

The Parable Of The Soil (2)

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[0 : 00] And so we saw the setting of these parables last week. We saw also the significance of the parables, why Jesus was now making this transition in his style of teaching. Today we're going to focus in on this one parable itself.

We're going to see the story, and then we're going to see the sense of it or the meaning of it. Look with me again at verse 3. We'll see the story that Jesus told. Right here at the beginning of verse 3, he says, Listen, hearken.

And then he tells us, Behold, a sower went out to sow. Now, we noted at the end of chapter 3, remember when Jesus was in the house, and his family was on the outside of the house, and they were sending the messages in, saying that they were there to see him, and people were communicating to him.

Remember there was an emphatic statement that Jesus made. When he answered, he answered loudly. There was an exclamation point at the end of that, which is not extremely common in the scriptures.

It's a point of emphasis there in the text. This word, hearken, or listen, you may see that it has another exclamation point there. It's a point of emphasis here. Now, it could be that Jesus is outside on the lake, and there are thousands of people, and he's just getting their attention.

[1 : 17] But why would Mark feel a need to communicate to us something that we already know Jesus would have had to have done? We know he would have had to have quieted the crowd. So I don't think that this is really an emphasis of volume.

I think it's an emphasis of significance that Jesus is getting across here. Throughout the entire chapter, actually, this whole series of parables, there is a major emphasis on listening, hearing, and heeding the message that Jesus is teaching.

And so right here, we get to verse three, and Jesus calls out, listen. It's not so much volume. Listen, quiet down. It's not so much that. It is, listen to me.

Listen, this is important. It's emphatic in that sense. Don't miss what I'm about to tell you, Jesus says. He was alerting his audience to the importance of this story.

Now, all parables communicate ordinary, everyday ideas and situations that audiences would have been familiar with.

[2 : 26] Everybody that was there on the seashore that day would have understood this story. It was agricultural in nature. They would have understood, as we do, you don't have to be a farmer to understand that when you throw seed out, it finds a place of soil, and if that soil is good, the seed will grow, and it will flourish, and it will produce fruit.

So this is what Jesus did with the parables. The stories themselves isn't what was difficult to understand. There's nothing in the story that makes it hard for us to grasp the story itself.

Now, the parable itself, the story, is about the process of sowing this seed in a field, but the emphasis is on the soil. And so Jesus gives four types of soil in the story that that seed that maybe he was demonstrating even in that moment might have fallen on.

And the first one is found in verse 4. Look at it with me. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it.

So the first type of soil here that Jesus mentioned is a pathway. It's the borders of these fields. Now, we've talked about this already in Mark's gospel as well. You remember, was it chapter 2, where Jesus and his disciples were walking through a field along the path, and his disciples began to pluck heads of grain.

[3 : 53] And as they were rubbing the chaff in their hands and eating the grain because they were hungry, some Pharisees noticed, and there was that confrontation about the Sabbath day. You

remember that?

Well, we talked about what path they were on. The road systems were not like they are today. Most of these agricultural fields had pathways that would either border the fields or they would traverse across the field.

And so over time, these paths, as you might expect, with the foot traffic of not only people but animals, and then the farmers doing their thing, the carts for the merchants that would travel from town to town or from place to place, the carts that would follow along the ox as they were treading these fields, the ground would get very, very hard.

So it would be something similar to concrete, maybe not quite like rock, but it would be very hard. You know what a path is like. And so Jesus in this story talks about that's the first type of soil. The sower goes out with a seed, and he throws the seed, and it lands on the paths that kind of transverse or traverse the fields.

And what happens is there's nothing there for the seed to penetrate in the soil. It just sits on top as if it was on top of a rock. And there's no protection. They weren't throwing straw down on the seeds on the path, right?

[5 : 09] And so the birds saw it, and immediately the birds come down, and they take the seed that has been sown, and they devour it. So Jesus says the sower's going. Some gets on the path, and the birds just immediately take it away.

