Title: The Condition of the Heart in God's Kingdom

Description: In this Sunday morning message from Mark 4:10-20, Pastor Anthony Kim of Calvary Road Baptist Church continues last week's study of the parable of the sower, the seed, and the soils. After the crowd has gone, Jesus explains the mystery of the kingdom of God to those who stay and ask. Unto you it is given, He says, but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables. The sower and the seed remain the same; the difference lies entirely in the heart. Pastor Kim walks through the hardened wayside, the shallow stony ground, the thorny divided heart, and the good ground that hears, receives, and brings forth fruit. He calls every listener to seek the Lord with a whole heart, to come to Christ for a new heart, and to trust that the word of God, made alive by the Holy Spirit, will not fail.

Transcript:

Well, this morning we're going to continue in Mark chapter 4 and we're going to be in verses 10 to 20. Mark chapter 4:10-20. And we're going to see the Lord Jesus explain this true spiritual reality of how people receive and respond to the word of God. In verse 10, the public gathering has dispersed and the scene now shifts to this intimate private moment with the Lord Jesus Christ while he is alone.

And so with that said, let us read our text together as you stand out of respect for God's word.

And we are now in Mark 4:10-20 beginning with verse 10. And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? And how then will ye know all parables? The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among

thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

These are the words of the Lord Jesus. Please be seated.

Notice how Mark sets the stage in verse 10. It says when he was alone, that is the Lord Jesus Christ. And then they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. Look at who is present. Now in this particular scene, we see the core 12 apostles alongside another group that continues to stay after the parable of the sower is given. These are ones that want to continue to hear the spiritual understanding of the lesson of the parable.

Notice also what this group does. They waited until he was alone. They waited until he was alone. And then they pressed in to ask him about the parable. Mark gives the brevity that it was a crowd amongst the crowd those that stayed behind along with the twelve apostles. And why did they ask about the parable to understand the parable? Because what we see here is that even the disciples did not automatically grasp the full meaning when they first heard the story. So what we see is that there's a fundamental difference between the disciples and then the crowd, the larger crowd which are called the multitude.

And here it is. Those that truly belong to Christ, they don't walk away with just the parable unexplained. They don't just leave with possibly confusion. What is that natural understanding of farming have to do with a spiritual lesson? They don't even consider the spiritual lesson. They just hear the natural story and then walk away. See, the ones that are true disciples of Christ, genuine followers of Christ, they want to draw near to him to seek the spiritual understanding. This is where we are in our text.

So, as we walk through Jesus' answers in verses 11-20, we're going to discover two specific movements in this passage. And the sermon is broken up by two things. So number one, we're going to see the ultimate purpose of the parable. The ultimate purpose of the parable. And then secondly, the spiritual condition of the four soils, namely the condition of one's heart.

So let's begin with the ultimate purpose of this parable. Look down with me at verses 11 and 13. And that's where we're going to be at this beginning of this sermon. Now, before Jesus explains a single detail about the sower, about the

seed or the different soils, the four different soils, he addresses the deeper question of why he is teaching in parables in the first place. So look closely at verse 11. He says unto them these words, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables."

So look with me, two distinct groups. The first group is unto you and the other group is them that are without.

So in one sentence, Jesus divides all of humanity into two categories. Let's start with the "you." These are his disciples and those who genuinely follow Christ and them that are without, those are outside of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who refuse to follow him. As we know, many of the crowd stopped following him. So pay attention to the words unto you it is given that phrase means in the original language. Let me just break this and parcel this with two verbs. The first one is a passive voice unto you it is given and it's in the perfect tense. Let me explain what this means. In the passive voice, spiritual comprehension is not something that you earn. It's not something that you earn by your own understanding, by your own intellect.

It is a reminder that what is given to us is through grace. It is grace. Meaning God is the one that opens up our spiritual eyes, gives us understanding at the heart level. And so in the perfect tense tells us this was an action that was completed in the past and then it continues to transform in the effects of the follower of Christ into the present as well as into the future. So past, present and future, it is all of grace. It is all God given for our spiritual illumination and our hearts to comprehend and understand.

Furthermore, I want us to look at what is knowing mean in the original language. Let me share that with you as well. Knowing is not just again simply a head knowledge. Again, you can understand the parable of the sower naturally because there are similarities in the agricultural farming, right? You plant a seed and you expect a harvest. That's a natural occurrence. Our natural minds can comprehend that. But to understand the spiritual truth behind the sower and the seed that results in a connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a direct connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. And I shared with you last Sunday regarding the vine and the branches in John 15 that you have to abide in Christ in order to bear fruit in order to have a conversion experience which is the first fruit of one who is connected to Christ.

