

Only 1 in 4 Will Bow!

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[0:00] please take your bibles and go to Matthew's gospel Matthew's gospel chapter 13 Matthew chapter 13 if you're visiting with us and you need a bible if you go to the chair in front of you on the bottom you should pull that out there's a hymn book there and there's also a bible pull that out go to the back and find page 10 page 10 because they renumber the new testament so Matthew chapter 13 you'll find page 10 in that black bible Matthew 13 Matthew chapter 13 page 10 in that black bible we're going to read Matthew chapter 13 verses 1 through 9 and then drop down to verse 18 to 23 to see the explanation of the parable of the sower

I found this shirt at a shop called for pastors and there's a section that says keep them awake so I I'm just kidding I didn't there's no such thing as a store like that I just thought you would enjoy that I thought of that 830 this morning so they get a good laugh but it is it keeps you awake right so you look you're like whoa okay I thought I needed coffee anyway so Matthew chapter 13 let's read what Jesus has to say here on that day as he was going out of the house Jesus sat by the sea and great multitudes gathered to him so that getting into a boat he sat down and the whole multitude stood on the beach and he spoke many things to them in parables saying behold the sower went out to sow and as he sowed some fell beside the road and the birds came and ate them and others fell upon the rocky places they did not have much soil and immediately they sprang up because they had no depth of soil but when the sun rose they were scorched and because they had no roots they withered and others fell among the thorns and the thorns came up and choked them and others fell on the good soil and produced fruit some a hundredfold some sixty and some thirty he who has ears let him hear drop down to verse 18 therefore you yourselves hear the parable of the sower when anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart this is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road and the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places this is the one who hears the word and immediately with joy receives it yet he has no root in himself but is temporary and when affliction or persecution comes because of the word immediately he is caused to stumble and the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns this is the one who hears the word and the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and it becomes useless verse 23 and the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil this is the one who hears the word and understands it who indeed bears fruit and produces some a hundredfold some sixty and some thirty

I don't know how exactly I found this statistic from the Bureau of Labor Statistics but I was looking through statistics and found this website there in the U.S. Department of Labor the Bureau of Labor Statistics the largest over the year percentage increases in employment in large metropolitan areas the top two first was Orlando Florida the area around Orlando Florida as well a 3.8% was an increase and by the way this is from June of 2018 to June of 2019 that's the statistic that they give so number one was Orlando surrounding area Orlando Florida guess what number two was Phoenix it was Phoenix Mesa Scottsdale area 3.3% increase in just a year that's amazing right it's helpful when you see these statistics because it kind of puts things in perspective so to speak because you look at data right and you're seeing this information let's stir the pot a little bit you know

I like doing that let's look at the statistics on gun violence one third of gun deaths are homicides which are concentrated in cities and half of those took place in only 120 cities across the country interesting and was most prevalent in racially segregated areas with high rates of poverty by the way you find the statistic on everytownresearch.org black Americans represent the majority of gun homicide victims it's sad black Americans are 10% more likely than white Americans to die by gun homicide black males are 15% more likely than white males to be shot and injured in assaults involving guns and even black women are twice as likely to be fatally shot by an intimate partner

compared to white women so you look at these statistics and you look at these and they're sobering and yet things change even more so when it becomes personal because no matter the statistic when it happens to you nothing can bring him back nothing can bring her back it becomes personal take another stat when you're talking about Christians people who profess to be Christians only one in four are true Christians and out of the four one totally rejects

Jesus so out of the three that seemingly believe two thirds will defect from the faith so that means statistically only 25% of people who respond to the gospel truly respond to the gospel 25% I said that to my wife she said wow where did you find that statistic I said from Jesus because that's the parable of the sower well it's one thing when you look at statistics it's sobering but it's quite another thing when it becomes personal Michael Ferris he's the founder of Homeschool Legal Defense Association HSLDA he wrote a letter to a former pastor maybe some of you some of you might have heard about Joshua Harris former pastor of