Secondly, we see in verses 5 and 6, look at with me. 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. Now parts of Israel as well were very rocky, and that makes it difficult to farm.

And the soil here is a reference to a limestone or a bedrock that would have had a very thin layer of dirt on its surface.

In fact, in order to try to be like Jesus, I brought an object lesson for you today, right from my backyard. In fact, if many of you, most of you have actually probably been to my house and been to my backyard, this is a piece of bedrock from my backyard that I pulled out this morning.

[6 : 18] It's very hard and rocky. There's about a half inch to an inch of soil on top of this in my backyard. And so it's right behind my house. Now, I also brought some of my soil from my house this morning, which is not very good soil.

It's just like sand. It's all it is. There's nothing there really for anything to grab onto. And so you can go to my backyard today, right behind my back porch, and you'll see there's a whole bunch of this bedrock like this.

And it's got about that much of this sandy, nasty, rocky soil on it. Now, here's the problem. I can spend a couple of hundred dollars in the spring and in the fall and throw seed on this portion of my backyard.

And I'm ignorant enough to keep doing it for some reason. And I do it. And it just sits there on top, but it may penetrate a little bit. It's not quite like the soil on the path.

That would be as if I was just throwing it right on the rock. This is just a little bit different. There is a little bit of soil there. It's not very deep. That's the problem. And so the seed will get on it.

[7 : 21] And then I'll get out there with my sprinkler and I'll spend a couple hundred bucks a month on water for my house, trying to get this seed to grow. And wouldn't you believe it? In a couple of weeks, there'll be a couple of short, thin blades of grass that pop up right behind my house, right on top of this right here.

But then a rainstorm will come. And it just kind of washes this stuff out because there's just nothing to it. There's nothing to it. Or if maybe the rainstorm doesn't come, the seed lands on it and it goes in just a little bit.

And then the water that I put on or the fertilizer I put on, you get these little sprouts. But then as soon as things start to get hot in the spring, you know what I mean? It starts to get hot. It just scorches. It burns it out.

And it can't survive. Why? There's no root. It has absolutely no root system in it. And so it may seem at first, I'll get excited like I did last year.

I've got pictures. If we had a TV in here or one that we use there every week, I would show you the pictures. My dad helped me do this. And we had grass. You know, we went out with a blanket one day.

[8 : 23] We sat in the grass. And like a week later, it was all gone. There was nothing there. It had no root. And I was excited at first because look, it seems like this has taken and there's some fruit of it.

But no, there was actually no fruit at all because there was no root in the seed, in the soil. So that's what Jesus is saying. There's the pathway. Then there's the rocky ground. It just doesn't have much soil. It pops up for a moment. But it doesn't have any root system so it can't survive. And then he gives the third one in verse seven. Other seed fell among thorns. And the thorns grew up and choked it and it yielded no grain. Now, there's a different problem here. The problem in this part of the story is not the depth of soil.

It's not like this. There's plenty of it. And it's pretty fertile soil. And it's good. Maybe it's rich with some nutrients even and it has great depth and texture to it.

[9 : 25] The problem's not the soil itself. The problem's what's inside of the soil. So I went out in my backyard and I got something else to show you this morning. Maybe you have some of these in your backyard.

This is about all that's in my backyard. In fact, it's just a bunch of weeds. This was the smallest one in my yard this morning. There have some that are, they're probably this tall sitting off this.

They're just massive because we're bad yard keepers. But there's this weed. Now, what Jesus is talking about here in this particular part of the parable, this is not what he's talking about.

This is what we see. Right? We see the weed. Okay? The problem in the parable is not the weed because in the parable, the weed's already been cut or it's been burned or it's been taken out in some way.

The problem is that when the weed was taken out or when the thorn was taken out or it was cut or it was burned or whatever, the root remained in the soil. So it's not that there's not depth of soil.

[10 : 27] It's not that there's not a place for the seed to penetrate. It's that what else is in the soil that you can't see? There's these weeds and thorns and as the seed begins to grow, so does the weeds and the thorns and ultimately the weeds choke out the good seed and there's no grain that's able to be produced in it.

