

Mrk11 – **Check Your Heart, Pt 1 – Mark 4:1-25**

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We left our **study** of **Mark** – with the **HARD SAYINGS** of **Ch 3**

& the **two Hard sayings**

we **looked** at - **last message** - **made** it **clear**

The DIVIDE – Between

those who are **RECEIVING Jesus** - &

those who are **REJECTING Him**

Was growing **more & more pronounced**

& - so – **Jesus** is **going** to begin **SORTING OUT**

those who **DESIRE** to **Receive His Truth**

from those who are **BENT** on **Rejecting His Truth**

& **Jesus BEGINS** this **“Sorting Out Process”**

By **Starting** to **teach** the people – **IN PARABLES**

There are Over **30 Separate Parables** in the **Gospels**

& so – it’s **critically important** – that **we know**

how to **RECEIVE** what **Jesus** is **teaching** – in his **Parables**

In our First Parable Today

The **Lesson** is . . . **Check Your Heart**

Let’s Pray

We left Jesus in the Midst
of 2 difficult Situations of UNBELIEF – in Ch 3

& so – on the HEALS of this “Hardening Unbelief”
Jesus begins this NEW WAY to share deep truths with the people

Mark 4:1-2 (NLT)

1 Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat in the boat while all the people remained on the shore.

2 He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:

this was (most likely) the PEAK of the Popularity of Jesus
- & ALL SORTS of people are Gathering around him

But - Jesus KNEW

the True Condition of each person's HEART

He KNEW some BELIEVED

He KNEW some WOULD Believe - &

He KNEW some had HARDENED their hearts toward him
& were looking for a way to REMOVE him from their lives

But please hear me - Jesus WANTED them ALL
to Hear & Receive His Message of Salvation

Jesus Christ Came - From Heaven to Earth

to BE the Good News of Salvation – for ALL People

1 Timothy 2:4 says (ESV)

4 [God our Savior] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

**Unfortunately - God knows - NOT All people
Will Desire to Receive The Truth of God's Word**

& **so** – At the **PEAK** of Jesus' "**Popularity**"

He **begins teaching** in a way
that **will** kind-of "**SORT things out**"

NOT "SORT things out" for **Jesus** – He **already knows**

But – **Sort things out** – **FOR US**
So We **can See** – Exactly **Where WE stand**

To **help Each** of **us** to - **Check Our Heart**

<u>THIS</u> – is <u>where</u> – The <u>PARABLES</u> come in
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The **word PARABLE** means
To place alongside, for comparison

A **PARABLE** is – Taking a **Spiritual Truth**
& "**Placing it alongside**" - an **Easily Understood Truth**

So that - **those Who DESIRE** - to **HEAR & RECEIVE**
That **Spiritual Truth** from God - **CAN Receive it**

& so – As this “Capacity Crowd”
presses in on Jesus that day

He gets into a Boat – & Pushes a little off-shore
& he BEGINS to Teach the Crowd - in PARABLES

& his FIRST PARABLE in Mark
has to do with the CONDITION of our Heart

Hence the title – Check Your Heart

In this parable – We’re going to See FOUR Heart Conditions -
ONE of which – represents OUR own heart

& we’re going to see these FOUR Heart Conditions -
Illustrated as FOUR different SOIL conditions

(making it a parable - to place alongside, for comparison)

Mark 4:3-4 (the parable starts) (NLT)

3 “Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed.

4 As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it.

THIS - is Heart Condition #1

a heart that is hard to God’s Word

Then - Mark 4:5-6 (NLT)

5 Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow.

6 But the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn't have deep roots, it died.

THIS – is Heart Condition #2

a heart with a shallow desire for God

Then - Mark 4:7 (NLT)

7 Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain.

THIS – is Heart Condition #3

a heart 'choked out' by thorns

Finally - Mark 4:8 (NLT)

8 Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

THIS – is Heart Condition #4

a Heart that is ready to receive God's Word

& then – look very closely at the last statement of the Parable

Mark 4:9 (NLT)

9 Then he said, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

This statement from Jesus **closes many** of his **parables**

WHAT does **Jesus mean**

“Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand”

WELL – it **DOES NOT** mean ***Physical Ears***

OR - the Physical Ability to hear

The **Phrase** ***“ears to hear”*** – is a **Figure of speech**

Meaning: ***“a heart willing to RECEIVE”***

Jesus is saying

Anyone who **Truly DESIRES**

to **RECEIVE** the **Spiritual Truth** of this **Parable**

should listen & understand what is being Taught

Then - EACH of us – Must choose to **HAVE**

EITHER - a **Heart** that **RECEIVES God’s Truth**

OR – a **Heart** that **REJECTS God’s Truth**

Here's the thing we've GOT to understand

John 16:13 says "*The Holy Spirit will lead you into all truth*"

That does NOT MEAN

The Holy Spirit will FORCE truth on you

**But – the minute you set your heart
to RECEIVE God's Truth**

The Holy Spirit will begin revealing God's Truth to you

UNFORTUNATELY - What I've found – *Far, Far too often*

Is that – instead of Truly SEEKING
God's Truth in His Word

**Most People bring their Own Opinions –
into their Search for God's Truth**

**They approach God's Word
with their own Pre-Conceived Ideas**

**about what God should BE LIKE
& what Salvation should LOOK LIKE**

... according to them

& so – they don't really come with a heart
ready to RECEIVE TRUTH from God's Word

Instead – Often – & Sadly

their OWN SELF-Developed Opinions & Ideas

End up KEEPING THEM from being able
to RECEIVE Truth from God's Word

So – Now Jesus has taught his First Parable

About FOUR Heart Conditions
that the Seed of the Word of God - Falls On

Only ONE of which leads to true salvation

& then – in the Next Section
(that we're going to look into Next Week) – (*2-Part msg*)

The Disciples ask Jesus - about this whole Parable thing

& (again) we're going to dive into that - Next Week

But – for today - In response to their question
Jesus tells them exactly what this parable means

& The Deep Spiritual Truth
represented by this parable – is this:

The CONDITION of your heart – TOWARD God's Word
DETERMINES your Ability to RECEIVE God's Word

So - Please – Have a "Heart to Receive"
What God's Word is saying to you here

SKIP down to Vs 14

Where Jesus Begins Explaining the Parable to the Disciples

Mark 4:14 (NLT) (Jesus explain)

14 The farmer plants seed by taking God's word to others.

So - The seed is God's Word coming to you
especially about Your Salvation & Eternal Life

& then – Jesus explains the four Heart Conditions

ONE of which – WE HAVE
Toward Receiving God's Word

Heart Condition #1 - Mark 4:15 (NLT) → →

Heart Condition #1 - Mark 4:15 (NLT)

15 The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away.

This is a heart that is hard toward God

God's Word lies on the surface of your heart (for a moment)

**& then - the Devil comes & steals it away
making sure it has no chance of taking root in your life**

This is the scariest of all heart conditions

If you see yourself here

Please REPENT - Turn to God - & Be Forgiven

Heart Condition #2 - Mark 4:16-17 (NLT)

16 The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy.

17 But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.

This is the heart that is Quick to Receive God's Word

Then just as Quick to Turn Away from it

When you find out that God's Word

does NOT actually Promise - The Prosperity & Easy Life

that the TV preacher sold you

When the hot sun of the Real World

brings **Problems** or **Persecution** for **Believing God's Word**

That's when you quickly **pack your bags**

& **go back home** to your **previous life**

If you **see yourself** here

Please **REPENT** - **Turn to God** - & **Be Forgiven**

Heart Condition #3 - Mark 4:18-19 (NLT)

18 The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word,

19 but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced.

AHHH MAN ! – You ALMOST Had it . . .

You **Received God's Truth** –

You thought it was **Starting** to **GROW**

But **then** . . . **Something ELSE** Started **Growing**

Faster - & Faster - & Faster

It **was** – The **THORNS of this World !**

The WORRIES of this Life . . . The LURE of Wealth . . .

