

“The Soil Of Our Hearts”
Mark 4:1-20
4/21/24
Message 10

Introduction

- Title Of The Message: “The Soil Of Our Hearts”
- **Been Loving the study in Mark**
 - **At First – How to teach / outline**
 - Mark has some challenges with his short explanations and quick pace
 - **But Like with ALL the Gospels**
 - **1st We Clearly see our Lord Jesus**
 - We see His HEART
 - We Understand His WAYS
 - **2nd And As we look at Jesus and His Word**
 - A transformation takes place in our hearts & lives
 - Paul spoke of this in 2 Cor. 3:18

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NKJV)

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

- Now Paul says that we are beholding Him as in a mirror
- What does a mirror do?
 - IT REFLECTS

- As we look to Jesus and His Word
- We see ourselves for who we really are and we also start to become MORE like Jesus
- BUT We Need to do more than LOOK

James 1:23–24 (NKJV)

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;
24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

- As we look into His Word
- We see what need to be changed
- We must respond
- We MUST BE DOERS
- If Not we are like the person who Gets up in the morning looks in the mirror and doesn't make the correct changes

Now This Parable is ALL about how People Respond to His Gospel

- **1st The PRIMARY meaning of this Parable**
 - How people will respond to the Gospel
 - We will see 4 types of hearts represented
 - 3 out of 4 were not believers...
 - I have seen every type of heart Jesus has described here
 - We this saw this at the crusade we used to do

- *Pastor Chuck; “There is oftentimes criticism of mass evangelism, Billy Graham’s crusades, criticism of the Harvest crusades, declaring that so many people go forward but not all of them remain. Many of them have an emotional moment in which they respond and go forward but so many then never follow through. I think that Jesus is basically pointing that out in this parable. You see, there are four types of soil upon which the seed fell. Only one in four really brought forth fruit.*

- **2nd A Secondary Meaning – How Is the Soil of Our Hearts!**

- BUT we should also look at this portion of Scripture and Ask
 - How is the Soil of our hearts
 - How are we responding to His Word in our hearts
 - It is Called the Parable of the Sower
 - But we could also call it the Parable of the Listener
 - Look at v. 9

Mark 4:9 (NKJV)

9 And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

- How are we Hearing and Responding
- What type of Soil are we

- **So this Morning we will look at 3 Wonderful Truths about The Soil Of Our Hearts**

- The Parable Of The Sower vs. 1-9
- The Purpose Of Parables vs. 10-12
- The Parable Of The Sower Explained vs. 13-20

The Parable Of The Sower vs. 1-9

- **First: The Multitudes v. 1**

Mark 4:1 (NKJV)

1 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea.

- **1st He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea**
 - Jesus often used a boat as His “pulpit” (Mark 3:9).
 - Why?!
 - It gave Him a place to speak away from the press of the crowds
 - It provided good acoustics

- **Second: The Introduction Of Parables v. 2**

Mark 4:2 (NKJV)

2 Then He **taught** them many things **by parables**, and said to them in His **teaching**

- **1st He Taught them Many THINGS**
 - Again –
 - Can't over state this –
 - Jesus wanted to teach more than do social work
 - Teaching is so critical
 - We do social thing to preach and teach

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- **2nd BY Parables**

- The idea behind a Parable is - “To Throw Alongside Of.”
 - It is a story thrown alongside the truth intended to teach.
 - The idea was to set a spiritual truth along side a daily truth of living
 - Parables have been called “earthly stories with a heavenly meaning.”
 - A "Parable" is the using of a KNOWN subject to ILLUSTRATE and reveal a HIDDEN truth.
 - If you Will – KINDA like
 - An Object Lesson
 - Illustration
 - Analogy
 - BUT not quite – more on this in a minute
 - Now A Parable does 2 things
 - Reveals or Conceals
 - Depending on the Heart of the listener
 - For those who have the right soil they will seek
 - For those with the wrong soil they will walk away

• **Third: The Parable of the Sower vs. 3-9**

- **1st A Sower went out to sow v. 3**

Mark 4:3 (NKJV)

3 *“Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow.”*

▪ Context

- In this parable
- Jesus described something they were all familiar with –
 - A farmer casting seed on the ground and the seed falling on different types of soil.
 - Jesus takes something that the LISTENER of His day knew a great deal about.....