So Jesus gives those three types of poor soil and then he gives a good soil in verse 8. And another seed fell into the good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding 30-fold and 60-fold and 100-fold.

So after mentioning these bad soils in which no seed can survive and be fruitful, Jesus told of this good soil and this earth was well cultivated it was prepared to receive the seed it has depth it's free from the underground problems and pollutants that will choke out the grain and as far as Jesus' story is concerned this is the only soil that will actually be able to produce any kind of fruit.

And then Jesus closes this story with another emphatic statement in verse 9. And he said, He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Now you gotta think the unbelievers that were there that were maybe continuing to be hardened by this had to have been confused. What in the world is that about?

[12 : 08] We've traveled from all over the place to come and listen to this guy's teaching. We've heard that it's phenomenal. And he just told me a story that I learned in my second grade science class about how seed and soil works.

And then he just leaves it to that. And then he gets to the end of the story and he says, He who has ears to hear, let him hear. And this is supposed to be significant to me? This story about soil and seed?

What is this all about? Well, Jesus is actually testing the soil, so to speak. the soil of their hearts here. And it was the testing of their soil that determined whether or not they were really in Christ or not.

And so he says, He who has ears to hear, let him hear, meaning that many of them would not actually have ears to hear. But if they did, it was important that they listen.

The command here is not only to give audience to his remarks, but to engage with them, to obey the lesson that he was teaching. And this teaching is actually eternally significant.

[13 : 19] And he desired that they would obey. Well, let's skip down to verse 14 and we'll see what this parable actually means. And then we'll wrap up this section of Mark chapter 4.

Look with me at verse 13. And he said to them, Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?

Now Mark's returning to this issue of soil. He took a break and he talked about Jesus' explanation of why he was teaching in parables to begin with. And before explaining this, Jesus made those really difficult sayings to hear.

But then he wraps back to this specific explanation about the soil. It's a foundational lesson actually for believers. Jesus said, If you don't understand this one, you're going to have a really hard time understanding any of the other parables that I tell.

And so all three of the synoptic gospels actually record this exact parable in great detail. Why?

Because Jesus himself said, If you don't get this one, you're not going to get the other ones.

[14:31] You may be wondering, why didn't John do it? If Matthew, Mark, and Luke did, why didn't John? Well, John didn't record any of Jesus' parables, so it would be unnecessary for him to explain the one that they need to know to interpret the others.

But Matthew, Mark, and Luke all deal with it. And so let's see what he has to say. Verse 14. This is the key that unlocks the whole thing. The sower sows the word.

The sower sows the word. The sower casting out the seed in Jesus' story is representative of an individual who is preaching or teaching or sharing the word of God.

And in the immediate context, the sower is a reference to Jesus. Because in this moment, Jesus is the one casting the seed. He's the one that's teaching the gospel.

He's the one that's sharing the good news. But it doesn't only apply to Jesus. We would make a mistake if we thought that Jesus is meant to be the sower exclusively in this particular passage.

[15:36] That's not it. Any person who takes the gospel of Jesus and shares it with another is represented here by the sower. And of course, the seed is the Bible.

Especially the explicit teaching of the gospel of Jesus. Now, we have to make an important note here. Notice that in the story, the problem is neither with the sower nor the seed.

So in the immediate context, the sower is Jesus. Well, Jesus is the greatest teacher to ever live.

He's perfect. He's God. There can't be a problem with him. It can't be a problem with the way that he's teaching.

It can't be a problem with his methodologies. It can't be a problem with his tone or any other things that we may point to and say, well, maybe this was the problem there.

No, there's no problem with the sower here. Sower is just casting out seed. There's also no problem with the seed. The seed is the word of God. It's perfect. It's inerrant.

[16:40] It's infallible. There is no mixture of error. It is God's truth to us. So as this seed is being cast out, there's no issue with that because it's perfect.

