

Change Begins with a Parable: The Soil

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. I guess there's a couple of you here. Good morning, everyone. Hey, there we go. So great to have you here.

My name is BK. I have the pleasure of serving as one of the pastors here. If you are new, I see there's a few visitors. We are actually in a study called the Life of Christ. What we're doing is we are going through a chronological, through all four Gospels, looking at the major events of the life of Jesus Christ.

And today, as you know, we are in a parable. So please turn with me to Mark chapter 4. Mark chapter 4. If you do not have a Bible, please let us know because I'm going to be pulling stuff out. And I want you to see it in the text for yourself. Don't trust me. Trust God's Word on this. So these are the things that are very important to us. So just to kind of bring you up to speed, where we are in the life of Christ, we are actually at the tail end of what is known as the Galilean ministry of Jesus Christ.

The first year of Jesus, we call the, I don't know, the Judean ministry. But that's actually not that specific either. But it's the beginning time when Jesus was baptized, went to the wilderness, and started to draw people to him through the preaching of the gospel.

[1 : 23] But he's primarily situated in Jerusalem, Judea. That's the story. Remember, he meets the Samaritan woman. And we read about that time in John chapter 1 to John chapter 4.

Then, for the next year and a half, Jesus spends the multitude of his time in the land of Galilee, which is where he grew up. It's the northern part of Israel, very fertile land, and it's actually the most populous part of Israel.

Historians estimate that there would have been over 2 million Jews there. And there's actually the center of where the major highways went through. So highways from Syria all the way to the coast of Mediterranean all came through this little town.

Well, it really wasn't a little town, but the town of Capernaum, where Jesus sets up his central part of the ministry. So he kind of had a house that he lived in, people, historians believe.

Could have been Peter's house, could have been his house. Who knows? Maybe it was just a rental. He lived in Squamish, right? And he would go. And the news of Jesus spread everywhere because travelers would go through the city of Capernaum and they'd see people heal and miracles done and word went everywhere.

[2 : 37] And as you noticed what Dave talked about, it begins the text, great crowds. It just doesn't say crowds. There's an emphasis in the Greek that is great crowds, big crowds, right?

Crowds are already big on themselves, but there's great crowds. And we estimate there was thousands, if not tens of thousands of people were following Jesus, that he couldn't even minister in any town or city, but he'd have to go out on a boat on a lake and people would be spread out on the beaches.

That's how big he was. But at the tail end of the ministry, we start to see lack of belief, lack of faith. Let's be honest. Everybody loves Jesus, right? Everybody loves the healer, the sustainer, the one who takes away our leprosy, heals withered hands, cures paralysis.

He does all these things and people are around him and they're loving this. But they're hesitating with his message. And the message is, I am the Messiah.

[3 : 48] The kingdom is coming. Repent now and believe. So you have the crowds kind of ambivalent. They like Jesus. The crowds are there.

Matthew 7, 28 says, The crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority and not as the scribes.

Remember, the scribes were another, they were part of the Pharisee sect, which were based in the synagogues that were spread. And they were kind of the religious rulers.

They were the people involved with people's lives. And nobody had ever heard anyone teach like this man.

And they loved him for it. But Jesus also pronounced woes on specific cities. Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, for their lack of belief.

[4 : 52] Although they all came out to see him, they all came out to hear him, they all came out to be healed by him, they refused to repent.

They refused to turn away from their dead religion. And if you don't remember, I used a word that classified their disbelief.

I called it determined disbelief. The people were determined to not believe in him. And the religious leaders, we know some of their stories, right?

They accused Jesus of healing on the Sabbath. By their rules, not anything that the Old Testament tells us, but by their own traditions. They accused Jesus of eating with tax collectors and prostitutes. Jesus shouldn't be there for, here for them. It's us. The religious leaders believe that if there was a Messiah that was coming, he'd want us.

[5 : 53] He'd want to be around us. He'd want to pat our backs for our faithfulness, our desire to follow the law. And we know that Jesus, at every opportunity, demonstrated to them their hypocrisy, their unlovingness, and their hatred of strangers and foreigners.

