

Wednesday March 11 ~ What Soil Type are You? ~ Mark 4:1-20

In this parable, Jesus is the farmer who sows His teachings amongst the multitudes. Although Jesus communicates the message, those who hear the message must respond before the communication is complete. Jesus gave examples of four soil types to illustrate His point.

The soil on the roads near the fields is hard and unprepared for planting. The topsoil is worn away and it has no nutrients capable of producing a crop. Birds can easily take away the seeds that fall on this hardened soil. This soil represents those who hear the message, but the message has no effect on them.

Soil in the rocky places is poorly suited for growing crops because it contains very few nutrients. The rocky soil represents people who initially believe, but after a short time they fall away because they are not prepared for hard times.

Sometimes the message falls among the thorns. These people also initially believe the Word. However, the Word does not have its proper effect on them because they turn away to the worries of the world, such as the pursuit of riches, idols, and unfruitful desires.

The good soil represents those whose hearts are receptive to the Word of God and who continue on in their faith despite temptations, trials, and difficulties. These people hear and accept the Word, and then produce fruit thirty, sixty, or a hundred-fold.

What soil are you? As you begin to produce fruit, be encouraged even when you don't see results - this even happened to Jesus. Keep sowing the Word of God and sharing the gospel.

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The Parable of the Sower

4 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. 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!"^[a]

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."