So what has been given to them to know? What is this knowledge for them to be given and to know? He explains it. Look down in the text. It is the mystery of the kingdom of God. The mystery of the kingdom of God. So, let's break this down. Now, what is mystery? Mystery, the way it's explained, is divine truth. God-given truth that was previously hidden in the past that has now been revealed by God to his people. Namely, the truths that we are reading here is given by the Lord Jesus Christ. See, Jesus Christ never appeared physically in the Old Testament. But what divides the old and the new is the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in every truth that is given explains the mystery of the kingdom. So he's going to explain the mystery of the kingdom that was not explained before because again the Lord Jesus Christ did not arrive until his new birth physical birth, right, of the Lord Jesus Christ he came flesh and bone he is not a spirit he is flesh and bone.

So by using the kingdom of God, Mark underscores that this is the sovereign reign of the one true God in the Bible. Meaning the one true God has a begotten son and his name is the Lord Jesus Christ. That's how we know we believe in the true the one true God. So let's go into what is the mystery of this kingdom. First-century Jews, including Jesus' own disciples, were expecting the arrival all at once, a dramatic political as well as a military overthrow of Israel's oppressors, namely Rome. This is the context that they're living in, Roman oppression. And so, the coming of immediate judgment on the wicked was to be presumed. Oh, if he is the Messiah, he is going to bring judgment to the wicked. That's their assumption.

But the mystery Jesus reveals in Mark chapter 4 radically reshapes the expectation. In Mark 4, the mystery centers on the unexpected arrival of God's reign in two stages. Let me explain. We see the hidden gradual growth now followed by visible final consummation later. Meaning his first coming the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. It is small but it grows and grows and grows and grows. They didn't expect it to happen slowly. They expected him to come quickly and judge the wicked and bring down the oppressors and be the Messiah, the the ultimate king. But we know that doesn't happen until his second coming, which I don't have time to elaborate. But there is a second coming of Christ. And at that time, he will judge the wicked and he will do what a king does. He is the authority on this earth. For the time being that is not his first appearance in which this context of the kingdom of God explained by the Lord Jesus Christ.

So let me break this down a little bit further. What is the motive of its arrival? What is his mode of his first arrival rather? First it was sudden. It was

sudden. It was visible. And it wasn't a political or military type of ruling. No, rather he explains it as an internal work of his kingdom working in the hearts of his followers. And he uses the description of a seed sown into human hearts that will receive his kingdom. So that's what we see here. They didn't expect that. They didn't expect that it would be coming in that type of arrival. Next, what we see is that the immediate display of a cosmic force as it were where he will rule quickly and have authority over everyone wasn't the case in his first coming. You see, it was rather like that mustard seed and then would continue to expand to continue to expand. I'll go into this in more detail when I go through the soils. You'll understand in that part of the sermon next judgment. It wasn't a immediate separation of the destruction of the wicked. Rather evil and opposition coexist alongside the growth of the kingdom for a time. And we're going to go into this and later in the Gospel of Mark where he talks about the tares and the wheat and so we'll go to that later in Mark's gospel.

But here's the encouragement now with his first coming that he's not conquering. Meaning he's not going to send judgment right away. Meaning if you're a sinner in this room, there's still opportunity for you to be saved. And if you are saved, you can bear fruit before his arrival. There is a reward for believers in Christ. And so my prayer is that before second coming of Christ that those that are lost here would come to know a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why he first came to die for sinners on the cross and he paid it in full by his own blood and his own death and that his resurrection means you don't have to live like you are right now as a sinner in rebellion against God rebellion against his word not obeying him as you are because of your unregenerate heart meaning your heart hasn't been transformed by the gospel yet but when the gospel really is impacted in your life. He gives you a new heart, a new spirit in which you can obey the Lord Jesus Christ and his commands.

And for those that are believers in Christ, my desire is for you to bear much fruit in discipleship as we continue to focus on that in our church. Importance of discipleship is key. After all, that's how we are right now. Disciples, they want to understand more. They want to comprehend and they want and by understanding more they want to obey more. It's not just about understanding. It's about understanding so I can obey more effectively. And that's the key for those that are believers in Christ here.

So to the believer is one and then to the unbeliever. Let me share with you John chapter 3 verse 5 to explain it in the way the Lord Jesus Christ gives this

understanding to those that are here right now this morning to understand what this word regeneration means. I pointed that word out. Let me explain with first the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said these words, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." So Jesus is speaking to a man named Nicodemus who was a Pharisee at the time of Jesus speaking to him and he was a teacher amongst the teachers. He was like the teacher meaning everyone would listen to him in giving lessons and to the Pharisees. And so the way Jesus explains to Nicodemus is to enter into the kingdom of God requires what's called a new birth experience and that is a spiritual new birth. And he explains it with the words born of water and the spirit. Here he is consistently showing what Ezekiel 36:25-27 explains. You see water is explaining cleansing from sin and God giving a new heart and a new spirit again that is echoed from Ezekiel chapter 36. So that means you cannot create a new heart. You cannot create a new spirit and certainly you cannot cleanse your own sin. That is all by the Lord Jesus Christ.

