

Date: 11.12.2004

Passage: Mark 4:3-9 (Parable of the Sower and Soil)

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*What does the following represent in the parable?*

Farmer:	God
Sowing:	Act of spreading the Gospel/ God's word
Seed:	God's word
Soil:	Us
Birds:	Satan
Sun:	Trouble and persecution
Thorns:	Worries/ Deceitfulness of wealth/ Desires

What are the four types of soil?

1. Path
2. Rocky places with shallow soil
3. Soil with thorns
4. Good soil

*Who are the people described with the first type of soil?*

v. 4: People who heard the Gospel, but didn't accept it. (Luke 8:11-12: they don't believe and therefore, won't be saved)

*Application:* The parable reminds us to follow up after we share the Gospel with someone.

*Who are the people described with the second type of soil?*

v. 5: Explained in v. 16. When we hear the Word, in the moment, we may be very excited and passionate. However, this is only mentally or emotionally, because when trouble comes, we forget the passion for Christ and are overcome by our problems. When there's not much soil, roots can't get deep. Our roots need to be deep founded in Christ in times of joy and trials. Also, the rocky places in our lives may be things that we do not want to yield to God or bitterness that we have etc.

*How can we 'grow the roots' so that we will be able to persevere when trouble comes?*

Be faithful in daily Bible reading and praying to God. Surround ourselves with other believers, so we can get encouragement and guidance from them to mature in our faith. We can build unity as the body of Christ.

*What does the sun represent and is not sun essential to the growth of plants?*

v. 6: The sun can represent trouble and persecution, but it can be a good thing too because they help us build character. (Romans 5:3-5 perseverance verses)

It could also be a resource that we need, but if we're not ready, it does no good. Seeds need to be deep enough in the soil before the sun is beneficial.

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*What are the thorns in our lives?*

v. 7: Explained in v. 18-19.

- Worldly worries: we should pray about them, and cast them to God. At times, worries are just our sense of responsibility for doing and planning something, but we shouldn't let it engulf us so much that we forget about God's sovereign role in our lives. Matt: 6:34 – "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself." Worry is also trying to take responsibility for what we are not responsible for.
- Deceitfulness of wealth: Merely being financially prosperous will not bring us security. We should realize that God is the source of all our needs. (Prov 11:4 and Prov 11:28) Do we think that we should be paid a higher salary?
- Other worldly desires: Lust of the eyes (1 John 2:16)

Don't let our daily routines become overcrowded with materialistic pursuits that can deafen us to God's Word. At the same time, we can be passionate about things, but use our passions for God, and ask how we can further God's kingdom with our passions.

*What is different about the fourth type of soil from the other types?*

v. 8: (See also Luke 8:15) Only the fourth type soil bears a crop. It shows the consummation of following God's Word – sharing the Gospel with others, who in turn share with others. Multiplications of the number of Christians who can further share the Gospel. Disciplining as example of nurturing the plant (mentoring new Christians) so that the plant will grow strong and produce a crop.

*What do you think Jesus meant by the verse 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear'?*

v. 9: We must be willing to listen not only with our ears, but also with a prayerful heart, and applying the teachings in our lives.

*Self-Reflection:*

- Which type of soil are we?
- How can we become the fourth type of soil?