's Word in our heart? What is the difference between merely listening to the Word versus hearing the Word and putting it into practice? Are there any seeds that God has been challenging you to plant and put into practice?
- 6) Retaining the Word of God requires us to continually elevate God's Word above our own thoughts and patterns. Pastor Joseph shared that we will always be tempted to abandon Godly methods for seemingly quicker or easier methods. **READ JEREMIAH 17:7-8.** How does striving to cultivate 'good soil' in our hearts benefit us? How do we know the difference between good soil and other soil?