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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1994

I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES

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Study #1

A Sower Went Forth to Sow

Reading: Matthew 13:1-23

You know my beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ, life is very busy for us, isn't it? Full of business, full of things to do, places to go, leisure time, family affairs, all kinds of things to do, all kinds of activities to become involved in. We find that sometimes, the activities of the truth are difficult to fit into all of our lives. We find that the truth becomes a slice of the pie, as it were, the life that we live. And really, what it ought to be for us, Christadelphians, is the whole pie, and every aspect of what we do in life, is something that is done, within and affected by the truth. Now when we look at what the Lord Jesus Christ is talking about, in Matthew chapter 13, we read a number of parables, we should through these things, in the readings, their simplicity seems to just tell us that what He is showing to these unlearned men and women assembled before Him, the simple stories to teach very simple lessons. As Bro. Colin Hollamby, pointed out yesterday, it is the simple lessons, are the most difficult for us to apply. Those are the ones, that because of their very simplicity we leave by the wayside. It is important for us to realize what the Lord Jesus Christ was doing at this time.

The Lord Jesus Christ was a very active man. He set us an example for activity that is utterly remarkable, difficult to fully comprehend everything that He did, and everything that He said, and all that was said and done, was done in perfection with NO SIN! That mind that was so beautiful and rich and pure and clean. The mind of God that He had, as Bro. Colin pointed out to us, beautiful point last night, the very emotions that He found, were His Father's emotions. What kind of man was that ! And yet, brethren and sisters, He had a body just like yours and mine. He got tired, He got run down, He got exhausted. At the end of this week we will be physically tired, though spiritually rejuvenated, the Lord Jesus Christ was no different in that way to us. His body was like ours. His mind was like God's. Well, look at what He did in one single day, brethren especially, arranging brethren in particular, look at what He did in one day!

He starts off the day in the morning, Matthew tells us, chapter 12, in the house. In the house in the morning they are trying to have a meal. Mark chapter 3 fills in the details for us, verse 19, it tells us that 'the press, the people that were there, pushing in to surround Him, were so great that He couldn't even eat His food. So there He is, first thing in the morning, particularly, quietly, private time that we all have as families and

individuals. He had no private time; there the crowds are pressing in on Him, and they bring people that need to be healed. He can't eat His food, He has to drop whatever He's doing that is for Himself, and He has to heal people. And there are a number of people that come that are healed. Now just picture it in your mind, this quiet man in His house with His brethren, trying to have a meal. And a multitude of people, and they are distressed, they're anxious, they're weeping because they're bringing their loved ones. Your father, your mother, your brother, your sister, they're bringing those loved ones with illnesses that can kill them, or the most terrible, terrible physical condition, and there in that stressful situation, Jesus heals those that are ill with that divine calm and presence of mind and **UNSELFISHNESS**. He extends Himself beyond His own needs to look after their needs, arranging brethren. He had no time for Himself, He looked after their needs.

It's stressful enough in that situation alone, but in the same place there are Pharisees, and the Pharisees come along and they see, they see what He's doing in Matthew 12. They see the healing, there is the healing hand of God. God's power through a man. He's making the sick well again. And what do they say, they say, 'well, He's doing these things by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils', all of their warped and corrupted doctrine being brought in to destroy a man whose activities they are not willing to accept. Christ says to them 'Look, you can say what you like about Me, but when you speak against the clearly evidenced power of God, there is no forgiveness for that'. And so, there is the additional stress and pressure of dealing with constant hostility and opposition. So there, He hasn't had the time to eat His food; He's healing those who need to be healed, calming, nurturing and encouraging the broken hearted. Dealing with those that strongly opposed Him and then, what else happens after that, brethren and sisters?

At the end of that period, His mother and His brethren come, to take Him away because they believe that He is beside Himself. His own family believed that He was insane. Put yourself in His place. They come and there are those that are with Jesus, his disciples, and they say, 'Look, your mother and your brethren are outside and they want to talk to you?' And He knows, He knows what they want to do and what they're thinking. Those, who of all people should have known who He was, and what He was there for and He says that, 'My mother and my brethren are those that do the will of My Father'. So then, there is the family pain that He has to bear, and all of these things together, and then, He goes out of the house to the seaside to teach the multitudes. And this is all in one day, brethren, one day! **ONE DAY OF STRESS AND PRESSURE AND TOIL**, and He goes out to the sea of Galilee and teaches the multitudes. Did it end there? No, it didn't, it didn't end there, brethren.