[8:45] Covenant Life Church kind of a rock star as a pastor and yet he just recently divorced his wife and renounced the faith he posted that Joshua Harris he posted it publicly on Instagram well Michael Ferris who's known Josh Harris for almost 40 years ever since he was 7 years old and I think Joshua Harris is like 40 41 years old so close to 40 years Mike Ferris wrote a letter here's some of the things that he said to Joshua Harris quote Jesus told us there be false prophets and teachers among us your story doesn't invalidate Christ's message because he predicted that people would do exactly what you have done I just didn't expect it would ever be you my heart aches for you in so many ways it seems that you thought that

Christianity was a series of formulas of formulas for marriage formulas for systematic theology fear of choosing the wrong formula fear of failing to live up to your formula I would never reach this conclusion about you on my own but what you have said yourself can be fairly summarized as this you thought your faith and your marriage were based on formulas and they never went deeper than that Josh you and your story are not the measure of the validity of Christianity Jesus is real he doesn't want you to return to your prior formulas he wants you to come to him for the first time and learn to love I am praying for you Josh with love and sorrow Mike Ferris now I think we need to be careful because we cannot necessarily make hard sweeping judgments about Joshua Harris or anyone else for that matter but the fact of the matter is presently speaking he says he wants nothing to do with

Jesus right now and at the end of the day it just hurts it brings sorrow grief see it changes things when it becomes personal doesn't it a loved one walks away from Christ a good friend renounces Jesus a pastor who called you to love Christ seems to not love Christ anymore even denying Christ Matthew's gospel is about coming and bowing down because Jesus is the Messiah King of Israel bow down and worship him and here as we come to the parable of the sower this is our title only one in four will bow only one in four will bow we must come to grips with the fact that some people will not listen some people will be superficial and some will be preoccupied with the things of this world we must come to grips with that and not just as we're proclaiming the gospel to people but even in our own lives us as a church here at

Cottonwood Bible Church only one in four will bow the fact of the matter is the majority of people will not positively respond to the gospel so the fact that you're sitting here is just the grace of God think about it it's just the grace of God as sobering and as sorrowful as a passage like this could be I actually want to turn it on its head because we're going to celebrate the Lord's Supper this passage is timely because what I the trajectory I want us to go in this morning is this let's remind ourselves of Jesus death for all our sins our total admission and confession of our sins our humble repentance of our sins before him our trust in Jesus and his work for us and our love for him this is what we're going to do as we walk through the parable of the sower and as we see only one in four will bow down you remind yourself that you have bowed down and you are bowing down you remind yourself of the gospel truth you remind yourself of your confession of your sins you remind yourself Jesus has died for my sins you remind yourself that you trust in Jesus

Christ alone we talked about this in the first hour to recount the gospel engenders intimacy Michael Susanna Matthews they're going to celebrate their anniversary tomorrow Craig and Toby did it just this past week that's what you do at your anniversary right you say happy anniversary you recount that time and it creates and engenders intimacy that's what we're going to do this morning we're going to recount our commitment to Jesus or put it another way let's renew our commitment to Jesus our Savior once again as we're going to walk through the parable that's what the mindset I

want you to have this morning does that make sense are you with me tracking let me give a few statements before we actually look into the parable opposition to Jesus had increased from Matthew chapter 11 chapter 12 even before that

[15:38] I mean John the Baptist was doubting Jesus his own family the people he grew up with people Nazareth surrounding area and the Pharisees well we knew they would reject Jesus but I mean when you're living in the first century these were the religious leaders you would think that they would embrace Jesus no no they didn't what's going on I mean how does one make sense of these different responses these mixed responses to Jesus Jesus tells us he does it by giving telling a story the parable of the sower what is a parable a parable it's a proverb an enigma a riddle a taunt a simile or an allegorical story that's what a parable is it uses one writer says this it uses a concrete analogy to illumine or obscure an abstract thought or in other words put it like this you have an abstract truth abstract truth put into practical everyday living via a story that's what a parable is they're allegories but we don't want to allegorize them and we must understand them in their historical literary backgrounds draw that out of the text and not impose our own backgrounds into the parable well this is what the parable means because this is what these words mean for us today no you don't do that what are those historically literarily those words mean at that time when Jesus was speaking in the first century that's what we do with these parables they parables reveal truths of God's kingdom to his followers but they conceal truths from others you'll see why next week actually when we look at verses 10 through 17 of chapter 13 these parables spoke about the progress of God's kingdom on earth now but also the future glories so we don't simply relegate them to something in the future nor do we just say it's something in Jesus own time they apply to us today so not just this parable actually but all the parables