The DESIRE for other things . . .

They're all CHOKING the Spiritual Life OUT of ME !!!

The **THINGS** of this **WORLD** . . . **LOOK SO Attractive**
Right up until they **STRANGLE YOUR HEART** – **DEAD**

If you **see yourself** here
Please **REPENT** - **Turn to God** - & **Be Forgiven**

Have you **seen** your **own heart** – **so far?**

Do you **have** “**Ears to Hear**”
what **God** may be **saying** to **YOU?**

Is your Heart RESPONDING to **God’s Word ?**

Or is your **Heart HARDENED ?**

Or is it **SHALLOW ?**

Or is it **CHOKED OUT** by the **things** of this **World?**

Guys – We’ve **GOT** to **Allow**
OUR RESPONSE to **God’s Word**

To REVEAL TO US

The **Condition** of our **OWN HEART**

We have **GOT TO** – **Check Our Heart!**

& we’ve GOT to KNOW

the **Condition of our Heart** – **TOWARD** **God’s Word**

DETERMINES – **IF We WILL HEAR** - the **Truth of God’s Word**

& so Finally

**Jesus Describes the ONLY HEART CONDITION
That Bears True Fruit for the Kingdom of God**

Heart Condition #4 - Mark 4:20 (NLT)

20 And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

The **ONLY Good Soil**

**Represents the Heart of those
who Desire to HEAR & RECEIVE God's Word**

**& in THAT Heart
A SPIRITUAL HARVEST is Produced !**

**& THAT Spiritual Harvest - is Eternal Life in Heaven
& a Transformed Life on Earth !**

**If you Truly DESIRE
to HEAR & RECEIVE God's Word**

**Then God will RESPOND – By Revealing More & More
of HIMSELF – TO YOU**

**& your Life will Bear the FRUIT of Eternal Life in Heaven
& Supernatural Transformation on Earth**

Now - - - We're **going to look** at some **additional truths**
in **these Parables** next **week** (in Pt 2)

But **for today** – let's **close** - with an **ENCOURAGEMENT**
AND a **WARNING** from Jesus

(Skip down to) Mark 4:23-24 (NLT)

***23 Anyone with ears to hear (a desire to receive God's Word)
should listen and understand."***

***24 Then he added, "Pay close attention to what you hear (don't
bring your own ideas or opinions). The closer you listen, the more
understanding you will be given—and you will receive even more.***

THAT is an **incredible PROMISE**

& **on the HEELS** of it – ***Comes . . . The WARNING***

Mark 4:25 (NLT)

***25 To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will
be given. But for those who are not listening, even what little
understanding they have will be taken away from them."***

That **doesn't mean** **GOD** will **take it away**

But it **DOES** mean **SOMETHING will take it away**

Pls – **Come to God** – **with** a **heart** that is **Truly Ready**
to **RECEIVE** the **Truths** of **God's Word**

don't come to **God** with your **Own Ideas**

or your **Own Opinions** - about **how things** should **be**

Come to God with **Ears Truly Ready To Hear**
& a **Heart Truly Ready To Receive**

Because - the **condition of your heart**
is what **determines**

if you can receive the **life giving truth**

of **Who** Jesus Christ **IS**
& **What** he's **Done** - to give you **Eternal Life**

Don't let your **heart** become **HARD to God's Word**
like the FIRST soil

Don't let your **heart** be **SHALLOW toward God**
like the SECOND soil

Don't let the **cares** of **this world** **Choke out** your **heart**
for the **things** of **God** – ***like the THIRD Soil***

Make your **heart** - **READY to Receive** the **truth**
God wants to **reveal** to you – ***like the FOURTH Soil***

<p>& then <u>SEEK God's Truth Alone</u> – with <u>Ears to HEAR</u> - & a <u>Heart to Receive</u> – <u>ALL</u> that <u>he has for you</u></p>

Let's – Check our Hearts

Let's Pray