

The Soil of the Heart

Mark 4:1-20

4/25/04

Intro

In Mark 4, we learn of God's heart through a parable about a farmer who sows his seed and how that seed falls on different types of soils.

The soils are different types of conditions of the heart. The Lord wants us to take a look at the condition of our heart and make changes in our lives so we can be fruitful in godly things.

The sower, Jesus taught, sows the Word of God. The sower, spreading seed by hand throws the seed on four different types of soil, representing four types of conditions of the heart.

These verses give us an opportunity to see what is happening in our hearts so we can bring the changes that God desires.

I. Hard Ground Must be Broken

A. Some hearts are hard

- Some seed falls on the path where everyone walks and has become hardened.
- So the seed cannot penetrate through.
- The Word of God cannot take root unless it penetrates into the heart.
- They don't take it seriously.

Genesis 19:14, "Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, "Up, get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy the city." But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting."

Ezekiel 36:26, "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

B. The seed is taken away

- Jesus explains that the seed is snatched away by Satan; the opportunity is lost.
- Many people come up with reasons, or excuses why they cannot respond to God's Word.

Luke 14:16-24 - Many invited to the banquet; few come.

- The scripture also tells us that Satan blinds the minds of the unbelieving.

II Corinthians 4:3-4, "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

C. The ground must be broken

- This is the only condition that allows the seed to penetrate the heart and take root.
- There must come a time when there is a humble confession of our lost-ness.

Psalm 51:17, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”

- The resistance to the Lord is often seen in stubbornness.

Jeremiah 18:11-12, Thus says the LORD, "... Oh turn back, each of you from his evil way, and reform your ways and your deeds." But they will say, “It's hopeless! For we are going to follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.”

I. Other Hearts have Rocks and Thorns

A. In the rocks, they have no firm root

- These are people who hear the Word of God and receive it with joy.
- But the truth does not run deep into the heart.
- As soon as the heat of affliction of persecution arises, they fall away.
- The problem is that these people are more concerned about what other people think of them than what God thinks of them.

John 12:42-43, “Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out

of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”

B. The worries of the world

- This is a condition many people today face every day.
- Martha was a woman we can all relate to...

Luke 10:40-42, But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." But the Lord answered and said to her, " Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

- It about worry rather than faith.

Luke 12:22-34 Do not worry about your life...

Illus – There was an old song, however, that missed it. “Don’t worry; be happy. Don’t worry; be happy.”

- Seek first the kingdom of God...

C. The desire for worldly things

- First, Jesus mentions the deceitfulness of riches.

Luke 12:13-21 – watch for every form of greed.

1 John 2:16-17, “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

- These things choke the Word.
- That is a very good picture of what happens to prevent the Word from being fruitful in these.

III. The Heart God Desires

A. To hear God’s Word and receive it

- In these, their roots run deep; that is the key.
- When there are deep roots, they can drink from the water of life.

Psalm 1:2-3, “But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.”

- They keep weeds and thorns from their soul.

B. The fruit of godliness

- Many people are confused as to what is the fruit God desires.

- Some think it to be bringing others to Christ; rather it is the fruit of godliness in the heart.

Galatians 5:22-24, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

Conclusion

Some bring 30, 60, even 100 fold fruit of godliness. The good news is that the ground can change; the heart can change. Ask God and He would love to answer.