

The Gospel - 4 - The four soils

Added: May 24, 2019

Introduction

- As we wrap up our preparation for the *Ask me about Jesus* outreach, I wanted to take one more Sunday and talk about sharing the Gospel
- This morning's message comes from a very familiar parable - and is found in the Gospel of Mark
- I'll read the text so that we have it fresh in our minds - then we'll look at several aspects of it:

Mark 4:1-8 (ESV) / (1) Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. (2) And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: (3) "Listen! A sower went out to sow. (4) And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. (5) Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. (6) And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. (7) Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. (8) And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."/

Mark 4:13-20 (ESV) / (13) And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? (14) The sower sows the word. (15) And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. (16) And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. (17) And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. (18) And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, (19) but 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. (20) But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."/

Message

Let's look at three specific things from this message: The job of the sower, the power of the seed and the responses of the soils

The job of the sower

- The job of the sower is to sow!
- It's about getting outside to sow *the Word* (v14)
- We have been studying and preparing and training - but now it's time to go!
- I think you understand by now - we cannot be idle, nor can we expect the lost to stumble in here
- **Thought** I think at some level every Christian knows this is our job, yet it takes faith to go! Lord, give us that faith and encouragement
- **Illustrate** As the shooting overnight reminds us yet again - this nation needs Jesus! Our community needs Jesus.
- **Final thought** - the sower **isn't** responsible for how it is received - i.e. he is merely responsible for having the word and sowing the word!

The power in the seed

- Consider the potential locked within a tiny seed!
- It doesn't seem like much - but when sown in good soil, can produce a plant which can reproduce *100 fold*
- We have mentioned a couple of times over the course of preparing for the outreach - but let me remind you again of **Rom 1:16-17** (ESV) (16) *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (17) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*
- The Word of God has the power to transform those who receive it with faith!
- The problems of this present age may seem overwhelming, but our basic problem is a **Spiritual Problem** and the Gospel alone can change a man from the inside out!

The response of the soil

The parable focuses on the response of the various soils - and I'll review them briefly this morning:

Hard soil (path)

- These are the casualty of spiritual battle
- See v15 *And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear,*

Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.

- The enemy is working against the Gospel spreading. He doesn't want souls to be saved
- **Ask:** What makes hard ground? Sin - sin hardens the heart, making it impossible for the seed to be planted. Making it easy pickings for the bird of the air.
- **Thought:** A path is worn by repeated walking in the same spot. A hard heart is formed by repeated sin and ignoring the Spirit's conviction! Soon - that heart is too hard to receive!

Shallow soil

- Jesus says [Mark 4:5-6](#) (ESV) (5) *Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. (6) And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away.*
- Then explains [Mark 4:16-17](#) (ESV) (16) *And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. (17) And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.*
- **Truth** Persecution will come - in both the parable and the explanation, Jesus uses the word *When* - not *if*
- Living the life that is patterned after Christ is not easy!
- We as Americans are living at the beginning of a dry, hot period
- Church - dig deep roots! Into the Word, learning how to seek His presence and refresh yourself with His Spirit - or you won't survive!

Thorny ground

- Jesus says [Mark 4:7](#) (ESV) (7) *Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain.*
- And again [Mark 4:18-19](#) (ESV) (18) *And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, (19) but 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.*
- This seed produces a plant, just doesn't bear fruit!
- This is where we are in American Christianity
- **Point:** Our focus and attention and pursuit is on something other than bearing fruit!
- We have to realize the return of Christ is at hand! [Matt 24:46](#) (ESV) (46) *Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.*

Good soil

- Finally, there is the good soil
- See [Mark 4:8](#) (ESV) (8) *And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."*
- And [Mark 4:20](#) (ESV) (20) *But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear*

the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

- **Point:** The good soil is the one that multiplies!
- We are to reproduce.
- Remember **Matt 28:19-20** (ESV) (19) *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Closing - What about you

- If you've ever heard the Gospel - you're one of these soil types
- Is it changing you? Is it producing fruit in you
- **Note:** If you're good soil - you'll become a sower!