And it's interesting that one of Jesus' greatest miracles that we looked at last week, they accused Jesus of being in league with the devil.

That's how much they revered their position within the people. So today, we're looking at a parable that marks a distinction in how he will now minister.

We believe that we are now in the spring of 32 AD. We're one year away from the cross. And instead of taking his time and going throughout Galilee and preaching to the crowds, Jesus is going to center his time on growing his disciples.

We know there's 12 apostles, but we know there's other people around him. And one of the ways that he will begin, and we call this the time of private preparation, as he prepares for them.

[7 : 27] And we haven't talked about this. His apostles and disciples don't know he's going to a cross, right? They think he's going to be here forever.

Jesus knows otherwise. And we're going to see how wonderfully, skillfully, Jesus moves the people around to crucify him.

Even by calling out their hypocrisy, he knows he's kindling their anger. So here in this time of private preparation, he begins using these stories, which are called parables.

And today I want to explain to you what are some of the significance of parables and what are some of the spiritual truths that we derive for them.

And we're going to begin and we're going to do this through Mark 4. In case you didn't know, Mark 4 is a parallel passage that Dave wrote or read in Matthew 13.

[8 : 30] And also it's found in Luke 8. So this is a significant event. All three of the synoptic gospels cover this. But before I go any further, let's pray.

Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we just thank you for your great word. But we thank you for your son and this word of God, which informs us so that we are able to sing, oh, how sweet it is to trust in Jesus.

God, I just pray that you would use this sermon to inform our minds and to transform our hearts. May you guide our wills in all righteousness. May you give us ears to hear, hearts to understand the meaning of this parable.

And also may it bring life change where it needs to bring life change. We thank you for you in this word, in your most holy, precious, everlasting name.

Amen. So we're looking at Mark 4, beginning at verse 1. And I'm going to read you the first eight verses. So here it says again, and Mark's a little bit shortened than Matthew.

[9 : 41] Matthew usually gives you a little bit of context. Mark is straight to the point. 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 on 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 teachings, he said to them, listen, behold, a sower went out to sow, and he sowed some seed.

And as he sowed, some seed fell upon 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.

When the sun rose, it was scorched. And since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain.

And the other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing, and yielding 30 and 60 fold and a hundred fold.

[10:47] Now, the first thing I want you to understand about a parable, and Jesus is gonna use these, Jesus is taking everyday life imagery stories. Like, this is a story that any person living in the land at that time can understand the imagery that he is doing.

Now, the key to understanding the parables of Jesus is understanding what the imagery means.

And the other component of the parable is a parable is supposed to have a shock value, that at the end of the parable, it's supposed to stun you with a truth about the kingdom of God.

Because at this point, Jesus, these parables are differing ways to teach about the kingdom of God. So, let's be honest.

When we read this parable at face value, is it very shocking? Right? Seed falls on a path. Birds eat it. No big deal, right? Seed falls in rock.

Of course, it doesn't grow. Anybody who gardens knows you throw seed in a weed bed. It doesn't grow. So, at face value, we look at this parable from our perspective in our culture, and it really doesn't really say much to us.

[12:15] But I want to explain it to you, what it means from a Jewish perspective in first century. First of all, there was two specific ways a farmer would farm a field.

The first one is you'd use a donkey or an ox, and he'd put a bag of seed over its shoulder. And he'd begin in the middle of the field, and he'd puncture the bag, and then he'd have the oxen walk in a circular fashion, moving outward, spreading the seed.

The other way is how what is described here. Every farmer has a field, right? No such thing as a farmer without a field.

And every farmer prepares a field. Think about this for a second. Seed is life. This is the sustenance that he's going to grow to either feed his family or take to the market to sell for goods to feed his family, right?

So it's important. So the idea that he's kind of just throwing seed all over the place doesn't really jive. Do you guys know what that word is, jive?

