

Greetings in the name of the LORD and savior Jesus Christ!

DISCIPLINE | *The Parable of the Sower*

Matthew 13:18–23

Welcome to the well community church, Dear church family, today we continue our Christ Soldier series with one powerful and necessary word: **Discipline**. We have already spoken about Fear of the Lord, Faith in Jesus Christ, Fellowship with believers, and Following Jesus in obedience. These are foundational truths, and they form the beginning of a strong Christian life. But today we come to a word that holds all these together. Discipline is what turns fear into reverence that remains. Discipline is what turns faith into faithfulness that endures. Discipline is what turns fellowship into unity that grows. Discipline is what turns following Jesus into a consistent walk that produces fruit. A soldier may wear armor, carry weapons, and belong to an army, but without discipline he will not stand in the day of battle. In the same way, a believer may know Scripture, attend church, worship, and confess Christ, but without spiritual discipline there will be no lasting growth, no maturity, and no fruit.

Jesus Himself teaches this truth through one of His most powerful parables: the Parable of the Sower. In Matthew chapter 13, Jesus explains that the Word of God is like seed. The seed is always good. The Sower is always faithful. The Word is always powerful. But the difference is never in the seed. The difference is always in the soil. The soil represents the condition of the human heart. Discipline is what prepares the heart to receive the Word, to hold the Word, to obey the Word, and to bear fruit through the Word. This parable is not merely about farming, but about spiritual life. The question before us today is

not whether God is speaking, because God is always speaking. The question is whether our hearts are disciplined enough to receive what He says. Tonight, each of us must ask honestly: What kind of soil am I?

DISCIPLINE BEGINS WITH RECEIVING THE WORD

Jesus begins His explanation by saying in Matthew 13:18, "Listen then to what the parable of the Sower means." Then in verse 19 He says, "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom..." The first step is hearing. Church, do you realize how sacred it is to hear the Word of God? Every time the Bible is opened GOD is speaking. Every time Scripture is preached, God is sowing seed into the soil of our hearts. Every sermon, every verse, every teaching is seed from God meant to produce life. But discipline begins with how we hear. Many people hear casually, but discipline hears carefully. Many people hear distractedly, but discipline hears with focus. Many people hear outwardly, but discipline receives inwardly.

A disciplined Christ soldier understands that the Word of God is not entertainment. It is not a suggestion. It is not merely information. The Word is instruction from the King. A soldier does not treat commands lightly, because his life depends on obedience. In the same way, the believer must treat the Word with reverence and seriousness, because spiritual life depends on receiving God's truth deeply. Discipline means training ourselves to listen with hunger, humility, and readiness to obey.

Receiving the Word requires spiritual discipline in daily habits. A disciplined believer reads Scripture consistently, not occasionally. A disciplined believer meditates on God's truth, not merely glances at it. A disciplined believer applies the Word in private, not only in public. The Word of God cannot produce fruit in a careless heart. But when the

Word is received with discipline, it transforms thoughts, strengthens faith, corrects behavior, and produces holiness. Discipline is the doorway through which the Word enters deeply. Without discipline, seed remains on the surface. With discipline, seed takes root.

THE HARD SOIL — AN UNDISCIPLINED HEART

Jesus continues in Matthew 13:19 by describing the first soil: the wayside soil, the hardened ground. He says that when the Word is heard but not understood, "then comes the wicked one, and catches away that which was sown in his heart." This soil represents a heart that has become resistant. The Word falls, but it cannot enter. The seed remains on the surface, and the enemy steals it immediately.

How does a heart become hard? Not suddenly, but gradually. Hearts become hardened through neglected repentance. Hearts become hardened through repeated disobedience. Hearts become hardened through unforgiveness, bitterness, pride, and spiritual laziness. A person may still attend church, but the heart is closed. The Word touches the ear, but never reaches the soul. The enemy does not need to fight strongly against such a believer, because the Word never stays long enough to produce change.

