

Mark 4:1-20

His Seed/Your Heart – The Parable of the Sower

The Human heart is an incredible Organ!

A) The heart is the size of a “fist” and weighs less than a pound

B) The heart usually beats 70 times a minute, 100,000 times a day and pumps 2,000 gallons of blood a day

C) keeping blood flowing through the 60,000 miles of blood vessels that feed your organs and tissues.

1) During an average lifetime, the heart will pump nearly 1.5 million barrels of blood—enough to fill 200 train tank cars

D) A kitchen faucet would need to be turned on all the way for at least 45 years to equal the amount of blood pumped by the heart in an average lifetime.

E) Every day, the heart creates enough energy to drive a truck 20 miles.

1) In a lifetime, that is equivalent to driving to the moon and back.

The Human heart is indeed an Incredible Organ!

Spiritually speaking the heart has an even greater function

A) The Bible uses the heart as a symbol of the inner man,

B) In Scripture the heart is considered the center of all physical, mental, emotional and spiritual activity.

C) A man’s deepest thoughts, deepest feelings, deepest intentions are all associated with the heart.

D) The term heart is used over 1,000 times in the Bible making it the most common anthropological term in Scripture.

Man is described in Scripture as

- Thinking in his heart
- Purposing with his heart
- Feels with his heart
- Hears with his heart
- Intentions in his heart

B) Here in Mark 4 Jesus likens the human heart to a field – where spiritual life can happen.

RD V.1-9

Now it is at this point in the ministry of Jesus that He begins to speak to the people in what is called Parables - Hasn't really done this up to this pt
THE WORD "PARABLE"... Greek "parabole" (para-bow-LAY)

A) Means "to place beside, to cast alongside"

As defined by Vine's Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words, it "signifies a placing of one thing beside another with a view to comparison"

B) Wiersbe's description of a parable... As "a story that places one thing beside another for the purpose of teaching"

"It puts the known next to the unknown so that we may learn"

C) What Jesus was doing in these Parables is:

He was taking something that was very familiar in the Physical realm and throwing it alongside of something that was unfamiliar in the Spiritual realm

So here Jesus is using the familiar picture of farming (agricultural area)

A) So he uses this familiar picture of farming to illustrate an important spiritual truth!

B) *The Sower went out to sow* - Farming was different in those days – today – heavy machinery – pp own 1,000s of acres

1) In those days – **everything done by hand** – animals

Farms were much smaller – 1 acre two acre – larger might be 5-10 acres

A) So the sower goes out – a sack or pouch with seed.
Fling

B) Four kinds of soil

In V.4 Jesus describes the first kind of soil as the **wayside soil – another translation = pathway.**

A) Those days the farms were long strips of land – pathway in between for walking

B) The pathway is impenetrable – Because it is so hard – the seed can't sink down into the soil – and the birds snatch the seed and carry it away

2nd Soil – Stony ground

A) Israel is a stony place (wilderness) { story that at Creation God assigned two angels the Job of spreading rocks equally around the world

B) First Angel went off and did just that –

1) the 2nd Angel – lazy – dumped all of his in Israel

C) Stony soil looks good on the surface –but underneath limestone rock

1) Sun comes out the soil gets extra warm – because of the rocks – **seed germinates quickly, springs up fast**

D) Because there is no depth/withers & the plant dies **3rd soil** Thorns { What grows quicker than anything and without any water – Weeds

A) That is what Jesus has in mind here – weeds and thorns- overtake the seed – choke it out

B)4th soil is soft – ready – yields a bountiful harvest

Jesus ended the Parable with these words – V.9 To him who has ears to hear – let him hear!

A)EARLESS PP IN THE CROWD?

B) Speaking of the Ears of the heart!

Mark 4:10-12

10 But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.

Matthew gospel says they asked him – Why speak in Parables.

11 And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, 12 so that

'Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And their sins be forgiven them.'"

Parables were meant to Reveal and Conceal.