[13:32] I'm speaking like, I don't know, I've been watching some movies from the 70s lately or something. Anyway, it doesn't connect, right? So we might hear that he's indiscriminately throwing seed around, but anybody hearing this story would know, no, no, no, no.

Now, what's going on? Why would he be doing these things? You see, like I said, seed is life-giving. They're expensive. And they don't indiscriminately go around throwing their seed everywhere.

What's interesting is, previously, you guys probably didn't know this, but 12 years ago, I actually planted a church in Decatur, Illinois.

And you guys probably don't know this, but this is in the southern part of Illinois. And it's actually a part of the prairies, the prairies come through. And Decatur is actually the soy and corn, it's actually the soy capital of the world, if you didn't know that.

It's got two major companies. And most of my church, if you were at my church, half of you would be in overalls right now, right? Especially if it's harvest time, you're coming in dirty from, you're out there early, you come to church and then you go back.

[14:38] But what's really amazing about these machines that they had, and I had the chance to go on, these aren't simple farmer types. They've got GPS controlled machines that make sure the line where the seeds are coming out is in an exact perfect order.

Not only that, it's perfectly distanced to maximize the amount of water content that it can hold. Like these machines aren't your simple tractor that I kind of grew up around.

These are complex machines worth hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars. So farming in that area was a very precise, and you would never throw away any seeds, and you were very exact on how you planted.

There's no reason to believe that this farmer would be any different. He might not have GPS, but he's an expert. He's been farming for a while, and he knows how things are done.

So he would have gone out, he would have plowed, he would have prepared the fields, he would have removed any rocks, trees, and yes, of course, he would have weeded. So what gives?

[15:49] Why would Jesus share this parable? First off, this path, the path that they're talking about, often paths were walkway through where people could go from one place to another.

We don't have the 99, don't have sidewalks, and of course, they became very hardened, three to four foot wide, sun in the middle of Israel, it's baking hot.

So very easy to understand the paths, and they usually didn't have fields. So the paths would mark out your property as well as giving you transportation.

So it's easy to understand that the birds, that some seeds would fall, whether it be the wind or just through a little bit too much. Now the rocky ground that Jesus is talking about is a form of limestone that is located several feet under the good soil.

So as he prepared the soil, he doesn't go all that deep to know that there'd be limestone. So when he's talking about rocky soil, he thinks it's good soil, but he's tossing it in the area where the weeds are only gonna be able to get so far and not go anywhere.

[16:54] And the other weeds, and there's a whole study on weeds in Israel that we always hear about the wheats and the tares. Have you ever heard about that? They're like almost permanently ingrained in the land, especially in the fall when they're in the harvest and where they're pulling everything through, the wind would blow them, and some of the seeds get under the land.

They're not growing or sprouting. You know, you'd take some of them out, but as soon as the growth began, sometimes those weeds would get in and choke out the seeds.

And you couldn't predict it. You didn't know it was gonna happen. It would just happen. And of course, then finally, the good harvest.

So what is the shock? What is the riddle of this parable that is supposed to grip the believers? So let's take the hearers. So let's take a look at verse eight. And other seed fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding 30-fold, 60-fold, and 100-fold.

And he said, he who has ears, let him hear, let him hear. So what's so special about this story, even with what I have told you?

[18:10] We understand the path, rocks, okay. Weeds, we understand, and good soil. What's the punchline, Jesus? If he had been telling you this story, what's the punchline?

But before we get there, let's take a look at verse 10. And when Jesus was alone, those around him with the 12, so this is an extended group of people beyond the 12 apostles who believe in him.

And they're following him. And they 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?

[19:12] Here Jesus is explaining what parables do. If you have accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and you believe the kingdom is coming, you get that parable.

You understand that parable. Remember last week, we talked about the pearl of great price. If you see and understand how valuable Jesus is, you will sell all that you have to buy the pearl.

If you understand who Jesus is, what he represents, what he says is true, it is life changing. But if you don't understand, it's just a story.

You understand the mechanics of the story. But within the story and not understanding, it's judgment. It demonstrates you are not in the kingdom, even though you might think you're in the kingdom.