Jesus told unraveled these mixed responses to him and his kingdom message that you see from chapters 11 and 12 of Matthew's gospel and you see how these responses to Jesus they continue all the way until judgment day because even today as you give people the gospel you will see those four different responses many will not respond positively to this message bow down and worship Jesus the Messiah King of Israel and even some who do they turn out to be counterfeits of Satan himself all that to say these parables concealed the truth from those whose hearts were hardened to the truth but to those whose hearts were tilled by the Father it revealed God's great kingdom so today we'll see the parable of Sower next week we'll look at chapter 13 verse 10 through 17 and then the next week after that which you see that in your bulletins look at all the other parables that Jesus gave but I wanted to spend more time on this parable because how Jesus spends a lot of time explaining this parable so notice how it begins simply

Jesus parable verses 1 through 9 going out of the house he sat by the sea it was on that day so what happened with his family from chapter 12 maybe with the Pharisees he left the house for the sea of Galilee and notice verse 2 great multitudes gathered him so getting into a boat he sat down and the whole multitude was standing on the beach it was actually just the opposite of what we're doing today so basically I should sit down the rest of you should stand up just kidding I'm not going to do that to you but that's what was happening Jesus sat down at the boat and all these people were standing there on the beach as he spoke these parables interesting and this first parable was about the crowd really to decipher the responses to him verse 3 he spoke to them many things in parables saying behold the sower went out to sow and notice excuse me some fell beside the road verse 5 rocky places verse 7 the thorns verse 8 the good soil notice the main issue the main issue in the parable is the soil upon what kind of soil did the seed land only one soil only one had soft soil upon which the seed landed and produced the problem wasn't the seed the problem wasn't the sower it was the soil and it's the soil that stands for the different responses to Jesus and the mission of his disciples of us and remember the farmer scattering the seed by hand as he walked through a field he was scattered by hand and for first century

Jews they knew exactly what he was talking about I mean for us we don't necessarily do that I mean we don't understand how things like this work so remember this is out of our context out of our historical how we do things in our society in 21st century put yourself in the first century this is how they did things so people could identify with Jesus story and Jesus gave four types of soils the path the rocky thorny and the good in the first three the seed did not produce a crop it was eaten by birds it fell in shallow soil or was choked by thorns a crop was produced only in the fourth kind of soil and notice how the production varied hundredfold sixty thirty notice from verse five and also into verse six about the one that fell in the rocky places when the sun rose it scorched had no roots it

withered the hot sun scorched the young plants because it had no root with no solid root system a plant withers on the hot days in verse seven that fell upon the thorns the plant competed for nourishment from these thorns and proving to be too strong the thorns took over and a new plant was choked but God's seed goes into good ground it bears a good crop and notice what Jesus says here in verse nine which is what

I say to you as well he who has ears let him hear if he has ears which I think all of you have ears today listen intently to what Jesus says respond today to the gospel if you're not a Christian you should repent and trust in Christ today don't wait come to Jesus and he will save you of all your sins he who has ears let him hear and then when we come into verse 18 Jesus unraveled the responses to him notice how it begins here in verse 18 therefore all you have here in the New American sentence is hear then the parable in the Greek it's so much stronger he says therefore you yourselves hear so he's like wake up hear the parable and notice verse 19 when anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand so you must hear and understand he was doing a play on words which he's going to bring this up about understanding in verse 14 we'll look at that next week understanding the word only comes from God allowing a person to understand because our natural tendency is the first three responses that's why it's so vital for

[25:01] God to be the one who's intervening in this which again you'll see next week but he says in verse 19 they hear the word they don't understand the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart the seed that fell upon the path displays the evil one coming and snatching away the word of the kingdom that was sown in the heart this person was a careless hearer their heart was hardened it went nowhere and then went nowhere couldn't go anywhere so the evil one comes and snatches it away this is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road she or he will not listen their heart was hard verse 20 and the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places this is the one who hears the word and immediately with joy receives it yet verse 21 he has no root in himself but is temporary so notice in the rocky soil there's initial enthusiasm and commitment to Jesus turned into apostasy why because of trouble or affliction or persecution it has no root