▪ Who is the “Sower”

- Now in Matthew Gospels it Say Jesus

Matthew 13:37 (NKJV)

37 He answered and said to them: *“He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.”*

- Now we can Also make a Case that it’s ALL BELIEVERS
 - We are ALL to sow seeds of the Faith

○ **2nd Note: A FEW Things**

- Before we get into the Soil
 - Let’s note a few things
- 1st Every one of these soils heard the Word of God
- 2nd The issue here is HOW people response to the Gospel when they hear it
- 3rd The “Sower”
 - Obviously –

- It refer to Jesus and His ministry...
- But then to all of US
- The MAIN Point though is not on who the Sower is BUT HOW People respond
 - **How people are responding to what is being sown**
- **3rd Wayside – Hard v. 4**

Mark 4:4 (NKJV)

4 And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it.

▪ **What is Wayside Soil?**

- In Luke's Gospel –
 - It says, “and it was trampled down”
 - These were paths that were between fields
- **Show Pic**
 - And we all know how a path gets hard from people walking on it
 - So the emphasis here is that it is HARD
 - Seeds do not penetrate so it's easy for the birds to come and take it

○ **4th Rock – Shallow v. 5**

Mark 4:5–6 (NKJV)

5 Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth.

6 But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away.

- This is referring to a something that is ALL over Israel
- Its talking about rock that has a very thin layer of dirt over it
- **Show Pic**
- Luke says, that “it lacked moisture”
- So there’s
 - No depth, the roots can’t go deep
 - No Moisture
 - So the Sun comes up and scorches it
 - So the emphasis here is that it is SHALLOW

○ **5th Thorns – Choked Out v. 7**

Mark 4:7 (NKJV)

7 And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

- Thorny ground

- **Show Pic**

- This is not tares...these thorns are thorns
- These thorns spring up and literally choke out the seed
- The emphasis here is that it is CHOKED OUT

○ **6th Good Ground – Yielded A Crop v. 8-9**

Mark 4:8–9 (NKJV)

8 But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

9 And He said to them, *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”*

▪ **1st Now the “Good Ground”?**

• **Show Pic**

- Good Ground It says it “yielded a crop”
 - The mark of good ground is not Simply Growth...*it is the kind of growth*
 - Remember A Little growth came out of #2 and #3
 - Growth was there...but it was the Wrong Kind of growth
 - There was something wrong with it...it didn’t yield a crop
 - So the emphasis here is that it yielded a crop or bore fruit
 - All these words indicate continuous kinds of action
 - One seed planted in good soil produces one hundred seeds.
 - **It continues to grow and reproduce.**

▪ **2nd With Genuine Believers**

- There is Fruit
- Our Lives has changed and continue to change
- We now have a desire to serve the Lord
- A Desire to Continue to GROW

The Purpose Of Parables vs. 10-12

- **First: As To Their Responsibility vs. 10-11a**

- **1st The twelve asked Him about the parable v. 10**

Mark 4:10 (NKJV)

10 But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.

- **The spiritual meaning of the parable was not immediately understood**

- The disciples of Jesus, including the twelve,
- Didn't know what Jesus meant and they asked Him about the parable.
- But they had NO Problem asking!

- **2nd To know the mystery of the kingdom of God v. 11a**

Mark 4:11 (NKJV)

11 And He said to them, *"To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables,*

- **Greek: Musterion ("mystery") –**

- There are some things about God
 - That are simply difficult to understand.
 - Until you are part of His family,
 - Some things just aren't going to make sense

- **The Disciples Wanted to know**

- They dug a little deeper
- As a result they were given to know the mystery of the kingdom –

- They could be spoken to plainly.
- But others were often taught with parables.
- Mark 4:26-25

• **Second: As To The Response Of The Multitude vs. 11b-12**

- **1st To those who are outside, all things come in parables v. 11b**

Mark 4:11 (NKJV)

11 And He said to them, ***"To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables,***

▪ **Now A Parables**

- Parables in their spiritual function,
 - Are more like riddles or puzzles than easy illustrations.
 - They can be understood by those who have the right "key."
 - *Guzik; "A parable isn't exactly an illustration. A good teacher can illustrate by stating a truth and then illustrating the truth through a story or an analogy. But when Jesus used parables, He didn't start by stating a truth. Instead, the parable was like a doorway. Jesus' listeners stood at the doorway and heard Him. If they were not interested, they stayed on the outside. But if they were interested, they could walk through the doorway and think about the truth behind the parable and what it meant to their lives.*

▪ **You MUST have the KEY**

- If you don't understand the key to the parable

- You don't understand it at all.
- Just imagine what different people heard
 - The farmer thought,
 - He's telling me that I have to be more careful in the way I cast my seed
 - The politician thought
 - He's telling me that I need to begin a farm education program to help farmers more efficiently cast their seed.
 - The newspaper reporter thought
 - He's telling me that there is a big story here about the bird problem and how it affects the farming community. That's a great idea for a series in the paper.
 - The salesman thought
 - He's encouraging me in my fertilizer sales.
- Tye KEY
 - The Sower Sows the Word (Mark 4:14).
 - If you miss the key, you miss the whole parable.
 - If you think the seed represents money, you miss the parable.
 - If you think the seed represents love, you miss the parable.
 - If you think the seed represents hard work, you miss the parable.

