

This morning we read together a parable which is probably one of the most familiar parables in the Word of God. I imagine every one who has ever gone to Sunday School, everyone who has ever had much contact with the Christian church, is familiar with this parable, but I think that it will well repay us to spend a few minutes together now thinking about this parable, thinking what it may mean to us. What meaning does it have for the life of each one of us. We're all, of course, familiar with the story which Christ gave, the story of the sower who went forth to sow, and I think all through the parable there is certainly stressed, not only the importance of the ground, which is the essential element of the parable, but also the importance of the seed. You might have bad ground over here, the wayside; here you might have the thorns coming up; over here you might have the shallow soil with the rock underneath; and over here some good ground, and they'd stay just that way. There would be no difference between them, as far as any practical is concerned, if the sower didn't come and sow the seed. The seed is the vital element. The distinctive feature of the parable is, of course, is the difference in ground. That is a vital thing that we want to look at this morning, but the seed is the most vital thing in the parable. Without the seed the ground would be absolutely--produce nothing. There would be no crop if the seed did not come. The seed is that which is a vital necessity in the parable. Now, He tells us in the explanation of it that the seed is the Word--"the Word of the kingdom," He says here, in Matthew. In the other two gospels He just says "the Word." Without the Word, you will not have life. Without the Word you won't have growth. You can work on the field all you want. You can till it, you can harrow it, you can improve it, you can do as so many fine people do today, use all the methods of improvement of character and social uplift and betterment that you want and they all have their proper place, but if you don't have the seed they're useless. There is nothing accomplished. The seed is the Word. And to my mind that is the thing which is perhaps one of the most important in all the Scripture, the importance of the seed, the importance