The next thing that he does is, after He teaches them all afternoon, all afternoon, then He leaves in the evening towards night, with His brethren, on a boat. He crosses over the Sea of Galilee, and do you remember what He did, when He was in that boat? He slept. When I was a child I use to think, well, the Lord Jesus was just pretending to sleep, so that the disciples would learn a lesson about believing in God, believing in Him, when the storm came up. But, that's not the case, brethren and sisters, here was

a man, who in one day of His life, had given everything that was in Him. Everything, there was nothing to be held back, it came pouring out in loving service to His God, for their good. That's what He did. There, all of the stormy waters, all of the thunder and lightning, all of the rain, and the fear and anxiety that His brethren felt, and they wake Him up. And what does He awake to find? Food? Comfort? There's a storm going on and his brethren are utterly faithless. So, He awakes to faithlessness, He awakes to more stress, more pressure, more trouble to deal with, and then He calms them by calming the storm. Gets across to the area where the Gaderene demoniac is, the man who was possessed with many devils, many demons. The madman; and He heals him. He heals him. This man in this terrible state of mind, goes out there and heals him, and then, that's the end of His day, at least what we know about it from the record, then He goes back home across the Sea of Galilee. Now, just think about that brethren. ONE DAY'S LABOUR. Look at the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, the greatest sacrifice that He gave. But, everyday of His life, brethren, was SACRIFICE. That was one single day's LABOUR; one day. We're not even told the whole thing of what happened, because, no doubt, what really happened is condensed so we're given just a skeletal structure of what He really did do and said on that day. We're given what we need to know, now we can better understand when John says, 'if everything that Christ did and said was written down, the world could not hold all the books'. If that was one day's LABOUR, now just think about that, think of how much we can do as individuals. We've got the same body that He had, we got the same inherent inbuilt tendency towards selfishness that He successfully conquered, we've got the same proneness to sin that He had. We don't have His perfectness of mind, but as Bro. Colin pointed out to us yesterday, we build it with the Word of truth, if we listen to it.

We want to hear what it has to say, so after His example, there is a lot more that we can do in our ecclesias. On our arranging boards, we're beginning to hear words like, 'Can we get this all rapped up, it's late and I want to get home'. In activities that involve us volunteering our services to work within our ecclesias, 'people say, look, I've done enough; I'm finished, I've done my part'. There was an ecclesial hall that was built in another part of North America, that consisted of a large ecclesia. That was the ecclesia that would meet in this new hall; well, the hall was being built by brethren mostly. A contractor did the major structure and then brethren did the work. Now, this ecclesia has close to a 100 people in it, 5 people, 5 people worked on that hall. 5 people, brethren, 5 people! because the others said, 'I gave the money I needed to give, I've done my bit'. The Lord Jesus Christ, in one day's activities, let's be strengthened and encouraged to do different. Let's follow His example, not follow what we think is logical and acceptable and reasonable. Christadelphians, of all people, should be people who are use to going beyond the norm of what is expected of them, because we have a man, whose example was an example of utter, complete, 100% devotion and self-sacrifice. And in that one day's LABOUR that we see, we have an example that we shall never forget. Let's be motivated and encouraged by it.

So, there He is, brethren and sisters, amidst this busy day, at the Sea of Galilee. It says at the beginning, 'The same day, chapter 13 verse 1 of Matthew, 'went Jesus out the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto

Him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore', they're not sitting, that means there's standing room only on the beach. The other records tell us that people had come from all the cities around, not just from Galilee, or the territory of Galilee, they had come from all the outlying areas, to hear this man speak. And there's standing room only on that beach, and the beach forms a natural amphitheatre, so that He on the boat pushed out away into the water, looks at them and speaks, and His voice resonates, so that they can all hear what He's saying. And He used, brethren, that tongue that Bro. Colin talked about, that most wonderful and most deadly part of our bodies. He used it to teach for the good of those that were there. 'He went into a ship and sat, and the whole multitude stood on the shore', and the other records tell us that there were scribes there who had come down from Jerusalem, they had come down to hear this man speak. This is the man, who had given the Sermon on the Mount, people called it. It was spoken in such a way that everything that they were used to, everything they'd learned, everything they knew about, everything that was traditional, was turned upside down. He took their world and turned it upside down in His gentile words on that mount. Everything they thought was normal, you hate your enemy, you make sure it's an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. He had taken it and turned it completely upside down. They'd never heard words like that before, EVER. Never, had they heard that kind of teaching and the news of this man and His teaching had gone hurtling back to Jerusalem, so they sent scribes down, men schooled in the law, who knew every jot a tittle of the traditional interpretation of the Law of Moses and the prophets and the poetical writings. They knew all of these things. It was their business, so they came down to see who is this man. Who does He think He is? Now, they had heard about the teachings that He had given, and here they are, they're waiting for profound depth of exposition. They're waiting for great richness of detail, and intellectual concepts coming through that they felt sure, would to them, be challenging. They were ready for it. So, there, is this man sitting in the boat and they're waiting for Him to open His mouth. They're waiting for His great learning, for His inexplicable richness of exposition. What does He do? What is the first thing that comes out of His mouth? And what are they expecting?

He says, 'Look on, A farmer went out to sow some seeds'. To the scribes sitting there, it would have been like someone had taken a piece of wood and hit them on the head. They would have felt that this was an utterly wasted trip. Who is this man? What is this nonsense? A sower went forth to sow. But, He continued, You see, when He looked at the multitudes that were there, He realized that it was now time to sift through those multitudes, because the truth is not accepted by multitudes, the truth is accepted by small groups of people. And He knew that. He knew these people were all following Him for the wrong reason, and so He had to sift them. So, He begins and says, 'Look, a sower went forth to sow', He's looking at them on the side of the Sea of Galilee, and right above them there are little areas of ground, patches of farm land. They weren't very good pieces of farm land, and the farmers for the most part were poor men. They had their little patches of ground, and the way you could tell one farmer's piece of ground from another, is that there was a hard packed little pathway in-between separating each little parcel of ground. It was hard packed; it was like stone that's how hard it was, and right by the people, above them, there were the patches of ground.

And He looks up at the patches and He looks at the multitudes and He said, 'A sower went forth to sow', went forth, it's the same word that's used in verse 1, where Jesus went forth, He went out of the house, verse 1. Same thing, so the sower is Jesus. The sower went out of the house, the sower went forth to sow, and there he is sowing his grain. 'And when he sowed some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up; Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth; And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away'. You might think to yourself, they might have thought to themselves, 'what kind of farmer is this? The farmer has his satchel around him and he has his grain in his satchel, and he's taking his right hand and he's throwing it out onto his land. This is a very careless farmer, because that seed was precious. The seed was what was left over from the previous year's crop. So, he's a careless farmer; he's taking the seed and just wasting it; he's just throwing it all over the place, even though he knows which patch of ground is what kind of ground, he's still throwing the seed willy-nilly across that area of land.

Was it because he was careless, brethren and sisters? Not at all. He wasn't a careless farmer, he was a liberal sower of seed, rather than just being a careless, foolish man, this is a man with a heart that is utterly generous, full of love, and is prepared to deliver that seed to all kinds of ground without distinguishing between them. You and I might distinguish sometimes when we're preaching the truth to people that we know. We might see somebody who is fairly flinty hearted and say, 'Well, I don't think I'm going to give that person a pamphlet or talk to him, in fact, we did it on the way here. When we were going in our car into a particular gas station, there was a very foul looking individual who served us at the gas station, and Gracie's voice piped up from the back seat, 'Have you given him a pamphlet?' I didn't, but you see, that was wrong, I should have given him a pamphlet. I will when we get back home.

Christ wasn't like that. He sows the seed liberally, to all kinds of ground. Look, what it says as it goes on further, 'Some of it fell by the wayside'; the wayside is the path, the path that is leading around the little plot of land. If it falls by the wayside, it can't grow because the ground is too hard packed, and it says, 'birds of the air came and devoured them'. One of the other records says that feet just trampled over them; trampled over the seeds. Something worthless. The emphasis is not on the seeds or on the sower, it is on the soil. The kind of soil that there is. The kind of hatching ground that exists, that this seed is falling on top of. That's the emphasis. He goes on and says, 'some fell upon stony places where they have not much earth, and straightway they sprung up because they had no deepness of earth'. Now, what does that mean? You could understand the idea that the seed would fall onto hard packed earth of the pathway and not spring up. It couldn't, it couldn't penetrate anything. It was too hard packed. What about the fact that it falls on stony ground and springs up because it's on stony ground? Doesn't seem to make any sense? unless you live in a place like Manitoulin Island in Ontario, or Newfoundland, where the ground is rocky. What He's saying is that there was rock, right close to the surface, hard rock, so that the layer of soil that was on top of this rock was really very thin, very thin skin of rock. Now, the sower is out, doubtless, sowing in the morning, that's when sower's sow their seed. And the