Jesus says and is temporary the last part of verse 21 when affliction or another word for that is trouble trouble or persecution comes because of the word immediately there in the American standard says falls away a better way to translate that is like this is caused to stumble why does Jesus say that why does Jesus say he's caused to stumble because of this if Christianity means persecution or having trouble in this life she or he wants nothing to do with Christianity wants nothing to do with Jesus these are superficial look if you think that coming to Jesus means you're going to have your best life now that person who told you that is an idiotic liar that is not true he is a moron that is not what the

Bible says you will have trouble in this life you will suffer and if you call yourself a Christian just the very fact that I walk up there in Jerome and walk those streets they spit on me because some of them can't even stand that I'm a Christian so much so that one person says to me hey Christian that's what he calls me he doesn't call me by my name he calls me just Christian if you think being a Christian means you have your best life now that's wrong no you won't you might have your worst life now because trouble will come when you follow Jesus ah but yet it's so worth it because he who endures to the end will be saved you have the glories of the kingdom you have the glory of your savior to look forward to these are superficial they don't want to have trouble or hardship verse 22 the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns this is the one who hears the word so they heard the message she or he heard the message they respond to it but competition rose up within the heart what's the competition

Jesus says the anxiety of this age worries and the deceitfulness of riches competition rises up within the heart remember we talked about that earlier the seed falls and it begins to blossom and grow but it's among those thorns and the thorns are too strong so they they're taking all the nourishments from that plant so it can't survive it's competing for that and it just withers it can't survive because the thorns are too strong riches and the worries and anxieties of this world they can be very strong can't they greed chokes the message of the kingdom greed chokes that message people say to me they misquote it they say money is the root of all evil

I say no no no it's not money it's the love of money that is the root of all evil that's what Paul says in 1st Timothy chapter 6 it's not money it's the love of money because greed chokes the message of the word notice how growth increased with the path and then stony ground and then the thorns

growth increased but none of these produce fruit with the first one I mean the seed's gone but the second and the third there seems to be a growth it increased but neither one of these two were true followers of Jesus and you hear what I said neither one of these two were true followers of Jesus now some today teach and believe in and we do as well eternal security but they believe in and teach in such a way that if any kind of profession is made to receive the gospel well once saved always saved they walk the aisle even though they're living like the devil they made a profession of faith so once saved always saved really

[31:33] I'm sorry that is not how Jesus was depicted by Matthew's gospel true true lasting fruit is one writer puts it like this an indispensable test for being a true genuine disciple of Jesus this is what we mean when we say the phrase lordship salvation you receive Christ not just as your savior but he's my lord he's my master of my life I give him my life that's part of the gospel yet having said that there are also varying degrees of fruit bearing so we have to be careful here fruit bearing crops yield in different degrees so we cannot put some legalistic human standard that all should be a certain way or yield particular amounts that's why

Jesus says some hundred fold some sixty some thirty we're all at different levels and all of this takes time I'm not a farmer I grew up in a big city if you want to know about farming ask Donnie Donnie knows about farming he came from Maine and did farming for a long time it takes time right Donnie plants trees take time to grow and some of you have family you yourselves grew up in farms you know about that some of you might be green thumbs too I'm a purple or brown thumb so I touch dies so anyways plants take time to grow so so we embrace the fact that this speaks about truly taking in the gospel kingdom message and understanding it so it will produce fruit real true fruit but we also believe there's varying degrees of that fruit verse 23 and the one of whose seed was sown on the good soil this is the one who hears the word and notice and understands it fruit is produced here he indeed bears fruit and produces some a hundred fold some sixty and some thirty genuine discipleship a true

Jesus follower a real Christian obeys the Lord Jesus because she or he loves the Lord Jesus you love him you're committed to him he means the world to you I'd rather have Jesus than anything in this world she or he knows the Savior and he knows them the person heard the word of the kingdom and understood it and they produced fruit now obviously as you read this and the interpretation of this Jesus interprets the parable Jesus was the seed sower right but the ultimate application is us and our proclamation of the gospel word we are the sowers but also personally in our own response to Jesus there's two aspects to this one that we are the ones who are the sowers we're sowing the seed but also in our own response personally in our own lives will we remain faithful to the gospel only time will tell how do we explain unbelief this helps us to decipher it we must faithfully proclaim the gospel word of the kingdom but must realize few truly grasp it because of hard-heartedness persecution worldliness and satanic opposition remember keep in mind the problem is not the seed or even the sower the problem lies in the heart the soil and yes