And in this particular context, so is the sower. So there's no issue here with sower and seed. So we can't come to this story and say, well, we need to find out more creative ways to sow the seed of the gospel.

No, that's not what Jesus is saying. And then we don't come to this and we say, well, we have to figure out better ways to present it ourselves. We need better personalities or we need to wrap it all in this nice, neat package of modern trendiness.

No, that's not what this parable is about either. The issue in this parable is not the sower of the seed. The issue in this parable is the soil. It's just bad soil.

And the soil represents the hearts of people. Jesus, again, says that there are four types of soil, four types of hearts that this seed will land on.

[17:49] And so let's look at them quickly. Verse 15. Jesus said, these are the ones that along the path where the word is sown. When they hear Satan immediately comes, takes away the word that is sown in them.

Well, this is the hardest type of soil that Jesus mentions. Talked about that already. It's the pathway. It's very hard. There's nothing for the seed to penetrate. This individual's heart is so hardened to the truth of God that they are utterly indifferent to it.

I'm convinced after spending the last couple of weeks in this passage, I'm convinced that this is the most predominant type of soil that you will come across in your evangelism.

It's just people that are just completely indifferent to what we have to say. They're just completely indifferent to the word. It's not that they're trying to figure out. It's not necessarily that they got all this stuff in their life that's choking it out.

It's just they don't care. They don't care to begin with. And some will even, in fact, maybe even many will take it to the extreme where it's not indifference only to the gospel.

[19:02] Maybe it's even they've made themselves an enemy of the gospel. These are the people that you can sit down with at your dinner table and you can talk about the love of Christ. You can talk about the reality of their sin.

And they just don't care. Like there's just nothing there to grab their attention at all. There's no sense of remorse. There's no sense of anything at all in their life. They just don't care. And they go to church. That's the thing. They go to church. But they don't go to church because they care. They just go because their wife makes them go. Or they go because their parents make them go.

Or they go because this is what you're supposed to do. And maybe if I network enough within the right congregation, I'll be able to make the right business context that I need to make. And it'll benefit my life in another way.

But their hearts are so hard. The actual message, the truth, Christ, they're just completely indifferent to it. There's nothing there. And Jesus says when the seed falls on this heart, that Satan immediately comes and devours it.

[20:04] He doesn't come and devour the person. He devours the seed. Right? What does that mean? Well, sometimes he does that just through worldly distractions.

You know, they share the gospel with somebody and immediately their attention is just completely diverted to another thing. Something else that's going on in their life. Maybe it's their business or maybe it's their family or maybe it's some other thing that maybe in and of itself is a good thing, but Satan just uses it as a distraction.

He devours that seed. He devours the seed that has then been cast on the soil. Satan doesn't harden the soil.

That's not what he does. The soil is already hardened. That's the problem. He just devours the seed when it's cast out, which tells us we have no excuse.

When I was a kid, maybe you did this. I don't know. When I was a kid, I learned early that if I messed up, there was a chance that if I played a spiritual card with my parents, I might could get some type of relief from the punishment.

[21:16] You know what I mean? I know Marty knows what I mean. And there were times I remember telling my parents, you know, I really didn't want to do that.

The devil made me do it. The devil made me do it. And they just never accepted that for some reason. I'm not sure why. Because Satan doesn't harden the soil.

That's not what he does. He's not capable of that. We take responsibility for that. We harden the soil of our hearts.

We're the ones who reject the message. We're the ones who live in sin. We're the ones who do wrong. And we can't say, well, the devil's just on my back this week.

No. No. No. He just steals the seed. He just steals the seed. Maybe it's through deception. Maybe it's through distraction.

[22:16] But he steals the seed. Paul said to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 4 that Satan actively blinds those who do not believe.

He said, 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, the glory of Christ.

You say, well, what kind of hope does this person have? If their hearts are so hard that Satan comes whenever a seed is sown and he just devours it and he takes it away and they're distracted and it just immediately goes away, what kind of hope do they have?