- You can only understand it by understanding the key:
 - The Sower Sows the Word.
- **2nd Lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them v. 12**

Mark 4:12 (NKJV)

12 so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And their sins be forgiven them.' ”

- Quoting Isaiah 6:9
 - Jesus offered His hearers the opportunity to dig deep and find the truth, or to turn a blind eye to an interesting story.
- A fulfillment of Prophecy.

Matthew 13:14–15 (NKJV)

14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;
15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'

- Matt. 13:14-15; Isa. 6:9-10; Jer. 5:21
- Matt. 23:37 - “You were not willing”
- Acts 7:51 - “Always resist the Holy Spirit”

The Parable Of The Sower Explained vs. 13-20

First: The Sower & Seed Is The Word Of God v. 13-14

- **1st Do you not understand this parable? V.13**

Mark 4:13 (NKJV)

13 And He said to them, *“Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?”*

- How then will you understand all the parables?
 - Jesus considered this parable A KEY to understanding the REST

○ **2nd The Sower sows the word v. 14**

Mark 4:14 (NKJV)

14 *The sower sows the word.*

- Sower = Jesus / US
- The SEED
 - Seed = the Word of God
- Application
 - **A seed is that which has life in it**
 - It is active - put it in dirt little water - starts to move
 - Mark 4:26-29
 - Peter says

1 Peter 1:23 (NKJV)

23 *having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*

- The Bible is likened to Seed - ACTIVE & LIVING / ABIDING
- Isaiah

Isaiah 55:11 (NKJV)

11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

- Being active it accomplishes what the Lord desires
- It goes out / doesn't return void.

- **How is The Soil of Our Hearts**

- The Seed = The Word
- The SOIL = Hearts
 - 4 different soils
 - 4 different hearts
- The primary interpretation
 - Yes Parable of the SOWER – But Also Parable of the SOIL
 - The natural tendency is for the audience to critique the preacher.
 - We Should (Acts 17:11)
 - But here, Jesus the preacher critiques His audience.
 - The issue is how well they will hear, not how well He will preach

- **Second: The Soils Represent Human Hearts vs. 15-20**

- **1st Jesus SAYS it's ALL About the Soil**
 - 3 out of 4 won't get it
 - **NOTE:**

- **It's NOT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ONE SOWING!**
- There is a belief in our Christian culture
 - That if it's communicated well
 - That's the key to the person really becoming a believer
 - We have to be careful of that thinking!
 - It's by the POWER of the Holy Spirit using the Word of God
- **2nd Wayside - Devil takes away v. 15**

Mark 4:15 (NKJV)

15 And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

▪ **Ripped OFF**

- Roadside is the person where the seed never gets a chance to sprout.
 - It never stays long enough to produce anything.
 - There are people who never seem to “get it” when you share the gospel.
 - The enemy has stolen the seed.
- Illustrations...
 - “The Bible is just a bunch of made-up stories”
 - “Jesus was not a real person”

- “We are all products of evolution, there is no God who created everything”
- When a person has swallowed some of these lies...
 - It’s easy for them to just blow it off when they hear that God loves them...
 - RESISTANCE & the Devil comes and snatches the seed before it even has time to take root.
- **For Us – Do we have SELECTIVE HEARING?**
 - We may have been walking with the Lord for YEARS
 - Yet we can still have Selective hearing
 - Or Compartments
 - Lord you Almost have all my life
 - When faced with Truth we don’t like...
 - Examples
 - Husband Love your Wife like Jesus does
 - Wife Submit to your husband
 - You need to Give up that SIN
 - You need to serve me – the church is a body
 - Be a contributor not a consumer
 - And When God or the Pastor or another believer bring this up
 - You avoid listening

- You may walk away or attempt to change the subject
 - PS I see this A LOT
 - People who profess to love Jesus and His Word
 - May even know a great deal of His Word
 - May even be doing a Lot with His Word
 - But in the Inside there are issues that God is not allowed to deal with
 - Their hearts are hard
 - They will begin even begin to blame others for their struggle
 - They in general known as CHURCH Hoppers
 - They stay long enough BUT not too long lest someone sees what going on
 - Of course when they leave they make up lies for why they are leaving
- What they need to do
 - Your heart is hard
 - Ask the Lord for forgiveness and to please soften your hearts
 - And seek to grow in a the body of Christ

