



WEEK THREE: The Parable of the Sower

WARM-UP

- If you were to quit your current career and become a farmer, which crops would you grow? Why?
- Describe the oldest house plant you own.
- What's the shortest time you've ever kept a house plant living?

WORD

¹Again 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. ²He taught them many things by parables, and in His teaching said: ³"Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times." ⁹Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

¹⁰When He was alone, the Twelve and the others around Him asked Him about the parables.

¹¹He 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 ¹²so that,

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

WE EXIST TO HELP PEOPLE KNOW GOD, GROW TOGETHER,
DISCOVER PURPOSE, AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



WEEK THREE : The Parable of the Sower

WORD CONTINUED

¹³Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? ¹⁴The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵Some 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. ¹⁶Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ¹⁸Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²⁰Others, 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.”

Mark 4: 1-20 (NIV)

INTRODUCTION

Today we will be studying and discussing the Parable of the Sower from **Mark 4: 1-20**. Parables are stories that Jesus told about common, everyday occurrences and situations that teach deeper, spiritual truths. Jesus encouraged His followers (and anyone willing) to seek to discern the deeper truths hidden in the common stories with the saying, “Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.” (Mark 4:9)

In this parable, Jesus describes a farmer sowing seed in four different kinds of soil: 1) Hard-packed soil on a beaten path, where the seed can’t penetrate and is eaten by birds; 2) Shallow soil without any depth for the plants to root into. When the sun got too strong, the plants withered and died for lack of sufficient roots; 3) Thorny soil, where weeds sprung up alongside the plants and choked them out before they had a chance to bear

Mark

THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS



WEEK THREE : The Parable of the Sower

INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

to bear fruit; and 4) Good soil, which produced a multitude of fruit, thirty, sixty, and one hundred times than the original seed that was planted.

Jesus states that understanding this parable is key to understanding every other parable because it deals with how we receive the Word of God. It also illustrates how we grow, from receiving the Word to helping spread it to others. We will pick up at the point where Jesus begins explaining the parable to His disciples.

DISCUSSION

1. Who was the first one to scatter the seed of the Word in your heart?
2. Why does the Word not take root in the first type of soil that Jesus described? (v. 15)
3. What causes the plants to wither in the second type of soil? (v. 16 - 17)
4. What are the three things that choke out the plants in the third type of soil? (v. 18 - 19)

APPLICATION

1. Which of the four types of soil best describes your heart currently?



WEEK THREE : The Parable of the Sower

APPLICATION CONTINUED

2. Which kind of thorn mentioned in verse 19 — “the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things” — do you find most challenging in your life?
3. What can you do to the soil of your heart to help the seed produce more fruit?
4. What are some things you can do to scatter more seed in the hearts of others?

PRAYER

- Pray that your connect group will be healthy and that community will grow in the group.
- Ask God to help you guard and grow your heart so that it will have be soft, deep, and free of distractions, so the Word of God can be received.
- Ask God to help you bear much fruit through your life and spread the seed of God’s Word to others.

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TRANSFORMING THE CITY, ONE LIFE AT A TIME