C)This was the purpose of the parables – For those who were eager to learn and for those who were following Jesus for the right reasons

1)The parables were meant to arouse in them a Hunger or a curiosity concerning the things of God

D)The Parables were to create in them a desire to dig deeper/ to ask questions { to press in & to draw near 1)Which is exactly what the disciples do – Please explain – they were intrigued stirred up stimulated by the parables

So the Parables are meant to Reveal – to those truly seeking!

But for those who really weren't interested in knowing God the Parables were meant to conceal!

A)See there were many pp following Jesus – side show- Next miracle – next demonized person released – next confrontation with the religious leaders

B)And you had the religious leaders who although for the most part were polite listeners – they were always looking to trip up Jesus

1)Always looking for a reason to accuse Him!

C)They could appear polite on the outside – but inside – seething – Jealous – already plotting His death

HERE'S THE POINT that Jesus is making - If a man wants to know the Word of God, he can know it. If a man wants to know the truth, he can know it.

But you can also shut your ears to it.

A number of years ago a coal mine collapsed, and **seven miners** were trapped inside for three and a half days.

Rescue workers dug feverishly, and when they finally broke through the caved-in mineshaft, the miners were **whooping and hollering**, obviously grateful they had been rescued—

until one of the seven said, “Hey, why doesn’t someone light a lantern?” The other six looked at their friend, and they realized he was blind.

The light was on. The lanterns were lit.

The rescue team had brought light into the darkened shaft, but he could not see because he had been blinded by the cave-in.

Until the light came through, no one knew who was blind and who could see.

The light had to shine on all seven before anyone could differentiate between those who could see and those who were blind.

So, too, Jesus taught believer and non-believer alike in order to determine who was truly blind.

A)The light was shining for those who wanted to see.

B)But those who chose to be wicked wouldn’t see the light, and it would only prove their blindness.

C)Today - There are multitudes of self-proclaimed broadminded people who shut their ears to the Word of God.

1)They don’t want to listen to it.

D)My kids were younger - Aaron is sharp - sometimes tried to give / Amy advice /

1)Amy can be stubborn - fingers in her ears *I am not listening -*

E)People tune the Lord out in the same way: Not fingers in the ears – turn up the radio –

1)Busy their lives with activities

Jesus said to His disciples but to you it has been given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God.

A)Mystery is musterion= something that was once hidden that has now been revealed.

B)Here is His point – the kingdom of God is not so much about – the external things –

B)But internal things – It is about the condition of the heart.

So Jesus explains the Parable

Mark 4:13-20

13 And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the

parables? {This parable is key to understanding all the parables} Seed/sower/soil

14 The sower sows the word. 15 And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16 These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17 and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. 18 Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, 19 and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 20 But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Three key components:

- 1. The seed = The word of God**
- 2. The Sower = anyone who shares**
- 3. The soil = human hearts.**

QUESTION: Why compare God's Word to seed?

- 1.) A Seed bears the BLUEPRINT for life within it.**
A)Seed blueprint for a plant.

B)God's word has the blueprint for life in it

C)Unlike the words of men, the Word of God has life in it; and that life can be imparted to those who will believe.

1 Peter 1:23

"having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."

2.) A seed is small, the Good News is small, yet Powerful:

Word is *"living and powerful"* (Heb. 4:12).

Have you ever seen a Seed crack a concrete side walk?

POINT: NEVER underestimate the POWER of the Word of God!

NEVER be ashamed of it.... ***because IT IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION.*** (Romans 1:16)

3.) The Word, like a Seed, must be Planted to do any good. It must be Cultivated, Nurtured etc.

This parable illustrated that the problem is not with the SEED – but with the soil!

A)So too the problem is not with the Word but the condition of the heart it is planted in.

B) In V.14-20 He reveals that the 4 soils represent 4 different human hearts

1) Four different responses to the word of God.

C) Note 3 of the 4 are not right

D) Encouragement to those who share the word – only 1 of 4 really receive it!

4 Soils – 4 hearers – 4 hearts – same is true of this crowd here today.

A) V.15 Jesus defines the pathway soil as the heart that is hardened toward the word of God.

