

The Parable of the Sower

Jesus taught in parables, not to make his teachings difficult to understand, but to encourage those who were truly interested to ask for an explanation. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (Matt 7:7-8)

The parable of the sower demonstrates this approach. When his disciples came and asked him, he told them exactly what it meant.

The Parable

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matt 13: 3-8)

The basic story would have been simple for the common man to understand. The wind would carry some of the seed to various types of ground. If it landed on good ground, it would take root and grow, and bring forth fruit. All of the remaining locations were contrary to good growth and the seed failed to produce. **Jesus explained his parable in the same chapter.** (verses 18-23)

The Seed = Word of the Kingdom (The Gospel)

The Wayside = Those who hear the word but do not understand. (nor will they ask)

Stony Ground = Those who hear and who receive the word with joy, but who have no depth. They are not well grounded (deep rooted) in the word

Thorns = Those endure for a time, but the cares of life, like weeds, choke the word.

Good Ground = Those who hear and understand and who continue to bring forth fruit

"He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." (Matt 13: 23)

We cannot read this parable without asking the questions: Will I be a good place for the Word to take root? Will the cares and pleasures of life choke out the word in me? **What kind of ground is my heart?** Will God's word grow in me? Will I produce fruit for



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"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John 15:14

When we think about the "things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ," we often concentrate on the hope that it represents for the future.

Jesus taught us to pray: "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt 6:10) We look forward therefore to the return of Jesus to this earth, when he will establish the Kingdom and the earth will be filled with God's glory.

Our Connection to this Hope?

In our enthusiasm for the future glory, we must not lose sight of those teachings that instruct us how we as individuals may hope to share in this coming Kingdom.

In the quotation from the top of the page, we learn for example, that there is an obligation associated with our desire to become **friends of Jesus**. Indeed, there are commandments that we are expected to keep.

Jesus taught that in addition to becoming his friend, we might also become a **part of his family**, but not without associated responsibilities. "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt 12:50)

The Sermon on the Mount

One of the most significant discourses that was delivered by the Master is recorded in Matthew, (chapters 5-7) This sermon contains many of the commandments of Jesus, and it teaches us how to do the will of **Supplement to The Christadelphian Advocate**

God.

Seek First the Kingdom

One of the keys to the lesson is found in the 6th chapter. Jesus teaches how important it is for us to set the right priorities in our lives.

Our nature leads us to be concerned about the necessities of life; - our food, clothing and shelter. Jesus teaches us that God understands our need for these things, and that if we place our search for God's Kingdom first in our lives, all these necessary things will be provided also.

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matt 6:31-34)

Doers, not Hearers

Jesus concluded his sermon by telling a parable. All those who listen to his sayings and do not do them are likened to foolish men who build their house on the sand.

The wise, on the other hand, are those that hear and do. These are like those who build on a rock. (Matt 7:24-27) We should build on a rock, by **learning and then doing**, all of the teachings of the Master.

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Hope and Comfort from the Scriptures

The Blessings of our Hope

The "Things Concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" are **good news** for all who are willing to hear the gospel and who then become **doers of the word**, bringing forth fruit from the Words of God that have been sown as seeds in their hearts.

Jesus assured us that he was coming quickly and that those who kept his commandments would be rewarded:

"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. **Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life**, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (Rev 22: 12-14)

The Lord is Merciful

Some of the most comforting words of scripture are found in Psalm 103. We are reminded of the blessing of **the forgiveness of our sins** that is now a reality through faith in Christ. We read: "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. **Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him**. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."



we are encouraged by the compassion that has been made available to us through our savior.

We are given the assurance that God will be pitiful to us, even as a father pities his own children.

We also learn that among these precious words of hope are those gentle reminders that these blessings are conditional.

Our own attitude and response to the promises of God is important. We have seen from Psalm 103 that the Lord pities "them that fear him."

This fear is not terror, but a sincere respect for our Father, who is the Almighty, the Creator and Sustainer of all life. If we respect His power and authority, loving Him with our entire heart, soul and mind, then we will "Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Eccles. 12:13)

Blessings (IF)

We have these wonderful blessings available to us **if** we have understood that a **transformation is necessary** in our minds. **When** we are **converted as a child** of God, and **if** we are **born again through the spirit**, and **renewed in the spirit of our minds**, then we will appreciate the lovingkindness of God **for those that fear him**.

We appreciate that the knowledge of his gospel is only a beginning and that His mercy is reserved for those that "remember his commandments to do them".

As we review these beautiful words,

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom -"

The Master taught that there must be a change in our attitude if we are to be really prepared for God's Kingdom. The words above are quoted from Matthew 18, verse 3. Jesus spoke these words in response to a question from his disciples.

The followers of Jesus were only concerned with their own status. They had asked: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (verse 1) Their attitude was entirely wrong. They needed to learn humility, and the example of a little child was chosen to teach them about true conversion.

Conversion

Fundamental to the way of salvation is the idea of repentance or conversion. When we learn about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, we also learn that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, and that Jesus was the lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world through his sacrifice.

Forgiveness of sins is only a start. We are encouraged to forsake our sinful ways and to "go and sin no more".

We therefore are told to "repent and be baptized" as the beginning of a new life in Christ Jesus. A life in which we are instructed to deny ourselves and to take up our cross and follow the Master, who led the way by his own example.

True Conversion is difficult

It was obvious from the way that the disciples acted that true conversion is something that few ever accomplish when they are baptized. Peter, who was one of the closest friends of the Master was told that he still needed to be converted. On the night when Jesus was betrayed, Peter denied Jesus three times because he was not yet transformed. (see account in Luke 22)

Be ye transformed

The idea of conversion is expressed in



many ways throughout the NT.

In Romans 12: 1-2 we are told: " And be not conformed to this world: **but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

In John 3:5 the principle of conversion is stated this way: "**Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit**, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

We are born of the water at our baptism, but we must then be born of the spirit by the renewing of our minds, by being converted even as a child.

In Ephesians 4 we find the same principle of conversion: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; **And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**" (verses 22-24)

Little Children

Little children should be an example for us. They are totally dependent on their parents, they have simple and honest faith and trust that they will be cared for. We should renew our minds after this example that the Master has appointed for us.

We must trust in our Heavenly Father in the recognition that we are his children and that he will take care of all of our needs if we can learn to humble ourselves as a little child, in subjection to His will.