

Bible Studies for Life: May 30

Trust God to Work • Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23

By Don Schuman



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The parable of the soils is a lesson for both those who sow the message of God's salvation and who respond to the message. Both actions require trust in God to work in hearts. The sower trusts God to use the message to bring His salvation to hearers, and the hearer must trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to receive salvation.

God Works through Sowers (13:3-8). God works in hearts who trust Him to work in them. In a following parable, Jesus is the sower. In this parable, anyone who sows the message of salvation is the sower. Christ works in and through His followers to sow the seed of the message.

Salvation is a gift of God (Rom 6:23) and not of our works (Eph. 2:9). Salvation is God's work in the past through Christ's sacrifice, death, and resurrection, His work in the present is to convict hearts that today is the day of salvation, and His work in the future is when believers will be glorified.

God works through sowers and in the hearts of hearers. We cannot save anyone, but we can lead others to the One who can

save.

Hard Hearts Reject God's Work (13:18-22). Spiritual ears must be open to hearing, understanding, and receiving the message (13:9). Jesus describes three ways in which hearts reject God's work in them.

– First, the *tempter* Satan confuses the message before some hearts and minds understand the Gospel. Three common tactics of the devil in which he discourages hearts to receive the Gospel are: (1) not necessary, (2) not worthy, and (3) not yet.

Some hearts are deceived in thinking that faith in Jesus Christ is not necessary to go to heaven (#1). Their good works outweigh their bad, or at least, the bad works of others. Others are deceived into thinking they have committed sins that God cannot forgive and cannot be saved (#2). Most hearts experience the temptation to wait for some other time to believe (#3). Too many wait until too late.

– Secondly, *troubles* discourage other hearts and they abandon the faith before it takes root in the heart. They want a religion that is all joy and peace without the tests and trials that make one spiritually strong and mature.

– Thirdly, *treasures* and *tensions* overwhelm still other hearts who hear the message. Their baubles rob them of time in the Bible. Their time is invested in worldly securities instead of in the Savior's security. They love prosperity more than the promises of God.

Far too many church members fall into one of these three categories. Were it not so, our churches would be filled to overflowing each Sunday. Many churches have a shockingly low percentage of their total church rolls who attend regularly. Poor soils in these poor souls.

We do not know how God will work in the hearts of others, so

we must tell everyone and leave the results up to God's work. We sow and God gives the increase.

God Works Abundantly in Fruitful Hearts (13:23). Just as the seed is different from the plant it produces, so are believers after they are saved. Hearts who receive the Gospel message are transformed and produce spiritual fruit for the kingdom of Christ. This fruit is spiritual self-maturity and a witness for Christ.

Sharing the message of Jesus Christ is one evidence of God's work in the believer. Some use the Roman Road collection of verses (Rom. 3:10,23; 5:8; 6:23; 10:9-13) to share the message. Others use Eph. 2:1-10.

Resources are available at <https://www.mbc.org/resources/how-do-i/become-a-christian/>. I like the PDF download for sharing the message with children. Appropriate to this lesson is the drawing of a flower that illustrates the sprouting of the believer as God's work grows in them. Let God sow the seed of the message through you and trust the Word of God to take root in the hearts of the hearers.

Trust God to finish the work in you as you follow Christ and partner with Him in the Gospel. Philippians 1:3-6 (CSB) states: "I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." May the Lord work abundantly in our hearts as we share the message of salvation with the world.

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