It is only by the grace of God that any one of us has a believing heart. Because between our sinful nature and Satan's blinding work, we are actually hopeless.

And the only hope we have is that the grace of God will overcome the power of sin and Satan in our lives. Listen, no person comes to faith on their own.

[23:30] It's not possible. The soil's too hard. And Satan's working too hard to steal away whatever seed comes.

You say, well, what hope do we have? The only hope we have is that God in his grace and in his sovereign will will do a cultivating work in our heart to break up the soil of our heart in order that his seed can penetrate our hearts and he can then produce fruit.

It is the spirit of God that awakens us. Let me go back to 2 Corinthians 4. Right after Paul says that the God of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, then he says in verse 6, for

God who said, let light shine out of darkness, he's appealing to the power of God, the creative power of God, for God who said let light shine out of darkness has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And then he says in the next verse, but we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God, not to us.

It's his grace that brings salvation. It's his grace that softens the soil. It's his grace that does this work, not us.

[25 : 04] You don't come to Christ by epiphany. You don't just wake up one day and say, you know what, I think I'll be a Christian. It doesn't work that way. God does a work. It's a work of grace.

Think about Matthew 16. Peter makes this wonderful confession. Jesus says, who do men say that I am? And Peter says, you are the Christ.

And here's how Jesus responded. Jesus answered, blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my father who is in heaven has revealed this to you.

Think about John 6, 44. No one can come to me, Jesus said, unless the father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day.

As it is written in the prophets, they will all be taught by God. You say, well, there's a problem here. If my heart is so hard that whenever the seed of the word is sown, the devil comes and blinds me or he takes away that seed, then I've got a problem there.

[26 : 19] And if on the other side is I can't actually do anything about that problem that I have to rely on God's gracious work in my heart to do something about that problem, what am I supposed to do? What am I supposed to do?

You've got one choice. Pray. That's all you can do. This is why we pray for the lost.

Have you ever thought about that? You ever thought why we pray for people to be saved? Because we know it is in God's act for people to be saved. It takes his work of grace in their heart and so that should drive us as believers to get on our knees before God and beg for God to do a work of grace in the hearts of people that we love, in the hearts of our co-workers, in the hearts of our friends, and in the hearts of people that may even attend our church whose hearts are so hard.

And we gotta pray that God will do something in their hearts, that he will cultivate the soil of their hearts. That's the only hope they have. It's the only hope we have.

And we need to pray. And if you find yourself becoming hardened and indifferent to the gospel yourself, and you're concerned, well, you may be a little softer than you think.

[27 : 38] And you need to pray that God will do this work, and then believe. That's what Jesus said to do, isn't it?

Repent and believe the gospel. Second type of soil, verse 16. These are the ones sown on rocky ground, the ones who when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy.

But they have no root in themselves. They endure for a while, and then when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

This type of person gives early signs of excitement about Jesus, but the word never takes any root in their hearts. Now consider the types of people that were following Jesus and were listening to him and hearing him at this point.

this soil represents the prosperity seekers. This is the prosperity seekers. Their interest is not in the gospel. Their interest is not even in Jesus himself or in his purpose or in his identity as Lord.

[28 : 55] They only want to receive some type of healing, some type of success, some type of improvement to their temporal life. love. They're hoping that coming to Jesus, he will benefit them materially or in some earthly way.

And for them, it's all emotion. That's what Jesus said. Immediately they receive it with what? Joy, gladness. They receive it with joy, not the prospect of the gospel.

What they receive with joy is the prospect of their life having some type of improvement that they want to experience. But they abandon Jesus as soon as a hardship comes along.

The word initially sprouts, but it's unable to take any root in their heart. Sun comes up, things get a little hot, and they say, okay, this is not what I signed up for.

But what does the sun represent here? It could be a lot of things actually. It could be persecution. It could be that they've said, yeah, I'm a follower of Christ, and then their friends decide they don't want to be their friends anymore.

