

Greatest Parable of All Time

Get ready to explore the most brilliant and helpful parable in the entire Bible! Jesus dubbed it the *parable of the sower* (Matt 13:18), and it serves as His model for discipleship. Everything you need to know about being a disciple of Jesus has been embedded in one profound parable!

That statement is no exaggeration. It's the ultimate Bible passage for making discipleship understandable and doable. It's a one-stop guide that contains every secret for being a fruitful follower of Jesus.

It plays like a movie. It gives us vivid imagery for how our hearts grow as disciples of Christ. When we grow Jesus' way, our hearts become as fruitful to God as a banner wheat harvest.

Jesus' Sledgehammer Parable

The parable of the sower is Jesus' sledgehammer parable. Like Solomon's superlative Song of Songs, this is the Parable of Parables. It's the big one, the most significant, the most magnificent, the GOAT (Greatest Of All Time). It's Jesus' tour de force, His blockbuster, His kingpin. This Mount Everest of parables beckons us to explore its heights.

When you grasp what Jesus infused into this parable and put it into practice, you'll find yourself on heaven's super-highway of discipleship.

Prepare to ponder kingdom secrets you've never seen before. It's about to get real good. We're going to sit at Jesus' feet and thrill at the wisdom of His words.

If you read this book in sincerity and truth, I promise you'll

never say to yourself, *This parable doesn't apply to my life right now*. Why? Because it's universally relevant. It doesn't matter your age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, income bracket, placement on the org chart, or how long you've been a Jesus follower, this parable is going to nail you. It doesn't matter what season you're in—whether happy or hard. Makes no difference, this parable is for you. You've been waiting for this.

Master of Metaphor

Get ready for plenty of metaphors. A *metaphor is a word picture that uses an object to explain an idea*. Jesus is the Master of Metaphor. Whether at a meal, a meeting, or a meadow, the greatest Teacher of all time used metaphor in all His messaging, and the metaphors within our parable are the strongest of His entire ministry.

John the Baptist, Jesus' forerunner, used metaphors prolifically to prepare people for Jesus' teaching style. For example, look at the metaphors in this excerpt from John the Baptist:

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you

with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matt 3:7-12).

Vipers, fruits, stones, ax, root, trees, fire, winnowing fan, threshing floor, wheat, barn, chaff. They’re all metaphors. That’s a mighty muckle of metaphors mashed into one message!

When Jesus talked metaphors, the people probably thought, *This reminds us of John the Baptist*. This is how he talked. They knew to pay attention.

Like John, Jesus’ use of metaphors was brilliant, and they shine the brightest in the parable of the sower.

The Parable in a Chart

The following chart encapsulates the message of the parable. It helps us *see* the parable. Refer to it frequently as you ponder the parable’s significance. To keep it before you, we’ll reproduce it repeatedly throughout this book.

When you actually see the parable, you’ll see everything in life through the lens of fruitfulness. You’ll constantly be asking, *Is this pursuit fruitful?*

We Want to Be More Fruitful

Fruitfulness was a common theme in Jesus’ teachings. He likened our hearts to a spiritual garden that produces fruit pleasing to God. For disciples, fruitfulness is as important as it was to Jesus.

Nobody reading this book is thinking, *No, I don’t want to move forward. I want to remain stagnant, myopic, and self-centered.*

Chart 1 Four Kinds of Soil

<u>FOUR SOILS</u>	<u>HINDRANCE</u>	<u>MAIN ISSUE</u>	<u>CROP</u>	<u>TOOL</u>
Trampled Heart	Birds	Unbelief	Stolen	Hoe
Shallow Heart	Stones	Tolerated Sin	Scorched	Shovel
Neglected Heart	Weeds	Distractions	Choked	Sickle
Fruitful Heart	All three	30/60/100-Fold	Productive	All three

Rather, we all want more impact, a deeper imprint, an enduring legacy. We want our lives to make an eternal difference in others. We aspire to be more productive, more helpful, and giving more glory to our heavenly Father.

But even though we want to be fruitful, we're weak and need encouragement to keep reaching for more. That's why this parable is so helpful. Jesus is going to incentivize us, through the power of His word and the release of His grace, to keep reaching for greater fruit.

Study this parable with a good heart and Jesus will use the vision of hundredfold fruitfulness to fill you with many holy desires:

- You'll want to be more like Jesus, bearing fruit to God everywhere you go (John 15:8).
- You'll strive for hundredfold fruitfulness, producing eternal life in others (John 4:36).
- You'll seek to glorify God more by bearing much fruit (John 15:8).
- You'll want to bear fruit that *remains* because you want to touch answered prayer (John 15:16).
- You'll desire to be more fruitful with age, making your elderly years more productive than ever (Ps 92:14).
The older the vine, the sweeter the fruit.
- You'll long to hear Jesus say, "Well done," when He rewards the faithfulness of His servants (Matt 25:21).
- You'll want to gain for the Lamb the reward of His sufferings. His sacrifice deserves ours.

You're using this book to study the parable of the sower because you want to be more fruitful. Tune your ears and lean in attentively. During this study, Jesus will provide practical tools to cultivate a more productive heart in faith and love.

Hundredfold fruitfulness is before you!