



# BEIJING INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

## INTRODUCTION

This study guide will be most helpful if you work through it slowly with an open Bible, looking up all the references. Grab some friends and do it together!



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# KINGDOM

# STORIES

PARABLES THAT  
INFURIATE OR INSPIRE



## Parables

## INTRO

משל

HEBREW mā·shāl'

## Parable

παραβολή

GREEK pä-rä-bo-lā'

Read the Following Verses:

Ezekiel 17:1-10

Speak a **parable** to the house of Israel; say, Thus says the Lord God: A great eagle with great wings and long pinions, rich in plumage of many colors, came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar...

Hebrews 9:1-10

By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (which is **symbolic** for the present age).

Matthew 13:10-11

“Why do you speak to them in **parables**?” He answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

*In your own words, what is a parable?*

Can you think of any modern day parables?

### Important things to remember about parables:

1

A parable is a simple word picture (analogy) teaching a spiritual lesson.



*Why use a parable instead of just saying it plainly?*

2

Every parable has one (often ONLY one) main idea that it is teaching.



*What is the main idea in today's parable?*

3

A parable's purpose is to hide truth to some and reveal truth to others. (See *Matthew 13:10-11*)



*Why would Jesus want to hide truth?  
(See also Prov. 25:2)*

4

Characters and items in a parable should not be allegorized more than the intention of the author.

#### Over Allegorizing

#### The Good Samaritan



Traveller



Jerusalem



Priest



Inn

Adam

Heaven

The Law

The Church

## The Parable of the Soils

*What are the main pictures in this parable and what do they represent?*

**1.**

SOWER

*Does Jesus explain the sower?*

**2.**

SEED

*See Matthew 13:19*

**3.**

SOIL

*See Matthew 13:19, 20-21, 22, 23*



*What is the one difference in each story?*



*What does this teach us about the Kingdom?*



### THE PATH

The Reaction	The Reason
Does not understand.	Satan has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts.
Does not receive.	They have closed their eyes and hearts (See 13:15)



*Do you know people like this?  
(Think of people in the Bible and in your life that fit this category)*



*What has to happen before they can be changed by the Gospel?*



## THE ROCKY GROUND

The Reaction	The Reason
Understands wrongly.	Believes Jesus solves all your problems.
Receives with joy.	Tribulation or Persecution because of the Word.
Falls Away	No Root

John 16:33

Acts 14:22



*Do you know people like this?  
(Think of people in the Bible and in your life that fit this category)*



*How can we prepare (ourselves and others) for persecution and troubles?*



*Have you ever experienced tribulation or persecution as a Christian? If no, do you think you ever will? Do you know people who have?*



## THE THORNS

The Reaction	The Reason
Understands wrongly.	Believes Jesus is part of life, but not all of life.
Proves unfruitful	Pursuit of worldly pleasure and money choke the Word.

Matt. 13:22

*Cares of the World*

**μέριμνα** me'-rēm-nä

*Distractions*



*Do you know people like this?  
(Think of people in the Bible and in your life that fit this category)*

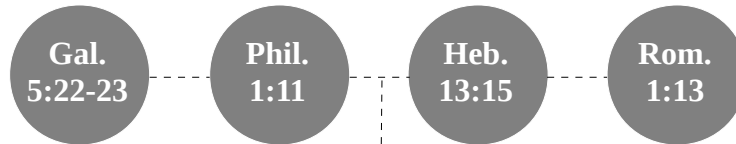


*What distractions can keep us from Jesus?*



## GOOD SOIL

The Reaction	The Reason
<p>Understands the TRUE Gospel.</p> <p>Bears fruit a hundred fold, sixty, and thirty.</p>	<p>Sees Jesus as he truly is.</p>



Spirit Fruit

Ministry Fruit

**Καρπός** kār-po's

Fruit

- Q
 What fruit do Christians produce?
- Q
 Why do some Christians produce more fruit than others?
- Q
 What are some things you can do this week to allow God to grow even more fruit in your life?

What is the one **BIG** idea in this parable?

It seems that **understanding** the gospel is REALLY important. What do you think the fourth soil understood that the other soils did not?

***Offer a prayer in response to what the Lord taught you today.***

What can we learn about the fourth soil from Colossians 1?

FIGHTS AGAINST

1

It (the gospel) is bearing fruit and **increasing**...since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.



Should we expect the fruit to ever be increasing in our lives?

2

Bearing fruit in every good work and **increasing** in the knowledge of God.

Soil 1



Is your knowledge of God increasing? If so, how?

3

May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy. Giving thanks..

Soil 2



Where does strength for endurance come from? How does this work practically?

4

He has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Soil 3



Instead of looking to worldly pleasures and riches, where does Paul point our attention to?

Bad Soil	Good Soil
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No Desire



Desire Joy & Not Suffering



Desire Things of the World



Desire Jesus

EXTRA  
DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS

1

Why do you think Jesus told this parable? Is it a warning? Is it a comfort? Is it a challenge?

2

Which of these things is most present in your own heart? What is the condition of your soil?

3

Why does Jesus quote Isaiah 6? What can we learn about this parable from that passage?

4

In the Old Testament *mā·shāl'* (*parables*) are mostly used by prophets. Do you think there is any important connection with the prophets who spoke parables and Jesus?

5

Jesus doesn't talk about the farmer tilling the soil (This is NOT the main idea). Tilling usually took place before or just after scattering the seeds. What are some ways we can till our own ground? What are some ways we can till the soil of others?

6

Read through John 15 and discuss the importance of staying connected to Jesus in order to produce fruit. How do we stay connected to him?



**SERMON  
NOTES:**

**I**NTRODUCTION

How can we grow in our relationship with Jesus? We can grow by following the letters of GROW.

**1**

**Groundwork (break up the ground).**

*How will you go about breaking up the hard ground that may be in your heart?*

**2**

**Rays and rain (good and bad, both are needed).**

*Can you think of trials and tribulation that have helped you mature in Christ?*

**3**

**Oppose erosion.**

*What are the ways you can oppose erosion?*

**4**

**Weed the weeds.**

*What weeds need to be removed from your heart? How will you go about removing them?*

**C**HALLENGE

Be the soil that the Gospel grows in. Go out with confidence that the seeds you plant will find its way onto good ground. Help those who are like soil 2 and 3 to become like soil 4.