



Sermon Notes from 20 January

Sowing in Love (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23)

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God's desire for the church is to experience continually the joy of new spiritual birth. **Those with the Agape spirit love evangelism.**

Matt 13:1-9 - the first of the eight parables in this chapter. Parables are stories that reveal spiritual truths about God to an open heart. The essentials to rekindle the Agape spirit for evangelism:

1) The reality about ourselves we must see vv1-2 It was customary then for religious teachers to sit while speaking to a standing audience. Jesus took what was familiar to the agrarian Jewish society and gave it profound spiritual meaning. The seed refers to the word of the kingdom (v19) and invites us to enter the kingdom of God by believing Jesus as our only Lord and Savior - the message of the gospel. The *sower* refers to Jesus - the ultimate sower (v37). We too are sowers - called by God to sow the word and gospel of God's kingdom!
The four conditions in this parable depict the entirety of our hearts and their postures towards evangelism:

#1 The unresponsive heart (v4) - closed and not renewed by the word.

#2 The impulsive heart (v5) - initially excited but becomes discouraged when disapproval and rejection comes.

#3 The preoccupied heart (v7) - places the good things as ultimate things over evangelism; loves the world more than God, and people hearing the gospel.

#4 The well-prepared heart (v8) - hears, understands the word and is fruitful.

This is the heart of the Christian. Nevertheless, the Christian does wrestle with tendencies found in the other 3 human heart conditions.

Only the well-prepared heart is ready to bear the genuine fruit of evangelism.

For this to happen, you need to repent of the sinful postures of your heart and seek God's forgiving and transforming grace to step out by faith. **Evangelism is a fruit that flows from abiding in Christ.**

2) The truths about evangelism we must know

a) Evangelism is a spiritual battle. Fight with prayer.

Matt 13:19 The devil is involved. Hence, the battle for lost souls (2 Cor 4:3-4).

1 Thes 3:5 The devil uses persecution to tempt the believer into giving up.

Eph 2:2-3 The devil keeps people preoccupied with their fleshly cravings. Acts 1:13-14 Corporate prayer is a potent weapon against this adversary. Don't let your loved ones and friends go to hell without a fight! Pray!

b) The word of God has power. Use it (Isa 55:11).

c) To sow is the success in evangelism. Leave the outcome to God.

What constitutes sowing? The word is essential, but seek first to love people into the kingdom by building deep relationships with them.

3) The vision of the future we must hold v23; Gal 5:22-23 The *fruit* is not about the number of people saved but that of a disciple who is radically transformed by the gospel. Jesus' death ensured our transformation and growth in Christ-likeness. The gospel properly planted in your heart will yield the abiding fruit of evangelism. Pray for God to rekindle the Agape spirit so you would love evangelism!