

Scripture this week:

Mark 4:1-20

¹Again 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. ²And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: ³"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. ⁶And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ⁸And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." ⁹And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." ¹⁰And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. ¹¹And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, ¹²so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.'" ¹³And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴The sower sows the word. ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷And 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. ¹⁸And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, ¹⁹but 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. ²⁰But 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."

Sowing, Seeds, Soil

Mark 4:1-20

Todd Chapman - December 2, 2018

In order to encourage us, Jesus tells a parable about farming to help us more clearly explain how His kingdom works.

Jesus tells a parable.

Jesus explains why He uses parables.

Jesus explains the parable.

Life Group Discussion Questions:

Notes:

Mark 4:1-20

What does it mean?

1. What are your initial thoughts on the parable of the sower? Would you have imagined the parable to mean something different before Jesus' explanation of it? What do you think his purpose is in telling the parable to this large crowd?
2. Why do you think Mark places this story immediately after Jesus declaring who is in his true family?
3. Who do you think has ears to hear (v 9)?
4. What are the two reasons Jesus gives for speaking in parables in verses 11 and 12? Why are some meant to not be understood?
5. If the parables are supposed to be apparent to those who have been given the "secret of the kingdom of God" (v 11), why do the twelve still have such a hard time understanding?
6. Who is the sower? What do we know about him from Jesus' initial telling of the parable and then his explanation? Do you think it's intentional that we don't know much about him?
7. Why does Jesus describe so many options of soils rather than simply "bad soil" and "good soil"?
8. Who are those "along the path" in verse 15?
9. In verse 16, how does Jesus describe the seed sown on rocky ground?
10. What does it mean to have good soil, and what do the seeds sown by the sower produce in those that have good soil?
11. What would you say this parable is about, the sower or the soil?

How does it apply?

1. What do the actions of the sower have to say about what our response should be to receiving the word?
2. Can you think of any examples of people you've met or talked to that resemble some of the types of soil that Jesus describes?
3. Do you have good soil? Describe what it might mean for you to "bear fruit."
4. How do we reconcile God's sovereignty over the different soils and our responsibility to continue sowing? What encouragement do we have in sharing the word with others?