So when he's talking to the religious rulers and the people there who heard him and they're not getting the parable, is acting as a form of judgment. If you get it, there's an assurance of your salvation.

[20:29] If you don't, you need to continue seeking after him. So let's take a look at verse 14.

Verse 15. Jesus begins to explain. He says, the sower sows the word.

We see clearly here that the seed is the word of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the good news. It is the message that he has, that the kingdom is coming.

He is the Messiah. Verse 15. And those 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.

In case you don't know, Satan is a real living being and he's presented even at the beginning of our Bibles. Right in the book of Genesis, we see Satan rise up wanting to pollute the message of God. The Bible calls him both a liar and a deceiver. And he will use any means that he has to take away any interest that you might have in God or in the word of the gospel.

[21 : 33] So that is what he's talking about there. And Satan will look for every opportunity to turn people away from the truth of the gospel. Let's look at verse 16.

These are the ones sown on rocky ground. The ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. They have no root in themselves, but endure for a while when tribulation, which is a word for hardship or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. The reality is, life is tough. And oftentimes, many people will turn to religion during tough times. But sometimes they're coming to hear, they have expectations of God. They believe he's going to heal them. He's going to bring them great riches or he's going to give them a good family or he's going to bring them wealth or status.

What happens is, that is a transactional relationship that someone is hoping to have with God. And when they come to God and the weeds represent this and they're not getting what they want, they often flee the building.

[22 : 57] They will say, God was not with me. Verse 18, 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 desires for other things enter in and choke the word and it proves unfruitful.

Let's just characterize that right now as the busyness of life. That there are many things in this life which can distract us from God's truth.

And some of these things look really, really good. But we're going to see that they can have a disastrous consequence. Let's look at verse 20.

But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it. And bear fruit 30-fold, 60-fold, and 100-fold.

Now before I get to the punchline of this text, I want you to understand that this text is often used as a great text to preach on evangelism.

[24 : 14] Why don't you guys take a look at your Bible? Do you guys have headings in your Bible? What does that heading say? You guys can shout it out. It usually says the parable of what? The sower, right?

Parable of the sower. The editors of your Bible got it all wrong. And it's true. How often does he talk about the sower here? One verse.

The parable is the parable of the soils. This is the parable of the soils. Now if I thought this was the parable of the sower, we would expect that there's some strategies that we can use in evangelism that'll help us reach.

He might tell us, you know, if the farmer sows with the left hand instead of the right hand, he will bear more fruit. If the farmer faced east instead of west, I think I got that right.

You know, he will bear more fruit. You know, we try to derive these kind of strategies from this text. But that's not what's in here.

[25 : 22] It's the soil that Jesus is talking about and the significance is the soil. You know what the imagery for the soil is? It's your heart.

The soil is your heart. So the question that I have for you this morning is, what soil is your heart? What soil describes your heart? If you have been attending this church for any length of time, you have heard the truth of the gospel, whether it be from me, you've heard it in prayers, you've heard it in the songs that we sing, or when Dave has preaching.

You have heard that Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone offers you eternal life. So the first question I want to ask you is do you have a hard heart?

Do you have a hard heart? A hard heart is often described as a heart that has no spiritual interest. It is a heart that despises wisdom.

[26 : 40] You might claim to follow God, but when people talk to you about what it is to be disciplined and to grow in the faith, those things have no interest to you. You feel like you're settled where you are.

Most people with hard hearts are here most often because of their spouse. Maybe they want to have, they think religion is a good thing for their kids. Others just want the feeling of being in a church.

Hard-hearted people are characterized by always wanting their own way regardless of what it costs anyone else. What's interesting is a hard heart is also an unprotected heart.

It's a heart upon which much damage can be done to it because it is exposed to the harshness of this world. Sadly, it often grows hard, becomes callous, and it is an empty heart.

Hard hearts are not convicted of their sin. They do not seek repentance, and they neither yearn for grace or forgiveness from others. In my pastoral experience, hard-hearted people are usually characterized by people who do not forgive others.