rock has retained the heat from the previous day, so it's warm and the thin film of soil that's on top of it, is quickly warmed because of how thin it is on top of that warm rock. The soil is moist because it is early in the morning and there's dew there. That's when the sowing would take place.

So, you have a combination of soil, warmth and moisture, so because of that, because of the fact that the soil is stony, right on top of stone, well, the seeds spring up instantaneously, instantaneously. But, it says 'that as soon as the sun was risen, then they were scorched, because they had no root and they withered away, so these seedlings are hatched in thin soil. They can't penetrate anything. The root can't go anywhere; it hits rock and so the sun scorches it. It cannot retain any moisture. As soon as that heat comes up from the sky, it's gone. That's the end of it.

He goes on further and says, verse 7, 'Some fell among thorns and the thorns sprung up and choked them'. An interesting thing! So there is soil that is contaminated, soil that already has something in it that's going to compete fiercely with the seed that falls on it. When it says, 'and the thorns sprung up and choked them', it means choked them together, so all the thorns came up as though they were conspiring together, they enfold over the seed so that no light can penetrate through to the seeds and choke them. It's a process that takes time, but that's what happens to those seeds. That soil had the potential to give life to the seed, but it had thorns. It had contaminates in it; it had things in it that were already growing and that by their very nature, thorns, thorns grow faster than regular wheat, barley or grain. That is the way that they have been created. These are things that grow naturally, quickly, aggressively and destructively, naturally. That's what happens with thorns, and so those poor seedlings, well, they haven't got a chance and they die.

He says, 'But other fell into good ground and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold and some thirty fold', so this is good soil. He's sowing liberally throughout all the different areas, not really, looking and thinking, well! that soil is not going to yield. He knows it but He does it anyway, because that sower is Christ. God had sent Him to send that message out liberally to all, to all who had ears to hear. Brethren and sisters, verse 9 says, 'He who hath ears to hear, let him hear'; it reminds us of Deuteronomy doesn't it? 'Hear O Israel', listen. It reminds us of the letters of Jesus to the seven ecclesias, doesn't it? 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear'. You see, when Jesus sat in that boat and looked out He saw many kinds of people, many kinds of faces. There were the hard packed faces upon which His word made no impact nor impression. There were other ones who lit up instantaneously, they thought that this was the most wonderful thing they'd ever heard. Surface seed enthusiasm! There were the others who sat there and listened to and thought upon and who moved by what He said, or as Bro. Colin pointed out last night, this is important, brethren and sisters, felt so uncomfortable because of what He said, that it made them question who they were and what they believed. Because they were made to feel uncomfortable, they couldn't sit right with themselves, after what He said. He saw those faces and He knew which ones were which, He knew who was who, He was fully aware of the kinds of people who were listening to what He was saying. And these are simple things, let's

not look at us and them; them out there in Galilee and us here 2000 years later. We're just like that! Just think of yourself in any talk that you ever heard or ever listened to. Sometimes we're hard packed ground, sometimes we're good soil.