[30 : 05] Or their family decides they don't want them coming over for dinner anymore. Or their coworkers are mocking them or making fun of them for whatever it is, and they say, you know what, okay, maybe I'm not a follower of Christ.

It's not worth it. There's no root. No root. Could be unmet expectations. They came because they thought Jesus was going to give them a better job, and they thought Jesus was going to heal the disease that they have, or they thought Jesus was going to restore the relationship that they have with an estranged child, but then when they don't ever get a better job, or they don't ever get the wealth that they were looking for, they don't ever get the other material things, these unmet expectations cause them to say, well, Jesus isn't all he's cracked up to be.

Could be that they're just hurt by others. They get excited initially, and then they realize once they get into church and around Christians, that Christians are sinners, and we don't always do things well, and they get hurt, and they say the first thing they abandon is not necessarily the church that they abandon, it's Christ.

They say, I don't want this. Third type of soil, verse 18. Others are the ones sown among thorns. They're 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.

Now, unlike the other two types of soil, as we mentioned earlier, the issue here is not depth. It's what's in the soil. Now, this person is willing to accept Jesus as their Savior, but we know that's not the complete gospel.

[31 : 51] They don't mind asking Jesus in their heart, and they definitely want Jesus to keep them from going to hell. No doubt about that. What they're unwilling to do is submit to Jesus as Lord.

What they lack is not belief in the claims of Jesus. They wouldn't deny who he is, wouldn't even deny what his purpose was. What they lack is repentance.

A repentance that Jesus demands for salvation. So, underneath the surface of this pseudo-belief is a network of sins, a network of desires that ultimately turn their hearts away from Christ altogether. And we have a cultural term for this. We call them nominal Christians. But the problem with nominal Christianity is it's not Christian. It's just nominal.

It's one thing to want Jesus to save you from hell. It's another thing to actually submit to him as your Lord and repent of your sin. That's the issue here.

[33 : 05] Jesus said in Matthew 6, no man can serve two masters. Either we will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. And then the specific illustration he gives is money.

No person can serve both God and money. In other words, your attention, your heart cannot be divided in the gospel. James talked about this. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. This person, they want Jesus because they want, they don't want to go to hell. They want Jesus, but they don't want Jesus telling them what to do. They don't want to actually have to change their life around. They just want Jesus to be okay with them.

They want Jesus to accept them as they are, but not actually do the refining work that the gospel does in their lives. And what we come to find out according to Jesus is that none of these soils, none of these three soils produce true Christians.

Two of them produce false Christians. And then he gets to the good soil. Verse 20. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word, accept it and bear fruit 30 fold, 60 fold, and a hundred fold.

[34 : 21] Now, the word that Jesus uses for here in all three of these situations is the word *akuo*. It's a verb. The first three times he uses it in the first three soils, it's in the imperfect tense, which means that it's past.

It's a single action. In other words, they heard. Single moment, they heard. It's kind of the picture of in one ear, out the other that we're all familiar with, right? That's the way that Jesus is using the word.

When he gets to the good soil, he uses a different form of the word *akuo*. They not only hear the word, but they heed the word. They listen to the word.

They obey the word and they submit to it. And Jesus made clear that the way to determine what type of person you are is to gauge the fruitfulness of the word in your life.

Now, remember, we are not bearing fruit in this parable. It's not us bearing fruit. We're just the soil.

[35 : 29] What is it that's bearing fruit? The word. The word bears the fruit. When it lands on the right soil that's been cultivated, the word bears the fruit.

And a typical yield in Jesus's day would have been anywhere from six to tenfold. In fact, tenfold was a blessed year. That was a good crop.

But then Jesus makes this outrageous statement that the good soil produces in some thirtyfold, in some sixtyfold, and in some a hundredfold.

This would have been meant to shock the people's ears, to shock them, because that's a massive bounty for what has been sown. And so what's the point?

The point is that there's no mistaking whether a person is truly trusting Christ or not. There's no mistaking it. Because it's not the person that produces the fruit, it's God that produces the fruit through his word, by his spirit.

