

THE PRODIGAL SOWER

OR What a Way to Run a Farm

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Series Theme: *Jesus reveals a Father who is worthy of your trust.*

***In Jesus' current reign we sow, water & see only early fruit.***

**ONE: What are the kingdom questions?**

Matthew 12

Why is the church often such a mess?

Why is the world such a mess?

**TWO: Who is the kingdom answer (and how does he rule)?**

Matthew 13

The answer is always a WHO.

Why parables? a veiled answer turns away wrath; the good soil is not always evident; the fruit that lasts is not seen in a mere sprout.

Jesus then and now prepares disciples to expand his rule and reign. A patient-yet-holy Father is seen through his Son and his sons.

The Father's forbearance restrains retaliation by those who know justice will yet come.

Matthew 11<sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERACTION AND STUDY

The Parables of the Soils and Sower:

Look at the relational context between Jesus and the religious leaders in Matt. 12.14, 12.30, & also 12:40-45 where he says "something greater than..." has come, and they fail to see. He calls this generation evil. He quotes Isaiah 6.9-10 to give historical context from Israel's history to his use of parables.

1. Read Matthew 13.10-17. **Given the context above why would Jesus Christ want at the same time to reveal truth to some (his disciples) and hide truth from others (the crowds/leaders)?**
2. Given this context of his increasing rejection by the authorities **how does Jesus' explanation of the four soils (13.18-23) prepare his disciples to think about and evaluate those who respond to his/their message?** (Be sure to consider Jesus' redefinition of God's family: 12.46-50.)
3. How important is it **that we see that God's now present kingdom in Jesus Christ (read *kingdom* as kingship/rule) is "something greater" than any other person or historical event (see Mat 12.6, 12:40-45)?** What things tend to keep our hearts from owning this deeply & publically?

The parable of the sower is followed immediately by *The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field* (13.24-30, and the explanation to the disciples: 13.36-43). Jesus says the sower is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the seed becomes the sons of the kingdom & the weeds are sons of the evil one. The Son of man sows as broadly (*the world*) as the prodigal sower who inefficiently allowed seed to scatter on path, shallow soil and among thorns.

4. **Why do you think God is willing to work in such a seemingly inappropriate and inefficient way?**
5. **How does the way God sows his Son into the world match up with this approach?**
6. **Has this approach been good for your coming to faith in Christ?**
7. **What kind of family member are you to Jesus?** How and where are you sowing the word of Jesus' for-now loving reign? How's your patience for purity in his church and purity in his kingdom rule?