

FOR FIVE WEEKS,
WE WILL BE TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT
“THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER”.

WE HOPE YOU WILL BE CHALLENGED TO:

LISTEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT DURING THE NEXT 5 WEEKS
AND LET HIM PREPARE YOUR **HEART** AND ALLOW THE **ROOT**
OF GOD’S TRUTH TO GROW DEEPER AS YOU CLING TO JESUS
THROUGH LIFE’S JOYS AND THE STRUGGLES OF THIS WORLD IN
ORDER TO CULTIVATE **GOOD** SOIL THROUGH YOUR JOURNEY TO
WORSHIP, BELONG, GROW, SERVE AND SHARE.

WEEK 1

READ: MARK 4:1-3

When Jesus commands us to **LISTEN**, our ears should tune in! Here, Jesus was addressing a crowd on the shore from a boat, speaking to a crowd that normally wouldn’t be seen in the synagogue. This begins a famous parable known as, “The Parable of the Sower”. The Prime Sower is God, who dispenses “the word” (Mark 4:14) through the faithful (2 Corinthians 9:10). Who are the sowers? All of us are; not simply our pastors, authors and speakers.

In that day, sowing like this was a common method of farming. What would happen, as a sower would take seed and go “out to sow”, preparing various types of soil to receive the seed. What is so profound in this parable is the assumption that seed will indeed be sown, no matter the condition of the ground. Only after we see how it prospers can we, as the sowers, determine what kind of soil we have sowed upon. No matter the soil, our delight is to sow the Word of God.

In short, our duty is not to leave the sharing of the Gospel, the word, to the “professionals”, or to neglect sowing on soil we don’t deem profitable. Our duty is to scatter on every heart and mind that we come into contact with, never withholding our hand. The joy of sowing, of participating in God’s work, is given to each of us.

Remember, we may scatter seed and water it, but God alone gives the growth. Take time to pray this week for the Holy Spirit to speak to you and take time to LISTEN.

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WEEK 2

READ: MARK 4:3-4

When paths are well trodden, their soil is often packed as hard as concrete. Paths form from consistent travel over the same area, and the more they get used the easier they are to traverse. The path Jesus was speaking of in today’s verse was the tightly packed soil of a human **HEART** and soul.

From this verse we can infer at least two kinds of **HEARTS** represented by this soil of the path. Firstly, there are those whose hearts are like a highway, laying common and bare to all. These are people who may have seemingly countless friends but still feel alone because their relationships are all surface level, never penetrating the depths below.

Secondly, we can witness those whose **HEART’S** have been trampled over the course of a lifetime. Who, time and again, are wounded to the point of callousness. The devil, like an angry bird, is very busy above paths like these. When the gospel is spread on them, he is quick to swoop in and carry off the gospel seeds. Our duty, as sowers and caretakers, is to drive those foul birds away, just as Abram drove them away from his sacrifice (Genesis 15:11). We should guard those hearts as best we can, and recognize Satan in his work as he seeks to steal the life-giving word sown on hardened and wounded **HEARTS**.

Can you think of anyone in your life whose HEART’S soil is like that on the path? How can you defend the seed of the Gospel sown on that HEART?

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WEEK 3

READ: MARK 4:5-6

Fast forward, if you will, to Mark’s sixth chapter. In verse fourteen, we read the account of King Herod seeking to answer an intriguing question of the day, “Who is this Jesus of Nazareth?” After some speculation, we reach verse twenty, which interestingly reports that upon hearing John the Baptist, “he heard him gladly” ([Mark 6:20](#)). We know also from Jesus’ very own words about people like Herod that for awhile they were willing to rejoice in the light, in the truth that John the Baptist brought ([John 5:35](#)). Yet these people, who were so quick to rejoice and accept the truth, were not a new phenomena. Remember those to whom Ezekiel sang “with a beautiful voice” ([Ezekiel 33:32](#)), but still would not live according to the truth? Or those who delighted to know God’s ways yet did not live according to them ([Isaiah 58:2](#))?

All of these were the hearts, quick to hear and fast to forget, of shallow soil. In these hearts the word immediately takes **ROOT**, and a small shoot of life appears. However, lacking the soil needed for deep roots of belief to weather the drought, growth is stunted. You see, in order for that **ROOT** to dig deeply and entrench us in God’s truth, we must live in submission to God’s word and walk in it. When we do, we will experience God powerfully at work in our lives.

Are you allowing the ROOT of God’s truth to take hold in your heart? Or are you quick to hear and fast to forget? Pray this week for richness and depth of faith.

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WEEK 4

READ: MARK 4:7, MARK 4:18-19

No one likes thorns, right? They’re sharp, prickly, and generally to be avoided. Weeds and thorns often go hand in hand, neither being the type of growth a gardener likes to see. However, as we continue in the book of Mark, Jesus reveals a surprise about these thorns. It is written that “the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful” ([Mark 4:18-19](#)). The thorns here represent the things in the world we care about, and are generally thought of as good or appealing.

Many of us spend our adult lives in pursuit of a bigger, better, more; and the list could go on indefinitely. When we center our energy and focus on things other than Jesus and the Gospel, those good things become idols, they become “God things”. They choke the life from our spirits and keep us from bearing fruit, useful and good ([Galatians 5:22-23](#); [Hebrews 6:7](#)). The point is this: in actuality, we like thorns, we like them a lot. The problem we continually face is when, instead of using the things in our possession or the status our wealth grants us for the Kingdom, we use them for our kingdom. At the center of our hearts should lie Jesus and His mission, and how He’s called us to serve Him. When we don’t live like this, we are in great danger of loving our thorns more than our God.

Read the story of the rich man in [Mark 10](#), and work through clinging to Jesus instead of the cares of this world.

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WEEK 5

READ: MARK 4:8–9

GOOD, healthy soil, is the product of many factors coming together in just the right balance. This soil isn’t hardened, leaving the sower’s seeds vulnerable on the surface to be devoured by the birds of the air. This soil isn’t shallow, but has the depth required to weather spells of drought, heat and adversity. This soil isn’t overrun with thorns and weeds because it is cared for and cultivated. This is the **GOOD** stuff, the stuff only a Master Sower could take credit for.

When our hearts are permeated by the truth of God’s word we will yield useful crops, thirty, sixty and a hundredfold! Commonly, a crop that yields ten to one is considered good. What this parable speaks of is a life producing exponentially more than is natural. **GOOD** soil is that which is prepared to receive God’s truth, allowing it to take deep root, and to grow the seed planted therein. Rather than attempting to grow an orange tree with an apple seed, this soil takes what is sown by the Master’s hand, and obediently allows it to come to fruition. Grow the seed God plants in you.

This week let the Holy Spirit cultivate GOOD soil in your heart through submission to scripture, prayer, and fellowship with other believers.

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