[28 : 07] Anytime you're in a counseling situation, and Dave can vouch for this, most people who are caught up with a difficulty in their spiritual growth is usually because there is an inability to forgive, and an inability to forgive is a blockage to everything in your life.

You know that? What did Jesus Christ do to you? Forgave you. And if we can't offer that forgiveness to others that Jesus Christ so freely gave his life up for us, it gives us hard hearts. So, if you have a hard heart, what can you do? Pray that God gives you a new heart. That God would take out your hard, stony heart, and he would replace it with a heart that follows after him. You have a rocky heart. Did you once hear about Jesus and really loved him, clung to him, but found yourself put off with the church?

Or maybe you found yourself put out with people or even pastors like me. Maybe you found yourself judging others more and always felt judged by others.

[29 : 28] My experience in life, people that have rocky hearts are those that are always feeling judged and wanting to judge others. Perhaps you've had some expectation and if God somewhere let you down, you are out of here.

There's this interesting book. It talks about five reasons why people walk away from the church or the faith. The top two is they've been hurt by someone either in the church or they've been hurt by a leader in the church.

It's personal hurt. If you will allow me to share something with you. Sometimes people are jerks. Sometimes pastors are unforgettable. The fact of the matter is, this church is made up of messed up people just like you. Sometimes it's a little messed up.

Sometimes it's big messed up. But there's an application for each and every one of us in being messed up. Some people may be going through a really tough time of life and they might be short with you.

[30 : 44] The fact is, we never know what's going on in their lives. That might make someone a jerk, impatient, tired, or seem to you uncaring. My advice to you is never ever give someone that kind of control over your life.

You know what I'm saying? If you're basing your whole life on what you think other people are doing or they're thinking of you, you've given them control over your life, your life is meant to be under Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone.

We're to live our life in the eyes of God, not in the lives of man. If you don't, you will find that it never ends. You will continually be after the pleasure of people more than God and you will always be disappointed.

If you have been legitimately hurt in church and need to forgive and need someone to walk with you through that, please come see me or see Dave. We want to be able to be with you, to pray with you, and hold you accountable to releasing that hurt that you may have experienced, whether it be here or at another church or a religious event or another person is done.

Don't ever let them have that kind of control. Here's another secret about our lives. There are consequences to our life decisions.

[32 : 16] Some people come to Jesus often hoping that Jesus is going to save them from their consequences. The thing is, God doesn't work like that. The most amazing thing of God that I can say is that he works in our consequences and if we submit them to us, he can grow us into an incredible person of God using those scars, those wounds to minister to others.

And there's no greater blessing than ministering to others. Even those people who've had the greatest hurt and scars can be the people with the greatest amount of love and grace.

Worst counseling situation that I was ever involved in over a decade ago is the husband slammed on my table and he said, God, why me? Why me? Because his wife was leaving and kids didn't love him anymore.

Well, he cheated at work. He was gambling, drinking, cheating on his wife and he tried to blame it on God. That somehow life is tough because of God.

So how do I know if I'm a person with rocky soil? One, you seek to control everything. You want control. You don't trust. You limit your personal engagements and you are selective with who you open up to.

[33 : 46] See, the reality is true conversion leaves one humble, brokenhearted, love and a trust for God. The answer to getting out of a rocky soil is to humble yourself before the great Lord God who sits on the throne of heaven.

Can I tell you something? If God can handle working this whole universe, he can help you with your life. You can trust him with your life.

You can trust that the wisdom of God's word is good and true and it's salvific. The last question I have for you is your heart full of weeds.

I think for a lot of us it's the greatest temptation that people can face. Just the busyness of life. Sometimes God or Satan gives us success and prosperity to distract us from the things of the Lord. God can give us a desire to raise good, wonderful kids and build a worthy career, friendship, network, whatever it may be, all to distract us from the things of God.

[35 : 09] You see, anything that takes our eyes off Jesus and supplants him from the throne of our life can fit into this section. John Calvin, the great Reformed teacher said that our hearts are idol-making factories.

