

# SOWER

**Matthew 13:24** Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;

**Matthew 13:25** but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

**Matthew 13:26** But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.

**Matthew 13:27** So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'

**Matthew 13:28** He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?'

**Matthew 13:29** But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.

**Matthew 13:30** Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' "

**Matthew 13:36** Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

**Matthew 13:37** He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

**Matthew 13:38** The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*.

**Matthew 13:39** The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

**Matthew 13:40** Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.

**Matthew 13:41** The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,

**Matthew 13:42** and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

**Matthew 13:43** Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

For our communion services, we pause from our 'regular' series of Bible studies and present a devotion on a name or title of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Since there are more than seven hundred such names or titles, to narrow it down we have arbitrarily used the English alphabet. We take each letter of our alphabet and find a name or title of our Lord.

We've come to the letter 'S.' There are so many we could choose: Savior; Shepherd; Sun of Righteousness; Stronghold; Scepter; Shield; Son of God; Son of David; Servant; Second Man; Seed of the Woman; Scapegoat; Sacrifice; Sanctification; Salvation; and several more.

In the passage from Matthew, there are two such titles: **Son of Man** and **Sower**. By **Son of Man** Jesus was referring to Himself. It was, in fact, the most common title He used of Himself. It focused on His *humility* and on His *humanity*. But it was also a title clearly understood by the Jews of His day to be Messianic. It comes from Daniel 7:13, which reads,

**Daniel 7:13** "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

**Son of Man** is not a denial of His deity. By becoming a man, Jesus did not cease being God. The incarnation of Christ did not involve the subtraction of deity, but the addition of humanity. Jesus clearly claimed to be God on many occasions (Matthew 16:16,17; John 8:58; 10:30). But in addition to being divine, He was also human (see Philippians 2:6-8). He had two natures (divine and human) joined in one person.

Further, Scripture indicates that Jesus was not denying His deity by referring to Himself as the **Son of Man**. In fact, it is highly revealing that the term **Son of Man** is used in Scripture in contexts of Christ's deity. For example, the Bible says that only God can forgive sins. But as the **Son of Man**, Jesus had the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:10). Further, when Jesus was asked by the high priest whether He was the Son of God (Matthew 26:63), He responded affirmatively, declaring that He was the **Son of Man** who would come in power and great glory (v 64). This indicated that Jesus Himself used the phrase **Son of Man** to indicate His deity as the Son of God.

Finally, the phrase **Son of Man** also emphasizes who Jesus is in relation to His incarnation and His work of salvation. In the Old Testament (Leviticus 25:25-26, 48-49; Ruth 2:20), the next of kin (one related by blood) always functioned as the "kinsman-redeemer" of a

family member who needed redemption. Jesus became related to us "by blood" (that is, He became a man) so He could function as our Kinsman-Redeemer and rescue us from sin.

It is as **Sower** that we want to discuss Jesus tonight.

Sowing seed was a familiar sight in Palestine. They would sort of scratch the surface of the ground with a very crude plow. Sometimes they didn't even do that much. Then the sower would go out and fling the seeds upon the earth.

The **Sower** represents the Lord. He is the One sowing the seed. Jesus is King and Lord; but He is doing the work of a farmer in this age in which we live.

The **seed** represents the Word of God (v19). The field symbolizes the **world** (v38). Earlier in the chapter, in the Parable of the Sower, you learn that the seed falls on four types of soil, and three-fourths of the seeds do not grow - they die. There was nothing wrong with the seed, but the soil was the problem. The condition of the soil is all-important as far as the seed is concerned.

In the Parable of the Sower Jesus said the **good seed** was the Word of God. In this Parable of the Tares the **seed** represents believers. The **tares**, on the other hand, are the **sons of the evil one**. The **enemy** who sows them is the **devil**. The **harvest** represents God's judgment at the **end of the age**. The **reapers** are **angels** who will execute judgment upon the unbelievers.

Just as the servants of the landowners were prepared to gather up the tares early, so must the disciples – and future disciples – want to weed-out unbelievers. Why not do so? Let me suggest a couple of things.

First: If you keep within the analogy, you don't weed-out because some of the wheat would be damaged in the process. Either because it was maturing late and therefore not recognizable; or because its roots were too intermingled with that of the tares.

I don't know if someone is genuinely saved. It's not up to me to decide if they are, or to declare they are not. Sometimes a person is a believer, but matures slowly. Let's leave it up to the Lord to sort it out.

As far as roots that are too intermingled with the tares... That's a warning for us to keep our contact with unbelievers on a spiritual level and not get too involved.

A second reason for leaving the tares to grow among the wheat is that Jesus wanted to emphasize that the age in which we live is a time for sowing, *not* harvesting!

Is there a harvest – and by that I mean, Do people get saved? Yes! But **we** are to focus on *sowing* and on *being sown* and leave the harvesting to the Lord.

It is this being sown that intrigues me tonight. Jesus, in this parable, is the **Sower** and He **sows you**.

Jesus sows you to witness rather than to judge and condemn. That's a huge concept to grasp because, like the disciples, we have a natural tendency to be judgmental. As one author put it, "The Church is called to preach and teach against sin and all unrighteousness, but, in doing that, its purpose is not to judge but to win souls, not to punish but to convert sons of the evil one into sons of the kingdom."

The **Sower** has sown **you** into a particular field where He desires you grow and bear fruit. All around you, in much greater abundance, are **tares**; unbelievers. They run the gamut, from atheists to agnostics to apostates. There may also be among them some apathetic believers – folks who you would mistake for **tares**, but who are just not maturing very rapidly.

As the **Sower**, the Lord knows exactly where He wants you. Most of you **are** exactly where the Lord wants you – provided you have sought His will and plan for your life.

I also think a review of your **field** is always helpful. Just because you are in some **field** doesn't mean you must stay there. You can get so

locked-in to your own plan that you convince yourself it is God's **field** for you. You can get to the point where you wouldn't even consider a change. That's dangerous – spiritually speaking.

For example: Like myself, many who are called into a field of ministry are called away from some other field – often a successful one.

True, not everyone is called into what we call “the” ministry. But you *are* called to minister, wherever you are. And it strikes me as odd that only pastors and missionaries ever make radical decisions!

Once you're in your **field**, you grow and bear fruit. Here is something to consider: If you are not very fruitful, perhaps you are not in the right field?

When we were first deciding to come to Hanford (or not), the Lord gave Pam a simile (elaborate...).

Conclusion

You've been sown or you need to be re-sown. Either way, trust the **Sower**. Then be recognizable among the tares of this world without being judgmental or condemning. Sow the Word and leave the harvesting to the Lord.

- being changed to bring change -