He goes on, 'He that hath ears to hear', if you've got ears, listen with them. HEAR! be moved by what I say. And then the disciples came and said unto Him, 'why sneakiest Thou unto them, them, them, in parables?' Did the disciples understand, brethren and sisters? They didn't, but they're human beings just like you and just like me, and they couldn't bring themselves to admit that they didn't understand themselves. So rather than putting the spotlight on their own ignorance, they put the spotlight on the people's ignorance to whom He was speaking. Why are you teaching them in parables? They didn't understand; they wanted to, but they didn't. We might find it difficult to relate to that until we think, maybe of the fact that there is no Trinity. Yes, there is no Trinity, yet if we were called upon, most of us, to explain that and to defend it to somebody else, we would be hard pressed, most of us. As Bro. Colin talked yesterday about understanding the divinity of Christ, the mind that He had. He wasn't God, but His mind was God's mind. Well, that's something that we don't always understand, we don't always know how to defend. We have the capacity to, if we wanted to, which is the wonderful thing, but we don't always understand. But, rather than admit something like that, we sometimes, are more likely to highlight someone else's ignorance in that or another area. So these men are people that we can relate to. The disciples came and said unto Him, 'why sneakiest Thou unto them in parables?' He answered and said unto them, 'Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, unto them it's not given'. There's no room for pride, brethren and sisters, the knowledge of God and what He is and who He is, of His purpose, of all of His ways, of whatever is in scripture, that knowledge is not natural to us. It doesn't well up from inside of us through our own intellect, it's something that is given to us. It is given to us through the Word, we sit and we read and we think about and meditate upon and study God's Word. It is given to us by God working in our lives, arranging circumstances that we come to the knowledge of who He is, of what faith is, of what we are made of, and of what our future will be. It's given to us, whatever knowledge we have. It didn't come to us naturally from ourselves, so there's no room for pride, and in our community, regrettably, we can overstress intellectual understanding of the truth, and under stress the practical living out of that truth. They both must go hand in hand. In our world in North America, we don't like to study; it takes time and it means work. That's something we don't always want to invest, but also at the same time when we do study, we can study in such a way that it is amassing of facts and details so we can wend our way through all of the intricacies of the Law of Moses, every type and shadow that exists. So that we can understand every detail of prophecy and some will get out of hand, what they even take that and change it into something else. What when it comes to taking those things and changing our lives through it, well! that's something that we have to work on.

So, brethren, He says, 'that whatever knowledge you have is given to you', it's been given to you to understand these things, but not to them. Now, how was it given to them? Well, right there He told them, He told them what it meant. He didn't tell the

whole multitude, so there must have been a break in the speaking. He must have taught them for a while and then have taken a short break, at which point in time, the disciples came and asked Him what does this mean? and how is it given to them to understand? He tells them, 'through the Word of Christ, through the Word of God, it is given to people to understand what is required of us'. And He tells them, 'For whosoever hath to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath'. What does that mean? brethren and sisters, what does it mean ' what we have will be taken away from us, and that if we have not, but if we have it shall be given to us for more? It seems unfair doesn't it? What did He say earlier in verse 9, 'he that hath ears to hear, let him hear', so there's a willingness and a desire to understand, for whoever wants to know, whoever wants to understand, God requires of him and what God has taught to us in His pages of scriptures. Whoever has a willing heart and yearns after knowledge, to that man knowledge will be given, to that woman knowledge will be given. 'But, whoever hath not, whatever he hath shall be taken away, even what he has.'

Now, just think of the Pharisees, brethren. Scribes, they have the law and all of its intricacies. They had all of the traditional interpretations of what that law entailed, and what was to be applied in the daily living of the Jews. RULES AND REGULATIONS! they had all of that. They had the temple, with all of its pageantry, all of its colour, all of the festivals, noise and the thunder. They had all of the psalms that were sung, all of the high feasts that were held, the building of booths in the feast of tabernacles. They had all of these things. They had sacrifices without end, all of this wonderful, wonderful heritage, and even when they had all of that, everything they thought was 'something' was taken away from them. It was; It was all taken away from them. The city they thought was the most glorious city on the face of the earth, was plowed into the ground. The law was done away with by this man who was superior to it. He fulfilled it and brought it to completion. All the rituals associated with that law came to an end. The very veil of the temple was rent and all of their traditions were lost, in fact, all of their money was lost. All of their careers that they spent so much time in, were lost. All the houses and lands and investments they had were lost, whatever they put their hearts into, that was not truly connected to their God and His Son, all of that was lost.

