

## **THE SOWER**

**Matthew 13:1-9 and 18-23**

**Mark 4:1-9 and 13-20, Luke 8:4-8 and 11-15**

### **What is Your Personal Responsibility? Hearing**

#### ***Introduction:***

Early in Jesus' teaching ministry a crowd gathered around Him beside the sea and He stepped into a boat, pushed off, and began to teach. This is an especially effective way to be heard. **(Northwoods example)**

This is a very important parable. How do I know? Mark 4:13 says,

*"And He (Jesus) said to them, 'Do you not understand this parable? And how will you understand all the parables?'"*

Opposition to Jesus was mounting. His followers were materialistic, more interested in getting healed and fed than in growing spiritually. His disciples were getting discouraged. Many were following but few were committing.

Jesus explains the reason that understanding this parable is so important. It teaches us about our responsibility in the effective communication of the Word of God. In fact, that responsibility is two fold:

1. We must watch how we hear.
2. We must keep sowing.

Much seed seems to be wasted but we must keep sowing in order to see a plentiful harvest.

#### ***Read Mark 4:1-9 and 13-20***

Jesus begins this story with the phrase, *"Listen to this!"* (v. 3)

We already know that one who teaches has a great honor but also a great responsibility. We are told in Scripture not to desire to teach unless we are ready to be accountable for our teaching.

Today's public school policy has moved to one that expects its teachers to "teach or else." This is called "results based learning" and many want teachers to be paid in direct proportion to the test results of their students.

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These results must come even though virtually all forms of discipline have been removed from the classroom and even if the student cannot or do not want to learn.

Jesus says that the hearer has a great responsibility.

There was a time when public school policy was "learn or else." A student came to school to learn and failure to do so brought serious consequences to the student. Not only that but trouble at school meant trouble at home.

In fact, Jesus ends the whole parable with the phrase, "*He who has ears, let him hear.*" (v. 9)

I'm sorry I don't remember who said it, but one of the best comments on this subject I have ever heard was something like this, ". . . *the thing that makes worship succeed is not a great sermon (lesson), but good ears . . . . The place to watch in church is where the people are. . . .*"