

The Soil of the HEART

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Mark 4:1-20 NIV

Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. [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, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times."

[9] Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

[10] When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. [11] He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables [12] so that,

" 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving,
and ever hearing but never understanding;
otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!'"

[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-- thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

The seed is the same for everyone. The Word of God is the seed.
1. It is dependent upon the person's heart (the soil) whether or not the seed (Word) bears fruit in them.

The question is, "is your heart good soil?"

The shallow heart. Read excerpt from,
 "The Parables of Jesus" -Boice. Moody Press, 1983.
 Pg. 17 "The second type of soil...
 (Pg. 18) You may be the rocky soil."

I was thinking this morning about youth camp. I'm so excited about camp, because it always strengthens us as a group, and without fail, we return with a fresh passion and excitement about the Lord. I remember last year when we returned from camp, all of you that went would be the first ones to the front of church on Sunday morning to worship. You set the pace for the rest of the people to enter in to worship... it was awesome, but somewhere along the way... the worries of life (like what your friends might think, or if that guy or girl likes you), the desire for riches (that job that takes up all of your time), the thorns came in and choked out what God was doing in your life. Or maybe

it is because our hearts are rocky soil. When we hear the Word, it springs up in us... a fresh passion, a zeal for God... we're involved in worship... and we're always sure to be up for Sunday School, but than because we aren't rooted in the Word of God... it soon dies out. That is why it is SO important that we continually get into the Word of God... we will become rooted, when we make reading the Word a priority in our lives.

And what happens when the seed lands in good soil?

It brings multiplication. (30, 60, or 100 times what was sown.)

ASK: What is the seed? The Word.

ASK: What is the soil? The heart.

When the Word lands in a good heart, it brings multiplication of what was sown. What was sown? The Word of God. It will reap none other than the seeds of the Word of God, which will be cast upon other's hearts.

2. When the Word takes root in your life, it leads you to contagious Christianity.

People that are growing in the Word, become Sowers themselves. They begin "casting seed" upon the hearts of those around them.

3 EVIDENCES of the WORD PLANTED HEART

A. *They start to speak differently.* Instead of talking dirty, and making off-color jokes, they begin to talk about things that are pure and good. Instead of cutting people down, they begin to build others up. They become an encourager.

Activity: *Everyone say at least one compliment/kind word to three other people. If someone says a compliment to you, you have to find something kind to say to them.*

A person who has allowed the Word to take root in their heart becomes a witness. The "Sower" is always on the look

out for people to invite to church, or to offer a prayer for in time of need. The "Sower" doesn't hesitate to cast seed. Even if a person seems like they will not receive, the "Sower" often spreads the Word anyway, because the "Sower" realizes that seed should be cast, and the soil will decide the outcome.

- B. *They start to live differently.*** The fruit is visible. A person acts differently, when the Word has taken root in them. He begins to treat others with respect, putting them ahead of himself. He doesn't involve himself with things that would contradict the Word, which is planted in him. (ex. He/she won't have sex before marriage, because the Word of God commands sex to be reserved for a man and woman who have been committed to one another in marriage. Not only that but the fruitful person will seek to avoid even the appearance of evil.) A fruitful person behaves in a way that would reflect the life of Christ, his ultimate example. WWJD
- C. *Other People Want What They Have.*** When you live differently other people notice. When they see the joy and peace you possess in your new life, some people will get jealous. Your Christianity becomes contagious. Like the flu, when people get around it, they catch it. Only this is a good "disease" and it will change their life for the better.

Activity:

Hand out cups of soil and sunflower seeds. Have each student plant their seed and watch it grow as they care for it over the next few weeks. Tell them... as the seed grows, remember that the Word of God in you heart is like that seed. As you care for your heart-soil through reading the Word, prayer, being involved in worship, going to camp... you will see growth.

Prayer: Lord, help me heart to be good soil. Let the Word bear fruit in me. In Jesus name, Amen.