

The Parable of the 4 Soils

Mark 4:1-20

I. Intro

- A. 30 day Challenge
- B. Parables: a short story used to illustrate a truth
 1. Scholars count 8 parables in Mark, the fewest of all the gospel accounts
 2. Scholars also do not count the 3 short parables listed in Mark 3:22-27, that Mark calls parables...they call them proverbs...so like everything else, it is debated.
- C. To be prepared to receive the Word, we must recognize the challenges, and face them with the truth Jesus presents today.
- D. Learn to Listen, Prepare to Grow
 1. Huge truth
 2. Only comes from God
 3. Connected to the previous passage
 4. Blasphemeing the Spirit...The Real Family...Those who bear fruit.
- E. Today you will need to let the Spirit help you assess with soil category you are.
 1. Are you hard packed?
 2. Are you rocky soil with no room for deep root growth?
 3. Are you trying to grow with thorns growing all around you?
 4. Or, Are you fertile soil ready to grow and produce a harvest?

II. Text

- A. Verses 1-9: The Parable
 1. The Hard Ground: Birds devoured the seed
 2. The Rocky Ground: The sun scorched the new sprouts
 3. The Thorny Ground: The other things growing choked out the good plants
 4. The Prepared Ground: Good soil
- B. Verses 10-12: The Purpose
 1. Jesus was investing in His disciples at this time
 2. He was going to die on the Cross to overcome a greater problem than temporary unbelief
 3. There would be a day that all was proclaimed in fullness, but this was not the time.
 4. Matthew gives a more detailed account:
 5. [Mat 13:10-17 ESV] 10 Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" 11 And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 13 This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: "'You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.'" 15 For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.' 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. 17 For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.
- C. Verses 13-20: The Explanation
 1. Hard Path: Hard hearts, satan steals the seed
 2. Rocky Soil: quick sprout, but no depth
 3. Thorny Ground: new growth is choked out by the chaos of the worldly influence
 4. Good soil: hear, accept, produce a harvest

III. Points

- A. Bad Soil is Compromised

1. Compromised by years of outside influence and neglect
 2. Hard soil:
 - a) The reality of life is it is difficult, and prolonged difficulty can make us hard hearted
 - b) Being hard hearted is a false protection that has taken years to develop, just like a hard path where thousands of footsteps have packed the ground.
 3. Rocky Ground is impacted by the influence of that which is not broken down, but filled with things that prevent roots from growing deep.
 - a) The top side of the plant is important, but the roots need to run deep as well.
 - b) We must make room for our roots to run deep
 4. Thorny Ground:
 - a) All the stuff in the world will choke out our growth if we all it
 - b) The thorny plants are symbolic of all the things in our life that steal our spiritual energy, or distract us from what gives life.
 5. The things that make the first 3 soils unprepared for seed are the outside influences that need to be removed
 6. What about you?
 - a) Are you hard packed soil where the seed of the Word is trampled underfoot and stolen by the thieves?
 - b) Are you Rocky soil, where you are quick to respond to something, but your roots do not feed?
 - c) Are you among thorns, where you are covered up by the things of this world that choke out and prevent growth?
- B. Good Soil is not Accidental
1. Hard packed soil can be broken up and prepared with some really hard work
 2. Rocky ground can be made good by committed labor and rock removal
 3. Thorny ground can be made good by prolonged commitment to pulling weeds, and its not a one time task, it is an never ending task
 4. Good soil didn't show up to the party already ready to receive seed, it took time and work to get there.
 5. It took cultivation:
 - a) Cultivation is the act of nurturing, developing, and improving something
 - b) This is the same action required in disciple making
 - c) When making disciples:
 - (1) Genuine care is vital
 - (a) You cannot see people as a tally mark on your Bible
 - (b) Care for people the way Christ cares for them.
 - (2) Genuine time commitment is vital
 - (a) People require time
 - (b) Model the Christian life, and teach the Christian life
 - (c) This takes time
 - (3) Genuine standards are vital:
 - (a) don't compromise the truth, don't compromise the love
 - (b) Keep the standard of godliness no matter what
 - (4) Genuine relationship is vital:
 - (a) develop the relationship so deeply that speaking truth about hard things is received
 - (b) If you just waded off into someones life yelling true statements, there will be no positive truth response
 6. We must take note, and become good soil
 7. We must also take note and help others become good soil
- C. He who has ears to hear
1. The Sower sows the word (Mark 4:14) THATS OUR JOB
 2. The Creator gives understanding

- a) Only God can give understanding
- b) Only God can open hearts and minds to the truth
- 3. Sometimes people are not ready to hear what God would have to say to them, prepare them through giving of your time and His truth
- 4. God can soften hearts and open minds. HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN!
- 5. I love it when you hear me, but I love it more when you hear GOD.
- 6. God Speaks quotes:
 - a) Henry T. Blackaby: "When God speaks to you, he is not writing a new book of Scripture; rather, he is applying to your life what he has already said in his Word."
 - b) Billy Graham: "God speaks primarily through the Bible, but He also speaks through circumstances, through prayer, and through the Holy Spirit."
- 7. God Speaks in various ways:
 - a) With a Whisper: [1Ki 19:11-12 ESV] 11 And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.
 - b) Through the Spirit: [Jhn 16:13 ESV] 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.
 - c) Through the Scripture: [2Ti 3:16-17 ESV] 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

IV. Close

- A. Learn to Listen, Prepare to grow
- B. Do you Hear from God? How quickly do you respond?
- C. It takes some of us some time, but we should respond quickly
- D. Some of us do not respond, and there is a reason:
- E. [Jhn 8:39-47 ESV] 39 They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, 40 but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. 41 You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father--even God." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. 43 Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. 46 Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? 47 Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."