

# JESUS UNFILTERED

SERMON STUDY GUIDE | PART 1: What is God Like? | 1.7.18 | FOLLOW ON FB @PASTORERICHUFFMAN TWITTER @ERICHESTORY

It seems like we're always talking about why it's important to believe in Jesus, but when was the last time you stopped to think about *what Jesus believed?* Over the next month, we're going to take a closer look at Jesus' belief system by analyzing eight of his most famous parables.

What are parables?

What is Christian apologetics?

Why do you think it's important to be able to defend or explain your belief system with sound reasoning?  
What are the limitations to Christian apologetics?

Why do you think Jesus chose to tell stories that illustrate Truth rather than simply to explain it logically?

## Matthew 13:1-23 The Parable of the Reckless Farmer

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Who does the farmer represent in this story? What about his behavior would seem odd or compelling to Jesus' agrarian audience?

What do the four kinds of soil represent? *For reference, check out Jesus' explanation in Matthew 13:18-23.*

How does Satan "snatch away" seed?

How do new believers get "burned out"?

How do worries of this life and the "lies of wealth" choke out the Word of God in people's lives?

What does the seed represent in the story? Given how precious seeds were to farmers (especially in Jesus' context), what kind of farmer would waste seed by throwing it *on all kinds of soil*?

How do you think most people - especially non-religious people - would answer the question, "What is the God of the Bible *like*?" What characteristics or personality traits do non-religious people tend to ascribe to the God of Christianity?

How does that differ from the character of God as demonstrated in Jesus' parable? What characteristics does Jesus ascribe to God by portraying Him as a farmer who throws seed on all kinds of soil?

Here's the question that's always been on my mind: **Why doesn't the farmer in Jesus' story till the soil before scattering the seed?** Even paths, overgrowth, and rocky ground can be tilled and prepared for planting. It reminds me of a question I hear from a lot of skeptics: **"If God is real, why doesn't He make it *easier* for people to know Him? Why wouldn't He make Himself known to humanity in a way that's undeniable, so that no one would be lost?"** Good questions, right? How would you respond to such questions?

What does Jesus' parable about the farmer say about the relationship between God's will and human will?

Additional Bible passages from today's sermon for reference:

Your reflections: