

THE PARABLE OF FOUR KINDS OF SOIL

TEXT: (Mark 4:1-8, 13-20, NIV)

¹ Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat in the boat while all the people remained on the shore. ² He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: ³ “Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

¹³ Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? ¹⁴ The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵ Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. ¹⁶ Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ¹⁸ Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹ but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²⁰ Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

I. WORTH MORE THAN ANYTHING

1. “Indeed, the ‘right time’ is now. Today is the day of salvation” (II Corinthians 6:2, NLT).
2. “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’
“But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’
“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour” (Matthew 25:11-13, NIV).

A. Worth More Than Riches or Worldly Activities

1. “‘Good teacher,’ he asked, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’” (Mark 10:17, NIV)?
2. “‘One thing you lack,’ he said. ‘Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me’” (Mark 10:21, NIV).
3. “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33, NIV).
4. “At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth” (Mark 10:22, NIV).

B. Worth More Than Anything in This World

1. “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field” (Matthew 13:44, NIV).

2. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:45-46, NIV).
3. "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life" (Matthew 19:29, NIV).

II. THE ELEMENTS OF THIS PARABLE

A. The Seed—The Word of God

1. "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God" (I Peter 1:23, NIV).
2. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17, KJV).
3. "The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it" (Isaiah 55:10-11, NLT).

B. The Soil—The Heart of Man

1. "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure" (Jeremiah 17:9, NIV).
2. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24, KJV).

III. THE SOIL

A. The Path

1. "You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody" (II Corinthians 3:2, NIV).

B. The Rocky Soil

1. "But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time " (Matthew 13:21, NIV).

C. The Weed-infested Soil

1. "The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22, NIV).
2. "You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and Money both" (Matthew 6:24, MSG).

D. The Good Soil

1. "It produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear" (Matthew 13:8-9, NIV).

CONCLUSION

1. "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel 14:14, KJV).

ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the value of the Kingdom of God (church today, heaven tomorrow).
2. How has your family been benefitted by living for God?
3. What kind of soil are you?
4. Are there any rocks still in your soil (heart) that you keep stumbling over?
5. Are there any thorns, thistles, or weeds (worries of this life and deceitfulness of material things) that are choking out your walk with God?