I'm sure that we can do better at giving people the gospel of course we can but there's times where you just can't go when you're giving somebody the gospel right and all of a sudden you're like wow you know they respond and you're like wow that wasn't me it wasn't my words right because God's good because the problem is not the sower the problem is definitely not the seed it's not the word it's the heart where's the heart there's three factors that hinder the reception of the word Satan persecution and greed that's that's a one writer puts it great way to sum it up Satan steals the word because the heart is hardened by sin and by God's purposes God's purpose of hardening that person's heart persecution or trouble shakes the person who only had an emotional response she or he had no root in the truth so these are the things that hinder word reception the evil one and what he does the hardness of heart persecution because you're a Christian and trouble and also greed greed chokes out the gospel word because following

Jesus means one gives up the stuff and fame of this world because when push comes to shove people want stuff not Jesus we must come to grips with the fact that some people will not listen some will be superficial and some will be preoccupied with the stuff of this world the fact that we're here that's just the grace of God so I told you in the beginning I wanted this to turn it more on its head in a positive direction so I want to end the message with three warnings for us putting a negative but really thinking of it in the positive be warned first beware of allowing your heart to grow cold and hardened to

[38:51] God when life doesn't go your way even pray you can pray God keep my heart soft to your word beware of allowing your heart to grow cold it's easy to do life happens things don't go the way you want it to go which is probably 99.9% of the time don't allow your heart to harden to God another warning beware beware beware of having only an emotional superficial response but unwilling to have a deeper understanding of God's kingdom when persecution or trouble comes because of following

Jesus in other words are you just merely a surfacy Christian let yourself go deeper let yourself go deeper in the word let yourself go deeper in your relationship with Jesus allow yourself to open to open yourself to the truths of God's word things that you thought you never would have understood initially whoa let yourself do that beware of only having an emotional superficial response which is so easy in our Christian culture to just be cheesy Christians are you a surfacy Christian last beware of allowing worldly stature and riches to attract you and the truth and the savior you once loved come to nothing or the short version in other words you end up loving money or stuff more than Jesus your savior beware of that beware of riches and the attraction of this world this way John says that right in 1st John chapter 2 don't love the world and the things that are in this world so they can attract us and draw us in and remember it choked it you won't win this passage was perfect for us to celebrate the Lord's Supper just fit for celebrating the Lord's Supper because what I wanted us to do the trajectory is a reminder recounting the gospel to yourself I put this up here earlier I'll put it up again let's remind ourselves of Jesus death for all our sins our total omission and confession of our sins our humble repentance of our sins before him our trust in Christ and his work for us and our love for him recount the gospel to yourself let it create let it engender intimacy between you and your

God the thing that glues you to Jesus is the gospel it's Jesus himself let's renew our commitment to Jesus our Savior once again if you're not a Christian this is for you to observe you get to observe physical tangible gospel truth the bread represents his body the juice represents his shed blood we would encourage you not to partake of this if you're not a Christian it's for Christians people who love Jesus right and if you're here you say I'm not a member of this church look if you come from a church of like faith and practice and we're Baptists so we believe you should be baptized by immersion partake of the Lord's supper with us join us as we celebrate it and if you're here you're a Christian and there's something you have against someone else and you've not gone to reconcile with this person and it's one thing to try and reconcile you can't reconcile you just have okay I'm just going to let it go that's just the way it is it's another thing if you have not gone to reconcile with them probably best for you not to partake of the elements wait go reconcile with that person and then come the next time we celebrate the Lord's supper but we will remind ourselves of the gospel we will examine our hearts right there'll be repentance there'll be brokenness and there'll be joyful celebration that there's forgiveness of all our sins in Jesus Christ and the father loves us in his son so what I want you to do please take these few moments of just silence let yourself reflect and think and ponder on the things we've seen from God's word recount the gospel to yourself take these few moments to do that and then we'll sing about

[44:55] Git now to do to do this word beg it tang and hang to hold together■ go ahead and y and show back back to