

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION

THE SOILS - JESUS' PARABLES: MARK 4:1-20



SCRIPTURE

MARK 4:1–20 Again 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. 2 And 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. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. 5 Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. 6 And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. 8 And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” 9 And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

10 And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. 11 And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, 12 so that

“they may indeed see but not perceive,
and may indeed hear but not understand,
lest they should turn and be forgiven.”

13 And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? 14 The sower sows the word. 15 And 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. 16 And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. 17 And 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. 18 And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, 19 but 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. 20 But 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.”

BIG IDEA

In Mark 4, Jesus begins teaching in parables because he cares more about seeing the gospel take root in our hearts than drawing crowds. Within this first parable that Mark records, Jesus warns us of multiple reasons we might reject him. First, because of hardness of heart, likely because of self-righteousness. This is exactly like the Pharisees who outright rejected Jesus. Another reason is because being a Christian begins to cost something, worldly speaking. Those who, in the end, are pretending to be Christians will not stick with Jesus when suffering or persecution comes because of being a Christian. Lastly, Jesus teaches that some reject him because they care more about the world and the deceitful things the world offers.

What we really need is life because spiritually speaking we're all dead as dirt because of our sin. This life is Jesus himself—he's the sower and the seed. And the only way we can receive his life is because he died for us. We can receive Jesus' abundant life that begins now and stretches into eternity because he endured our abundant death on the cross.

DISCUSSION

1. Was there anything from the sermon, big idea, or Mark 4:1–20 that **stood out** to you? **challenged** you? or **confused** you?
2. What do you think is the main point of this parable? What does it tell us about the Christian life?
3. Which of the four soils do you identify with now? Why? Which of the four soils have you identified more with in the past? Why?
4. Make sure and pray for one another individually.