

The Fate of the Seed

March 30, 2014

Mark 4:1-20 (NLT)

- This parable is important for them to grasp if they are going to understand His other parables—it's about guarding your heart so you can receive Him.
- A move of God in and through your life, revelation of spoken/written word, Kingdom built in you—is dependent on having hearts that receive

The Farmer: Jesus – He scatters seed on ALL soil for all to hear.

Farming Technique: Farmers scattered seeds first, then worked the soil over and over, breaking it up, working the seed into it

The Seed: the Word – the written Word, the words He speaks over us, the message of Jesus—He is the Word (John 1:1), the living word—the breath of God in us

The Soil: Our hearts

4 Types of Soil

The success or failure of a crop isn't necessarily in the skill of the farmer or in the power of the seed, but in the quality of the soil.

THE PATH: Hardened Heart

- It was a path for traveling and became compacted from heavy traffic
- If a path went through your field, you planted and ploughed up to it
- The seed cannot penetrate into the ground because the soil is hard
- The birds hover because they know the routine—seed will fall and not go into the ground

Jesus was referring to hearts that are hard and cannot receive Him and what He is offering to them

- Heavy traffic that compacts the soil: Activity/Busyness (afraid of being still before the Lord)...Being used, abused, people walking on you, taken advantage of, things others have done to you
- Hard-hearted: Those who don't believe or receive, unforgiveness
- They only hear the word with their ears and not their heart—no growth
- Mark 4:24 Jesus said – "*Consider carefully (pay attention to) what you hear.*"
- *Consider* – to carry what is heard; to take a truth you hear and apply it, producing spiritual results

- Ephesians 4:17-18 (NLT) *“...Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against Him.”*

Hardened – a picture of a callus, which is dead skin cells that become hard and insensible to touch—when there is life in the skin, you can feel

The Result of a hardened heart—you get robbed: The enemy swoops in like the birds to take the seed because the listener is stubbornly refusing to receive

- It’s not the birds’ fault that the seed didn’t go into the ground—it would have just sat there and never gone into the soil
- WHY? – The listener has no intention of plowing the ground...working the seed into the soil
- They are unteachable—the word is **ON** them but not **IN** them

Colossians 3:16 (NLT) – *“Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives.”*

THE ROCKY SOIL: No Roots

- The soil was able to receive the seed
- However, there was no depth to the soil so the plant grew up quickly
- It withered from the heat of the sun
- Because the soil was inadequate, the plant couldn’t take root, flourish or bear fruit—its fate is death

Roots are vital to a plant’s health

- Absorb water or nutrients—without roots you will not be able to...
- Anchor the plant to the ground and support it
- Store food or nutrients for leaner times
- Reproduce itself

Shallow soil is a heart that is not fully His

- This person receives from the Lord, there is immediate joy and excitement
- Because there is not much soil, the seed is unable to establish a root system
- When troubles come or persecution, they quickly fall away

Beware of the persecution of the enemy

- He tries to steal a word spoken over you, revelation from scripture, a transformation in your heart
- Persecution comes from lies: “You didn’t really receive a transformation...That word was meant for someone else...That wasn’t the Lord speaking to me.”
- Hold on to what the Lord has done and what He’s shown you
- Give the Lord a spacious place to abide—where your roots can grow

- Psalm 119:10 (ESV) – “*With my whole heart I seek You...*”

Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NLT) – “*...blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.*”

SEED WITH THORNS: Unable to Mature

- Soil was able to receive the seed
- However, thorns were growing right beside it
- In Israel and Syria, thorn bushes grow over 6 feet tall up beside fields
- Farmers use the bushes for outdoor fire cooking, so they’re not quick to remove them
- The roots of the thorns compete with the plant for water and nutrients, while their branches block the sunlight, and the good seed is starved beneath the soil and overshadowed above—the plant dies

Thorns represent worldly focuses and distractions—stresses of life and desires for other things

- People that believe they can add Jesus to their lives but not uproot anything else
- We can’t give our hearts fully to the Lord if part of it has been given away
- Isaiah 29:13 (NLT) – “*And so the Lord says, “These people say they are mine. They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.”*”
- Stresses and worldly desires compete for our hearts
- Peter and the storm

1 Peter 5:7 (AMP) – “*Casting (throw, give up) the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.*”

Ezekiel 11:19 (NIV) – “*I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.*”

GOOD SOIL

- Those that hear the word, accept it, understand it and by persevering (Luke 8) produce a crop 30, 60, 100 times what was sown
- Life is in the seed but it must be planted in good soil to produce fruit
- Good soil receives help—it is fertilized, watered, receives light and nurtured

Colossians 2:7 (NLT) – “*Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him.*”

What happens when we abide in Him:

John 15:5-7 (AMP) – “I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing. If a person does not dwell in Me, he is thrown out like a [broken-off] branch, and withers; such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire, and they are burned. If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. When you bear (produce) fruit, My Father is honored and glorified, and you show and prove yourselves to be true followers of Mine.”