There's a message here for us too, isn't there, brethren and sisters? He goes on further and says, chapter 13, verse 13, 'Therefore speak I to them in parables', brethren, I know that there are multitudes out there, what I'm doing now is a work of sifting. To you it's been given and now I shall give you that understanding to know what I'm talking about; but to them it's not given, because they must break through those words to come to desire, to listen to, they must have a heart that's desirous of learning. They want to understand what God requires of them and what I'm teaching them and if they want those things, it will be given to them likewise, but if they don't, it won't, and even what they have will be taken away from them, 'therefore speak I to them in parables, because they seeing, see not; hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand, and in them is fulfilled the prophesy of Isaiah which says, 'hearing you shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing you shall see and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross (it's fat, it's unheeding) and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes

they have closed lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and should understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them'- that's taken right out, brethren and sisters, right out of the book of Isaiah, isn't it? We know that it's taken out of the book of Isaiah chapter 6, and later on, have a look at that chapter. It's a glorious chapter, it's a chapter in which Isaiah is given a vision of Christ enthroned in His glory. There's a vision of God Manifestation. He sees what it is that God requires of mankind and the man who will fully and perfectly manifest Him before the multitude to follow. And then at the end of that chapter, He talks about the fact that the children of Israel or the Jews, would not even listen to that message. They couldn't be bothered with it. It wasn't important. If it wasn't entertaining, if it didn't as Bro. Colin said, 'pander to their flesh' they weren't interested, because what they were interested in, and what we can be interested in, brethren and sisters, is what is here and now and touch with our hands, and see with our eyes, taste, live-in, drive, spend, invest, and that's what can take up all of our time, all of our concentration. That is what can take our minds away. They wouldn't listen in Isaiah's day, and Jesus said, and Jesus is a man, of whom the vision was seen. This is the man that the vision was all about in Isaiah 6, He says, 'Look, that vision is being fulfilled in these people that you see, these multitudes.' I mean, the disciples think it's great that all of these multitudes are following Him. But, He's saying no, no. I'm teaching them in parables deliberately. The reason they asked that question also, not only because they wanted to take the emphasizes off themselves, was because they were saying to Him, in a careful and guarded way, with the respect they had for Him, 'why are you putting them off? Look, there are multitudes following us, don't make it difficult for them to follow us. Talk to them so they'll understand'. Christ says 'NO'. No, because it is not given to them to understand in that way. They will understand if they want to; it is given to you to understand. They are being sifted by what I'm telling them, and what you read in Isaiah 6, well, that's being fulfilled in those very people you see out there. Be aware of that; they will not listen; they don't want to listen; they will not see because they don't want to see. But, blessed are your eyes, verse 18, 'blessed are your eyes for they see', you know, brethren, they really didn't see. They didn't comprehend; it will be very late in the game after He died and came back before they really understand what the kingdom of God was and who He was and what God was doing through Him, but they desired to see and that's what He loves in them.

'Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear'. Blessed are your eyes because they want to see and understand, blessed are your ears because you want to hear and want to understand, and that's why God loves us. That's why He loves us because we want to understand though we don't always understand, and though we don't always take the time to understand which we ought to. We want to see, we want to hear. That's why we're here! We want to live by His principles, failing and fragile and faulty as we are. That's what we want deep down inside, that's the yearning, that's the illness, that makes us come here as Bro. Colin talked about last night, because we know we're lacking something and we need to have that built in us, we need to be given that strength to continue to desire, to grow in seeing and hearing. Right! 'Verily, Verily, I say unto you, brethren, many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see with your eyes.' They all wanted to see the

Messiah; there He was with them, right in front of them, and not seeing them and to hear those things which you hear and have not heard them. Imagine living in the days of Moses, and having very brief access to the one or two copies of the law as it existed. Imagine how they would have felt if they had all the scripture complete, that is the righteous ones, the ones who struggled in spite of their weakness to follow after their God. Not the ones that fell in the wilderness, but imagine if those righteous ones had this Word that we take for granted, that men died for. We have miracles in our hands, printed copies of God's Word, and we've barely opened them and barely studied them. We barely read them because there is so much else in our lives that takes up all of our concentration, all of our time, all of our leisure, all of our planning.

He says, 'Hear ye then the parable of the sower'; I want you to understand. When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom and understands it not, then cometh the wicked one and catches away that which was sown in his heart.' Whose the wicked one? The wicked one is the same person that is inside of me, standing before you now. Selfishness, human nature personified, the same thing that Christ put to death on the cross, the devil that He slew on the cross. Human nature with all its desire for ease, personal ease, rest, relaxation, time to do what I want to do because, life is so, so full of things for us to do in North America. That's the wicked one, the wicked one comes when the Word is sown in our mind. He takes it away, that what he does, that what I do with myself and catches away that which was sown, where? what's the soil? in his heart. That the ground, it's the heart. 'This is he that receiveth seed by the wayside, so the birds come and take away the seed. It's made no impact on him and the seeds are also trampled under foot, the only thing that makes an impact is his feet on the seed, all other people's feet. In other words, the truth is something that he can take or leave, it's really not all that important to him.