Discipline keeps the heart soft. A disciplined believer practices daily repentance and humility. A disciplined believer does not allow sin to remain unchallenged. A disciplined believer does not allow bitterness to settle. Discipline means regularly surrendering the heart to God and saying, "Lord, search me, cleanse me, soften me." A Christ soldier cannot afford hardness, because hardness prevents growth. A soldier with a hardened spirit cannot receive instruction. A believer with a hardened heart cannot respond to God. Therefore, discipline is the

practice of maintaining tenderness before the Lord. It is the continual preparation of the heart so that the Word can enter deeply.

THE ROCKY AND THORNY SOIL — NO ROOT AND NO FOCUS

Jesus then describes rocky soil in Matthew 13:20–21. This soil receives the Word with joy, but because it has no depth, it withers when the sun comes. This represents shallow commitment. These are believers who respond emotionally at first, but when hardship arrives, they fall away. They have excitement, but not endurance. They have joy, but not depth. They have beginning, but not continuation. The problem is not the seed. The problem is the lack of roots.

Discipline is what produces roots. Roots grow quietly, deeply, and consistently. Roots are formed in prayer when no one is watching. Roots are strengthened through Scripture meditation day after day. Roots are developed through obedience even when it is difficult. A soldier is not trained in the moment of battle, but long before battle begins. In the same way, believers must develop discipline before trials come, because trials will surely come. Discipline builds spiritual depth, so that when persecution, temptation, or suffering arises, faith does not collapse.

Jesus also describes thorny soil in Matthew 13:22. This soil receives the Word, and it begins to grow, but it is choked by thorns. Jesus says the thorns represent “the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches.” This is the distracted life. The Word is planted, but worries choke it. Money chokes it. Pleasure chokes it. Busyness chokes it. The believer is not hardened, and not necessarily shallow, but distracted.

This is one of the greatest dangers in the modern church. Many Christians do not reject God, but they are too busy for Him. Many do not deny the Word, but they are consumed by worldly cares. Discipline

is the ability to remove thorns. Discipline says, "I will not allow the world to choke my calling." Discipline teaches focus. A soldier who loses focus in battle risks destruction. A believer who loses focus spiritually will become unfruitful. Discipline uproots distractions and restores devotion.

THE GOOD SOIL — DISCIPLINE THAT PRODUCES FRUIT

Finally, Jesus speaks of the good soil in Matthew 13:23. He says, "He that received seed into the good ground is he that hear the word, and understand it; which also produces fruit." Good soil is the disciplined heart. Good soil receives the Word deeply, understands it, and produces fruit. Good soil is not accidental; it is cultivated.

Farmers prepare soil intentionally. They break hard ground so seed can enter. They remove stones so roots can grow. They uproot weeds so plants are not choked. They water consistently so growth continues. In the same way, discipline cultivates the heart. Prayer softens the soil of the spirit so the Word can penetrate deeply. Scripture deepens the roots so the believer stands firm in trials. Obedience removes the stones of sin and stubbornness that prevent growth. Focus uproots the thorns of distraction that choke spiritual life. This is why disciplined believers become fruitful believers.

Fruit is the evidence of true discipleship. Jesus teaches that the good soil bears fruit in different measures—thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and even a hundredfold. Not every believer produces the same measure, but every disciplined believer produces fruit. Discipline determines fruitfulness. God desires soldiers who not only receive seed but produce harvest. He desires Christians whose lives show holiness, love, perseverance, obedience, and spiritual maturity.

CONCLUSION

Beloved church, the seed is always good. The Sower is always faithful. The Word is always powerful. But the difference is always the soil. Today God is calling us to discipline. He is calling us to soften hardened hearts, deepen shallow roots, uproot distracting thorns, and become good soil. Our prayer must be sincere: "Lord, make my heart good soil." Let this church not become hardened soil where the Word cannot enter. Let us not remain shallow soil where faith disappears under pressure. Let us not become distracted soil where the world chokes our calling. Instead, let us become disciplined soil, ready to receive the Word, obey it fully, and produce lasting fruit.

Because disciplined soldiers become fruitful soldiers. And fruitful soldiers bring glory to Jesus Christ. Amen.

May the LORD bless you!