HARD HEART

B) So the Pathway soil represents the heart that is just hardened against the gospel – Hardened against the truth of God's word

C) See it when I am preaching: arms folded – Scowl

1) Funerals – today

Why are some pp so hard?

A) Some walked on – like the path – hard because been hurt

B) Others seen too much hypocrisy – turned off

C) Others – John 3 Love the darkness – don't want to hear.

Satan snatches the seed!

A) Satan knows the Power of God's word to transform any life that allows it to have it's way –

B) So he looks for every opportunity to thwart that

Seed among the stones:

Spiritually speaking { SHALLOW HEART! }

A) This describes the person who only allows the word of God to have a shallow place in their lives

B) Springs up quickly – v.16 Jesus describes the person who receives the word in the stony place is the one who receives it with Joy – Emotional response

C) But as soon as difficulty comes – as soon as some trial or persecution comes – their faith withers and dies

D) They stick with the Lord as long as everything is going good in their lives

1) But as soon as difficulty comes { GONE! }

LIKE FICKLE FANS - You are awesome – Bum traded

A) Some pp do that with Jesus – Jesus is so Awesome

B) Jesus what have you done for me lately!

3rd soil Thorns

Spiritually speaking: CROWDED HEART

A)The word gets choked out by the thorns

B)Defined as – the Deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this life **& desire for other things.**

1) All are dangerous to the intake of God's word

C)Note Deceitfulness of Riches – **RICHES LIE** –

1)They tell us that meaning Satisfaction and purpose is found in more!

Cc)How many millionaires are miserable – guy who won the lottery – worst thing that every happened to him

D)How many millions does it take to make a man happy? One more

Riches lie to us

But the other problems are probably more of one that most of us deal with

A)**Cares of this life – responsibilities of this life** – bills to pay/ things to do Easily distracted

B)How many times has God spoken to your heart – called you to draw near – intent was right –

1)Never happened – because you got pulled away by something

THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE PERSON WHO HEARS THE WORD BUT IS CHOKED OUT by the CARES, RICHES & PLEASURES

God wants to begin to UPROOT those things that have been "CHOKING OFF" the Word of God in your life.

1) Thorns - needs to be cleared -

Priorities put back in order

Final soil – Open heart – soft and Pliable – Word goes in and is able to root deeply – unhindered – not distracted BEARS FRUIT

Bearing fruit

Matthew 12:33 for the tree is known by its fruit.

Gospel: Jesus loves you

Hard heart – He can heal the hurts

Shallow – time for a real response

Thorns –realize – how many times been distracted

SECONDARY APP SAVED 4 soils one heart HEART HAS FOUR CHAMBERS

A)All have things from the word – we respond well to

B)Um Um – Preach it Pastor Rob – “Hope my husband is listening –

1)Need to get so and so that message.

C)Other things – We don’t want to hear-hard

1)Calling me in the nursery – no longer kids there

D)Mad – can’t believe he is talking about this!

Things that we respond emotionally –

A)So good – I need to do that –

B)Put into practice for a week – until hard

1)Gym membership

C) **other areas – Thorns – we hear – we have every intent of putting into practice**

1)Cares of this life – other pursuits choke out

What makes for good soil

- 1. Saturation: Soft heart = surrendered heart**
- 2. Meditation -Depth = meditate {cow chews /Journal**
- 3. Concentration -Absence of distractions – Prune**
- 4. Application – Doers of the word –
Take root**

Your heart today:

Hard – Jesus loves you – let Him heal – stop resisting His love

GIVE YOUR HEART TO CHRIST TODAY

Shallow – Real commitment – be done with the ups and downs – instead of an emotional response

Distracted: What is more important than a relationship with Jesus –

LET HIM BE THE CENTER OF ALL THOSE THINGS

RECOMMITMENT

BELIEVER

Is there an area of your heart – that is hard?

Surrender

Shallow – time and time again – emotional response

Distracted – surrender