



## Planting Seeds of The Gospel

### Mark 4:1-20

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It was great to be preaching again but I love to live life with people even during their darkest moments. We all have dark moments in life don't we. So, we need to pray for each another now more than ever. In fact, **1 Thessalonians 5:16-17** says "Pray without ceasing" and **Philippians 1:3-6** says "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." This morning I would like for us to spend time in prayer **#1.** over some of our people who are going through hard times; **#2.** We need to pray for other churches and their ministries like VBS at Faith Fellowship, Miracleland Baptist and Cypress Church this week. **#3.** We also need to pray for our VBS Sports Camp at the end of this month for volunteers and see God change our community.

Last week we learned the unforgiveable sin is hardening one's heart in a way that makes repentance, and therefore forgiveness, impossible. Praise God that He calls us to salvation and His Spirit is working in our lives. Jesus made a way for you and I to be rescued and have an eternal relationship with God. There is a spiritual relationship that transcends the physical family and is open to all who are empowered by the Spirit of God to come to Christ in repentance and faith becoming a part of the family of God. **Some will REJECT it; some will accept it for a BRIEF time but then fall away; yet some will BELIEVE and will LEAD others to believe.** This parable depicts the teaching of the gospel throughout the world and the various responses of people to it. So, Jesus is sitting down in a boat teaching to the multitudes about a sower going out to sow seed.

*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.'"*

A common method of teaching in Judaism was by parables. These stories filled with deeper truths would be explained by Jesus to His disciples, but unbelievers would not understand the meaning behind them. Notice in verse 11, Jesus speaks about a mystery that refers to something previously hidden and unknown but is now revealed in the New Testament. This mystery is revealed to those who believe, yet it remains concealed to those who reject Christ and His gospel. **What is not properly UNDERSTOOD cannot be properly APPLIED.** Verses 13 & 14 says, *"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."* Understanding the parable of the sower was key in the disciples' ability to discern the meaning of Jesus' other parables of the kingdom. **Being a Jesus FOLLOWER gives the ability to DISCERN the meaning of the KINGDOM.** In this parable, Jesus explains the Parable by revealing that He — **JESUS was the Sower of the Salvation Gospel THEN. Spirit-led FOLLOWERS of Jesus are the Sower of the Salvation Gospel NOW.** We can focus more about which soil is better and miss the work of God bringing salvation by planting the gospel seed. The Ground is different types of people & The Seed is the Gospel.

The first ground mentioned is **Seed Falling by the WAYSIDE Symbolizes an Immediate ATTACK of the Enemy. (v. 4, 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."* None of these verses of scripture validate the idea that a person can lose their salvation or that Satan has the power to "snatch us out of God's hand". *"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."* **Romans 8:38-39** Verse fifteen does describe the spiritual struggle that immediately occurs once someone is open to hearing the gospel. This does not mean that they have received Christ as Lord and no longer have Him, but they are hearing the Word of God which leads to salvation and it is interrupted by Satan's tactics. This why follow up; discipleship and prayer are so important.

The second ground mentioned is **Seed Falling on STONE Symbolizes a SUPERFICIAL Response to God. (v. 5-6, 16-17)** An enthusiastic, emotional response but not taking into account the cost involved quickly fades away. *"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.*” The implication is that unbelievers do not want to turn from sin. If a person's heart is hardened, like the stony ground, the gospel never takes root in the individual's soul and never transforms their life—there is only a temporary, surface change. **The gospel is not about behavior modification but heart transformation.** Many times I would sit in a home and share the gospel with an unchurched family and the kids would come to church and the family would seem to get serious about the Lord. However, two weeks later, I would visit again with the parents. They would be confused about their child's behavior not getting better since they have been going to church and reading the Bible. They focused too much on the behavior modifications without a heart transformation. Without this heart transformation, then a superficial believer is offended or will stumble and fall away when his/her faith is put to the test. In the middle of tribulation or persecution, faith is proven genuine.

The third ground mentioned is **Seed Falling on THORNS Symbolizes a DISTRACTION from the Seriousness of the Gospel. (v. 7, 18-19)** *“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.”* We can become easily preoccupied with the temporal issues in our lives and get distracted that we miss the purpose God has for our lives and the seriousness of living for God. Our efforts of becoming as successful as we can financially and physically, we become blinded to becoming successful spiritually. **1 Timothy 4:6-8** says, *“being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”* Not only can money and material possessions not satisfy the desires of the heart or bring lasting happiness, but they also blind those who pursue eternal or spiritual concerns.

The fourth and final ground mentioned is **Seed Falling on GOOD Ground Symbolizes God's work of REDEMPTION and Believer's FRUIT BEARING. (v. 8, 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.”* Believers, in contrast to unbelievers, hear God's Word because God allows them to hear it. They “accept” it – by understanding and obeying it because God opens their mind and heart and transforms their live. **The gospel is about heart transformation.** The result is that we who do believe and are saved will produce spiritual fruit. **We can tell if a person is saved by the fruit they bear.** This helps us understand the kingdom of God. It is not equally visible to everyone, although it is a kingdom of power. Those on the outside have unreceptive hearts. If you have ears and have heard this parable today, know God is speaking to you—unveiling the “mystery” of redemption, hidden in the person and work of Christ Himself. Thank God for His for this mighty work of salvation in our lives.