We work to make things to worship over God. Thinking, and we get deluded thinking that we're doing something that's honoring God that he hasn't asked us to.

That's exactly what the Pharisees did. They created all those rules thinking that they're pleasing God at the same time they were hypocrites, they were unloving, they didn't take care of the orphans or the widows among them.

They got so caught up in doing the things that they thought God wanted, they completely ignored all the things God wanted. The Bible tells us clearly in Romans 3.23 that none are righteous.

And think about this. If we are unrighteous, you and I cannot design an idol that will bring about God's righteousness. You with me on that? We are so broken we can't design anything good.

[36 : 25] We can't design any new wonderful way to worship God. Our role is to come under God and allow Him. I'm going to talk to you very briefly about one of the major factory idols that are happening today.

And in case you don't know that, but our culture is in a major cultural revolution is going on right now. Do you know that? There is a major cultural revolution going on right now and it's happening at the speed of light.

And I'm not going to say too much about it, but one of the major, and it derives from we are creating a society of victimhood that whoever can claim the greatest victimhood in society has the highest standing today.

And we do this today, we see this in the news, people are tearing down statues, right? They're tearing down statues all across the states, in Canada, England, all these other things. They're trying to correct the wrongs from the past, right?

We're trying to, somehow, the society is trying to make up for the offenses of our ancestors. And you also hear these words, right? I want to be on the right side of history.

[37 : 50] We see the government virtue signaling. Whatever, and I'll be honest with you, our, and I don't want to talk politically, but our prime minister is the greatest virtue signature of all time.

And I'm not just blaming him, I think anybody who would be in political power right now would have a hard time with not wanting to virtue signal. You always want to demonstrate that you're on the right side of history.

And the other thing that's going on today, and you've heard the term, cancel culture. If you do not accept my point of view, you need to be canceled. Your words aren't even allowed.

And this world is coming to terms with what it is to have free speech. And we even hear it from our government saying that we shouldn't allow free speech because there's bad things that get said. Right? So, but who decides what is good and what is bad? Now, I really thought it came to a pinnacle this week. And in case you haven't been noticing the news, there's a nomination of a woman who's an African-American woman for the Supreme Court, which she'd be the first in history.

[39 : 01] And there should have been one long time ago, right? They're dealing with horrible racism. racism. But she was asked this question. She was asked the question is, what is a woman?

And she says, I do not know. I'm not a biologist. Now, do I believe a woman who's going to be sitting on the Supreme Court of the United States doesn't know what a woman is?

Yes, she does know what a woman is. but she's also smart enough to know that the cultural flags are flying in a certain way where there is a complete destruction of the difference between men and women.

She doesn't want to make sure she's not on the wrong side of that. Think about that. This is a Supreme Court justice, could be, afraid to make that statement in the public arena.

That's a major idol that's going on today. And yes, there's things from our past that are evil and yucky and horrible and they need to be repented of.

[40 : 12] But we can't do that by deleting everything and saying people are ostracized because of one belief or another. The fact of the matter is if you're more concerned about being on the wrong side of history than being on the wrong side of Jesus, you may have some pretty big weeds in your garden.

If you find your righteousness in the things of this world rather than the person of Jesus Christ, you need to repent. you need to ask God to forgive you.

You need to ask God to help you begin by pulling those weeds. And we do that by seeking proper discipleship. Seek out a mature, older Christian saint.

Say, can we spend time? I need help in understanding God's word. Allow people into your life that can challenge you. I know I said the last question was the last question, but that's not the last question.

How do you know if you've got the good soil? How do you know if you've got the good soil? Well, genuine conversion creates humility in the convert rather than pride.

[41 : 32] If you are humble before the Lord rather than proud before the Lord because you happen to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you've got some pretty good soil. Genuine conversion creates a spirit of meekness, gentleness, forgiveness, and mercy, and leaves with you a true hungering and thirsting for God's righteousness.

You will not seek the things that you think are righteous. You will seek the things that God calls righteous. True conversion leaves us humble, brokenhearted, and gives us a love for God.

