

A Seed is Cast
Mark 4:1-20

"Fruit is never a matter of an overnight exercise. It takes nurturing. Thus, Jesus' teaching does not look at the reaction to God's Word in a single moment but over a period of time, which may be why the planting analogy is used. It takes time to bear fruit, just as it takes time for weeds to choke the seed or for the lack of root in a plant to become evident. Jesus' point deals with how response to the Word is a product of a process. Only one soil meets the goal from which the seed was planted, the fourth soil."
 Bock

- I. Jesus spoke in parables to give understanding to what the kingdom of God is like. How they were received depended on whether a person had ears to hear, which means having a willingness to think upon the parable to seek its deeper meaning. Jesus doesn't force people to think upon his Word in meaningful and lifechanging ways. He will bless those who have ears to hear and eyes to see by giving them to a deeper understanding of the truth of the gospel. Those who have hard hearts and who **purposely** close their eyes and ears he leaves alone to die in their unbelief. The offer of saving grace is never taken from them, but the moving of the Spirit to open their eyes and ears is. He will not work in hearts that refuse to believe his truth.

Mark 4:1-12

Matt. 13:16

Isa. 6:9-10

Rom. 2:5

John 6:44 *For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up.*

παραβολή parabolé *a narrative, fictitious but agreeable to the laws and usages of human life, by which either the duties of men or the things of God, particularly the nature and history of God's kingdom are figuratively portrayed. A parable: an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.*

"Jesus knew that not everybody would understand or give proper thought to his parables. Some people tune their hearts and ears to God's word, whilst others deliberately block their ears to God's voice. Yet others neither tune nor block their ears —Jesus told parables to challenge such folk."

- II. Jesus compared four types of people to four types of soil. Each soil represents a different condition of the heart, sadly only one bears good spiritual fruit. Satan's goal is to prevent souls from letting the truth of God's word take root. He works most easily in hearts that are hard or fickle. He must work harder in hearts that have ears to hear and eyes to see the truth of God's Word. That is why we must be on our guard, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong and do everything in love so that we can resist his deceptive ways. Otherwise, we'll end up living in constant defeat to our sin nature and to the ways of the world.

Mark 4:13-19

1 Cor. 16:13

1 Peter 5:8-9

2 Cor. 4:4

James 1:2-4

1 Peter 1:7

1 Jn. 2:15-17

2 Cor. 1:21 *Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

- III. Our responsibility as followers of Jesus Christ is to make sure we continue to have eyes to see and ears to hear. *What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us (1 Cor. 2:12).* The only way we can keep ourselves from being ineffective and unproductive in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is by making our calling and election sure by working out of our faith with fear and trembling. The blessings a fertile heart receives are twofold: the bearing of much fruit for him, and the receiving of a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Mark 4:20

1 Cor. 2:9-16

2 Peter 1:5-11

Phil. 2:12-13 *Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you to will and to act on behalf of His good purpose....*