

Title: A Diagnosis of the Soils

Passage: Mark 4:14-20

Draft Summary:

Diagnosis of the Soils

- The Rejecting Heart
- The Superficial Heart
- The Divided Heart
- The Hearing Heart

Application:

- If you belong to Christ, then you are a sower.
- When you sow, make sure you're sowing good seed.
- When you are sowing, sow prayerfully and expectedly.
- Examine your life.

Possible Discussion Questions:

- What point(s) in the sermon did the Lord most impress upon you?
 - In what area of your life do you need to start listening to God?
 - Who is someone you can start praying for and sowing seeds of God's Word upon?
 - What is one Biblical truth that you want to cultivate age in your life each day this week?
 - What next steps will you take in response to the sermon?
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EXPOSITION

Introduction

Parable of the Soils

Mark 4:1-8

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. And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. 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. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

- the parable was shocking because the resulting yield (thirty fold and sixty fold and a hundredfold) was humanly impossible.
 - Prompted questions in people’s minds.

Mark 4:9

And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

- A special invitation to those listening.

John 8:31-32

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

- one needs to believe and abide to find liberating truth

Mark 4:10-13

And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. 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, so that

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

And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?”

- This parable is a foundational, key parable.
 - If one’s heart is hardened, one will not understand and know God
 - If one’s heart is ready and receptive, one will understand and come to know God.

Philippians 1:6

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Mark 4:14

The sower sows the word.

Luke 8:11

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

Matthew 13:19a

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom

- The Word of God is the Gospel, which is about our Lord Jesus Christ
- We must not tamper with the seed itself
 - Analogy: many create "synthetic" seeds that are not real.

Galatians 1:9

As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

Soil = Heart

Matthew 13:19

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.

- soil in parable refers to the heart = the center of one's thoughts, emotions, and will.

I. HARD SOIL = THE REJECTING HEART

Mark 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.

- One that that does not repent.
- Originally, all our hearts are hardened.
 - Only by the mercy and grace of God are our hearts responsive to the Gospel
- How is a heart hardened even more?
 - Continuing in unbelief.
 - Love of sin

Luke 8:12

The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

2 Corinthians 4:4

In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- Continuing unbelief and love of sin make a heart unreceptive of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

II. ROCKY SOIL = THE SUPERFICIAL, SHALLOW HEART

Mark 4:16-17

And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. 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.

- One who respond to the Gospel initially but does not continue.
Superficial, shallow
- Temporary converts
 - Ex: ones who hear "prosperity gospel" who hear that Jesus can provide peace and blessings but focus on the material and unmet expectations break down their faith in God.
- Joy
 - Not the true mark of true conversion but mourning over sin.
 - But conviction of sin is the mark of true conversion

Matthew 5:2-4

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

- the first Beatitude is "poor in spirit" where we must recognize our brokenness and need for a Savior.
 - Then "mourn" = we must be broken over our sin before God.
 - Then we find genuine salvation and true joy in Christ.
- "The faith that fizzles before the finish was faulty from the first" (Adrian Rogers)

Matthew 7:26-27

And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

III. THORNY SOIL = THE DIVIDED HEART

Mark 4:18-19

And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, 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.

- One who wants Christ but cannot let go the things of the world that they cannot let go.
- The double-minded man who wants to love God and the world.

Examples:

- The Rich Young Ruler

Mark 10:17-22

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother." And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

- Judas Iscariot

John 12:6

He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.

- He spent three years with Jesus yet ultimately betrayed Him.
- Demas

2 Timothy 4:10

For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

1 John 2:16-17

For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

- Sin that distracts or weighs one down from God.

IV. THE GOOD SOIL = THE HEARING HEART

Mark 4:20

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.”

- One who receives and follows Christ.
- Fruit, not foliage, is the evidence of true salvation.
- The Gospel does not provide what your sinful heart already wants.
 - But rather the Gospel provides what you need - salvation

Matthew 7:24-25

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

APPLICATION

If you belong to Christ, you are a sower.

- you have the Spirit of Christ in you who helps sow through you.
- Misperception: I’m not qualified
 - Christ is in you. He speaks
- God does not call the qualified but qualifies the called.

Matthew 10:20

For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Acts 4:13

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

Romans 10:14-17

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

When you sow, make sure you're sowing good seed.

- Share the Word of God
 - Not your own wisdom or instincts.

Isaiah 55:10-11

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

When you are sowing, sow prayerfully and expectedly.

- It's ok to talk to your friend about Christ but don't forget to talk to Christ about your friend.
- Believe that God loves your friend more than you do so pray for them.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

Examine your own life

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

Hebrews 4:7b

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”

- be faithful to what God has called you to do.

- A man can count how many seeds are in one apple. But only God can count the apples from one seed.