How is that reflected in one's life? The German poet, philosopher, Heinrich Heine said, show me your redeemed life and I may be inclined to believe in your redeemer.

Do you realize that every command or instruction that relates to Christian obedience is only to produce in us the kind of lifestyle, a kind of manifest holiness that makes the preaching of the gospel believable?

You see, holiness is not about us pleasing God in and of itself, but it's about living a life that reflects the gospel.

[42 : 57] people. And since I'm on a roll, I'm going to give you a little other piece of advice. Quit looking at others.

Quit comparing yourself to other people. I meet a lot of people who think they don't measure up because they see someone else and what's going on in their life. And they say, I wish I had that. And I'm talking about the spiritual things. Guess what? They don't live your life, you don't live your life. The message I deliver is the same message to you regardless of your 18, 28, 38, 48, or 58. However, the Holy Spirit will bring a different application in your life. And that is through the power of the Holy Spirit. Well, let me tell you what the punchline of this parable is so that you may understand what happens with good soil.

If you were a farmer back in the first century, proper return on your farming would be approximately seven and a half of what you sowed.

[44 : 16] When Jesus produces through the gospel, 30-fold, 60-fold, or a hundred fold, that was life-changing teaching.

What if I told you there was an investment that you could make that could give you a return of 30% on your investments? We'd be all over it, right? What's the best we're getting now?

Somewhere I think I just read I was getting 3%. Crazy banks. Anyway, but just to think to have 100%. The reality is you and I will never be perfect in this lifetime.

We will not be without sin. But Jesus Christ does give us a commandment and Paul tells us quite wonderfully in Colossians 3.12. You guys have heard me say this over and over and over again, which I think is one of the most beautiful commands.

It is a command that you are living by yourself. The way to live the Christian life is to take off the world and put on Christ. And what is Christ? Paul tells us clearly.

[45 : 29] Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, one, compassionate hearts. Compassionate hearts isn't a heart at all poor person.

It's a heart that literally goes and helps that person. It's an action. Kindness. Humility.

And we talked about this before. This is an era where humility did not flourish. It was better to be proud was a virtue, not humility. Meekness.

Which is power under control and patience. Verse 3, Paul says, bearing with one another. Right? There's some people are hard to bear with more than others. But it says to bear with one another. And if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other.

[46 : 29] As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. the fact of the matter is, you've heard it from the Son of God Himself.

That if you are willing to receive the seed of life and your heart is for Him, you won't be looking at anybody else.

You'll be worried about the 30, 60, 100 fold produce that is going to be produced in your own heart.

God. Let's pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we are just amazed by the teaching of Your Word.

Such simple stories have such depth to them. Father, I pray that You would indeed work in our own hearts. Father, that we would seek to repent and to take hold of the true gospel.

And notice the seed is where the power is. The seed is Your Word. It's not us in our flesh that produces the great and mighty things. Our action is simply to receive it, to repent and follow Jesus.

[47 : 41] Father, forgive us of our hard heartedness. Forgive us for being unwilling to forgive.

Father, forgive us for our rockiness, our busyness of life, the weeds that have come in and taken our minds off of You.

Father, the fact of the matter is we live in Squamish, which is in itself an idol-producing city. The luxury of the outdoors here, all the sports it offers us, the beauty that we can see can be so distracting from our worship of You.

How easy it is to be distracted. Forgive us for these things, O God, and we pray that You would grow in us a measure of grace, of love and understanding of those around us.

May we seek to have compassionate hearts, to seek out people to serve, to love, to disciple, to grow with. May You give us the type of humble hearts that is willing to accept help, that looks for help, and is quick to repent.

Father, You are a great and mighty God, and we thank You for the messages that You have given to us that reveal Your heart to us in Your word so clearly to us.

[49 : 11] If there is any here that do not know You as Lord and Savior, I pray that You would personally draw them to You so that they may see You and be willing to sell all to purchase You.

We ask these things in Your great and glorious name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.