One of the saddest things about our community is that there are people in the truth like that. For someone whose come in from the outside this is devastating sometimes, that there are people who can take or leave the truth. It means nothing to them, they were raised with it, it's something my father's in and my grandfather, well, I'm in it too! The attitude of mind is a 'take it or leave it' attitude, I could partake by coming out on Sunday morning and that's it! That is my sacrifice, that's what I've given. Some of these people are remarkable businessmen. They are intelligent men. They are gifted individuals, men and women, and yet the truth is something that they can take or leave. That one variety of people that was out there in the multitude that He was teaching.

Verse 20, 'But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy, with joy, receiveth it'. He's full of the truth, 'yet, hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.' Well, that remarkable. When persecution or tribulation arises, well, what rose in the parable? The sun. What gives life to seedlings? The sun! Here's an unusual thing brethren and sisters, tribulation and persecution are the light that give life to the truth in our lives. If the truth is an easy thing to live, if it's something that doesn't cause conflicts, or distress or internal conflict inside of ourselves, then the sun really hasn't risen in our lives, and the truth is really not

having an affect. The Lord Jesus Christ is saying that so intricate a part of the life of a believer is trouble, that without it, he's not a believer. Well, that's remarkable for many of us, because doubtless, many of us are scratching around in our heads, well, what kind of trouble have I been through because of the truth? When Paul said all that will live godly in Christ Jesus will have persecution, they will have tribulation, in other words, all who want to live godly lives, are going to have difficulty in their life because of the truth. Well, it still sobers us up quite a bit, doesn't it? Shakes us up and makes us realize, hum! I am being a Christadelphian and am attempting to live the life of a Christadelphian, I'm being honest about who I am and what I am to those around me; my life will not be full of ease and quietness. There will be trouble. There will be difficulty; I will be ostracized by people that I know around me. I will be pushed out from people or by people that I may have been close to once, if I try to live the truth and to speak about it freely. So tribulation, that means pressure, pressure brethren, it's a word that was used of a great stone on a man's chest, that's what it meant. It came to mean the pressure of circumstances on a man, difficulties, trouble. That's the sun rising in my life, so when we go through rough times in the truth, it doesn't mean that the truth is not the truth. It means that we're in the truth when we go through difficulties. Do we have problems with people around us, and sometimes when we have trouble inside, because of holding fast to what is truth, we are just experiencing what Christ said would happen to believers. But, those who are this variety of people, the thin soil variety, well, they can't take that and they leave the truth. Then there are the others brethren, whose lives are full of all kinds of distractions, like you and me, and have difficulty having the truth grow up in our lives and in our hearts as something significant and above everything else, and surrounding everything else instead with thorns of our distractions, crowd around and conspire to choke the truth in our lives.

And finally brethren, there is the good fruit or the good ground, and that is he, verse 23, that heareth the word. He listens because he has ears to hear, and he listens with them, and he applies what he hears in the living of his life, and he understands it and he bears fruit. He doesn't just listen, he understands with the help of the Word. You see, he can't listen if he's not reading his bible, but Christ is not hear to speak to us. And the poor speaking efforts that we all make as brethren, is not enough to sustain us, because all we can do is direct our minds to this. That's all we can do, direct everyone's mind to scripture itself, and so, he who heareth, heareth the words that he is reading because he wants to know, what is the kingdom going to be all about? and how is it going to involve my family? my brethren and sisters? Because he listens, he understands and he bears fruit. It weighs up in his life and creates fruit. What? The fruit of the spirit, the fruit of a life lived upwardly towards God, after the example of that man who gave everything, everyday of His life, following His example of giving. Giving, giving, brethren and sisters, some bring forth an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty, because, it doesn't matter how much we bring forth provided we put in the best effort we are capable of putting in.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. If we want to listen through the course of this bible school, brethren and sisters, we have ample opportunity to listen to many things, have ample opportunity to be inspired and encouraged to change our lives forever.

Let's take the opportunity. Grasp it firm and change, so that we will truly become men and women in the truth.