

Good News From Mark

Good Gardening isn't Rocket Science

Mark 4:1-20

Intro

The needs of a productive garden are pretty simple:

- Sunlight
- Nutrients
- Moisture
- Plants / seeds
- Tilling & weeding

Today, we're looking at a story where Jesus talks about spiritual productivity and the things that hinder it.

Being unproductive in our walk with God is a dangerous thing (Matt. 25).

Overview

1. The purpose of parables
2. The parable of the soils
3. The meaning of the parable

1. The Purpose of Parables

A parable is a story drawn from nature or common life that piques the interest of the hearer and teases his/her mind into active thought.

Jesus is ministering in an environment of unbelief:

- the people are not heeding His message to repent and believe the good news
- the leaders are working with their enemies in a plot to destroy Him (3:6)
- his family thinks "he is out of his mind" (3:21)

It is in this context that Jesus speaks in parables.

Those who remain hardened in unbelief don't get it. They do not

understand the secrets of the kingdom.

The quote from Isaiah is a commentary on the present situation – that people’s physical senses could be operating just fine, but they are spiritually dull.

People are excluded from understanding as long as unbelief continues.

2. The Parable of the Soils

“Listen”

A sower went out to sow his seed.

Some fell along the path

Some fell on rocky places

Other seed fell among thorns

Still other seed fell on good soil.

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

3. The Meaning of the Parable

There are a variety of responses to the teaching of the word

- immediate removal
- germination and then withering
- germination and then being choked out
- germination & maturity leading to a harvest

The soils represent...

- different types of people
- the condition of our hearts at different times in our lives

A) the pathway – callous

- Satan comes and takes away the word
- “in one ear and out the other”

B) rocky soil – impulsive – the seed has a short life span

- trouble and persecution make it wither.

C) care-laden / materialistic

- worries of this life, deceitfulness of riches and the desire for other things

2 Timothy 4:10 (NIV)

... Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. ...

D) good soil - receptive & productive

- hear and accept it and produce a crop

James 1:22 (NIV)

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Colossians 3:16 (NIV)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...

Summary & Application

It is a dangerous thing to be unproductive in our Christian life.

John 15:8 (NIV)

This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

What are some things we can do to nurture the intake of God's Word?

A) Nourish your life with the scripture – lots of it.

B) Break up the hard-packed pathways to receive the seed.

C) Get rid of the rocks that give the Word a short life span

D) Pull the weeds of sin that choke spiritual growth.

E) Depend on the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NIV)

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

F) Work at hearing the Word

- be alert & awake
 - take notes
 - meditate & think on what the Scriptures say
- G) Broadcast the seed generously and often.
There will be different responses, but keep on sowing the seed.
“God, make us fruitful people of your Word.”