[36 : 37] And for a person that has truly come to faith, that's going to reveal itself over time in the bounty of fruit that the word has provided. Some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, some a hundredfold.

We're all going to be in different walks. We're all going to be on different planes as far as our Christian walk is concerned. But the unmistakable truth of the Bible is that those who have truly come to Christ in faith will, will bear fruit.

Because it's God who does the fruit bearing in us. It's not that we don't produce that. He produces that. And only those who are producing that fruit, that word is impacting their life and changing their life and doing the work of the Lord represent the good soil.

MacArthur said, having been made alive by the spirit of God, they produce fruit in keeping with repentance. That's Matthew 3.8. That's a part of the fruit. You say, how do I know that this is me? Well, what happens when you get confronted by the word about your own sin? What do you do? Do you bear fruits of repentance? It's not that the good soil never sins. You don't just leave it alone.

[37 : 49] But what do you do when you are confronted by your sin? Do you rebel? Do you harden? Or do you repent? It bears fruit in keeping with repentance.

Matthew 3.8. And then he said, it bears the fruit of righteousness. Philippians 1.11. That not only are we avoiding sin and repenting of sin, but we're actually living unto righteousness.

We're not only stopping the bad things, but we're actually being driven to do the good things, the righteous things, the godly things. And then thirdly, he says, the fruit of the spirit, which is Galatians 5.

Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.

Those aren't things you produce. Those are things the spirit of God produces. And so the question is, what's the fruit of your life? Do you sprout up real quick and then you blow away because you actually have no root?

[39 : 03] Is the faith part, you know, as far as mental ascent belief, I'm good there, just I don't want to give up the sins.

I don't want Jesus to be my Lord. I just want him to be my Savior. Is that your soil? Maybe you're so hard that you just can't wait for this to get over because none of this matters to you.

What does this have to do with me? Or is the word of God actually doing something in your heart? Is it actually producing a fruit in your heart? Is God doing this work in you?

It's a testing of the soil. And so we have to ask those questions. In relation to the parables, most of the parables are about the kingdom of God. And so when we come to one, we ask, where do I stand in relation to the kingdom of God?

And in this particular case, the question is, what type of soil have I proven to have in my heart? we also need to understand how this lesson relates to our evangelism.

[40 : 11] This is an important note for us as we care about lost souls. Our responsibility is to cast the seed. Remember? the sower in this case, now we could take it that far if we wanted to, but Jesus doesn't.

Okay? So we go with what Jesus gives us. The sower in this case, the issue of the soil isn't his issue. We just cast the seed. Right?

We cast the seed. And then we trust God to do that cultivating work in the hearts of people. we're responsible for faithfulness.

We leave the fruitfulness to God and we trust him to do it. But this helps us to understand why the people that we witness to respond in different ways. A lot of people you witness to is they're going to be just hard ground.

They're going to be different types of soil. This helps us understand our evangelism. And then finally, if you're a believer, if you're a believer with the fruit of the word being produced in your life, this should lead you to worship.

[41 : 16] This should lead you to worship. The problem is sometimes in our pride, that worship doesn't become so much a worship of God for the fruitfulness of our life.

It becomes a worship of me for the fruitfulness in my life. Look at what I've done. Look at how far I've come. Let me help you out.

When we understand the grace of God and how it works in the soil of our hearts, what that leads us to is to fall on our knees and worship. Understanding that but for the grace of God, we would be the hard path or we would be the shallow soil or we would be full of weeds.

Which is exactly what Paul does in Ephesians 2. He recognizes when he says, but God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love which with he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, he made us alive together with Christ.

And if they didn't understand what he's saying, he follows it up with, by grace, you're saved. Not your own effort. Not what you do. It's not that you got it all together.

[42 : 36] It's that God has blessed you. God has done a work in you. And what that should lead us to do is worship him for it. for you, for you, for you, for you, for you, for you, for you, for you, for you, for you, for you, for you, for you, for you, for you,