- 4th Stoney Ground / Rock - No root, falls away v. 16-17

Mark 4:16–17 (NKJV)

16 *These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness;*

17 *and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.*

- **There's no root...and they fall away when pressure comes**

- The issue here is a lack of endurance
 - They believe for a while...their belief is obviously superficial
 - They received it with joy...many people get excited
 - They hear the Gospel and think, "I want to become a Christian"
 - But then a little trouble comes or testing...and they're gone
- Some of those Temptation – Trial / Proving
 - They May say I was all over this Christianity when you talked about saving from hell...
 - BUT now you tell me I have to live by God's righteousness
 - I can no longer....
 - Look at pornography...
 - Sleep around...
 - No longer live with my boyfriend, girlfriend
 - They start to make excuses

- They ask the question,
 - “Just what does it mean to look on a woman with lust???”
- They might say,
 - “Well who doesn’t look on a woman with lust!”
- They MAKE EXCUSES – RUN FROM TRUTH
- They never allow the Word of God to go deeper than the surface of their life.
 - The shallow person is the one that says,
 - “I’ve tried Christianity and it didn’t work for me”.
- **For US – Are THERE ARE PLACES IN OUR HEARTS / NO DEPTH**
 - We are all in this process of needing to be changed –
 - We know God wants to work - we need to be changed
 - And so we come to church –
 - Hear a message / convicted / moved & perhaps come forward for prayer or purpose in our hearts to apply
 - But as soon as things start to heat up / trials start - they say forget this I will just stay the way that I am.
 - It’s Just Too Hard to change
 - The Problem

- Spiritual Growth Requires your to DIE to yourself
- Most people don't want to do this!
- There is a saying in working out - NO PAIN / NO GAIN –
 - If you are really going to get in shape & see results - it is going to hurt
 - Your going to have to take the HARD ROAD
- Spiritually Speaking –
 - If your NOT growing – Your going backwards
 - Illustration
 - My Own life if I begin to get too comfortable
 - Its time for a change
 - I need to be challenged
 - Because in know that growth only comes from being challenged
 - **5th Thorns - choked and brings no fruit to maturity v. 18-19**

Mark 4:18–19 (NKJV)

18 *Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word,*

19 *and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

- **1st It mentions 3 things: “cares, riches, and pleasures of life”**

- **1st The CARES**

- Are anxieties and concerns about

- They allow the worries of today to ripe them off

- **Application**

- We ALL have responsibilities
- Work
- Bills
- Family demands
- Medical issues
- Worldly Cares
- Hear MY HEART –

- DON'T LET THEM RIPE YOU OFF

- **2nd RICHES**

- If a person's life is about getting money and possessions

- Its just another thorn that can choke out the Word
- God's not against someone being rich
 - But for some that's what its all about...and so they're not willing to really follow Jesus

- **Application**

- What are you pursuing
 - Worldly Wealth and EASE

- Or Kingdom Wealth

- **3rd PLEASURES OF LIFE**

- The person who just doesn't want to give up his selfish, indulgent lifestyle...his partying and promiscuity
 - It will choke out the Word
- Application
 - Christian might say things like it's okay to ENJOY this life too
 - Yes - But HOW
 - It's okay to have fun here – take trips enjoy meals
 - BUT are you LIVING for them?!
 - Illustration
 - Take a nice vacation
 - But I am not living for it
 - I LIVE to serve JESUS

Luke 16:13 (NKJV)

13 *"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

- **6th Good - hear, keep, and bear fruit with patience v. 20**

Mark 4:20 (NKJV)

20 *But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."*

- **Good Ground**

- God wants your life to produce fruit.
- Jesus said...

John 15:8 (NKJV)

8 *By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*

- **Lessons:**

- Cultivate your heart
 - The Ground that best produces fruit is Cultivated
 - This takes place by feeding our soul the right things!!!
- Keep Swimming / going
 - Key trait to bearing fruit – patience.
 - Patience – hupomone (“under” + “to remain”) – steadfastness, constancy, endurance
 - It’s the person who falls, but gets up again.
 - Feel like quitting? Don’t.

Galatians 6:10 (NKJV)

10 *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

- *Theodore Roosevelt once said; “It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust*

and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; because there is not effort without error and shortcomings; but who does actually strive to do the deed; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly. So that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

Closing

- So How is the SOIL of Your Heart?!