So what he's explaining to Nicodemus is you cannot rely on your physical heritage, you being a Jew, you being a Pharisee or by your own human effort by you becoming the ultimate teacher. No, no human effort here. It is all by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You see on this side of birth we can see oh yeah I was born but can you explain to me how you were born? Explain that to me the same thing with spiritual birth. You can't explain how the birth happens but afterwards you look back I was born. And that's the idea. I don't want to go into the the deep theology of what the new birth is like, how all that happens, but you'll know when you're born again. You'll know. Suddenly, you start understanding the spiritual truths of the scriptures and you want to obey God because now you are a child of God.

So, let's continue into verse 12. Here we see the Lord Jesus giving a sobering contrast. Why do them that are without get everything in parables? Jesus here quotes the prophetic commission of Isaiah 6:9-10. That seeing they may see and not perceive and hearing they may hear and not understand. Lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them. Here we stand before one of the great tensions of scripture and we must hold both of them with biblical fidelity without softening either one here. On one hand, scripture affirms God's sovereignty in our salvation. It is all of grace. Again, like I said, it is all of grace. We don't earn salvation. No, it is unearned, unmerited by God. God graciously opens the eyes of his people to understand spiritual truth while passing over hardened rebels whose hearts are hardened

and they're given judicial blinding. That's what Isaiah commissions. He said there's judicial blinding, spiritual blinding. They can understand with their own physical ears or with their physical eyes.

Ezekiel 33:11 helps us to understand that God is not someone who wants to destroy the wicked. Let me share that with you from Ezekiel 33:11. He says, "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" The emphasis there is turn ye, turn ye in the Hebrew language, that's like an emphatic exclamation point. Turn. Turn and you shall live. Turn and you shall live. You see, hiding deeper truth from willful unbelievers is that in itself an act of mercy. It is an act of mercy because greater light rejected only increases greater condemnation at the judgment. That's why Jesus gives in parables to even those that are without, unbelievers. Let me explain this.

Jesus says in John 3:19, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Their actions were evil. So by withholding plain direct explanation that the Lord Jesus Christ was doing all throughout before this parable Jesus leaves the crowd in exact same spiritual state in which they preferred. Meaning if you want to live in darkness go ahead and continue to live in darkness. I'm not going to force you to look at the light. So he leaves them the way they are, unchanged, effectively confirming their own choice to reject him.

And then we see acts of mercy. He gives them limited accountability, meaning he's no longer going to be direct to them. And so he shields them, the unbelievers, from greater accountability. You see, greater exposure to divine truths carries stricter judgment if rejected. Luke 12:47-48 says, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded." And so, he doesn't want to add more condemnation to their already state of darkness. And so, he gives them mercy. If I do more of this, you're going to get more judgment, more condemnation, more condemnation. And so scripture does affirm there is human responsibility.

Why were those on the outside blind and deaf? Why couldn't they hear with their physical ears? Why couldn't they see with their physical eyes? As Jesus explained, they want to live in darkness. They want to stay proud in their ways, unwilling to turn from what? Sin. Sin. Is that you this morning? Where you are just so comfortable in your sin that you don't want to turn from it, but

you know, as Ezekiel 33:11 says, you will die in your sin. And they watched Jesus, the crowd, undeniable miracles that was prophesied in the Old Testament. No, Jesus Christ is the Messiah by all of his miracles. He showed them physically through their eyes. They listened. Repent ye and turn. That was his first message. Do you remember that in Mark's gospel? So they saw miracles. They heard what to do. Repent from sin and turn to Christ, but they were unwilling.

And so if you are here this morning listening to my preaching yet you continue to close your ears to the clear messages of scripture. You are refusing to turn from your self-righteousness and sin. That's really the heart of your problem. And so verse 12 warns, if those who stay hardened, unrepentant that you will be given just superficial clarity without true conviction of sin. Any conversion that you produce would be shallow and it'll be counterfeit. And any forgiveness that you claim that you receive is all imaginary. You're not dealing with the real problem. It's your sin. Your sin is the main problem. And we're going to explain that. We're going to go through it regarding the four soils.

So God has designed his kingdom so that hearts find what they earnestly seek. Remember there is human responsibility in this. Jeremiah 29:13, for example. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. Not a divided heart, a whole heart. Proverbs 2:2-6 also explains it this way. So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. When a heart is closed off by pride, it blinds the eyes from truly seeing and deafens ears from truly hearing. Your heart is the soil.

Now look at verse 13. Before unveiling the meaning of the soils, Jesus turns to his disciples in verse 13 with the rebuke and an urgent invitation. He said unto them, "Know ye not this parable?" There's that rebuke, gentle rebuke. And then he says, "And how then will ye know all parables?" He's inviting them listen to this parable because if I'm going to give more parables and if you can't understand this you won't understand the others. And so this is then him the Lord Jesus going on to help them to understand and how to interact with now the spiritual understanding on their hearts. So notice that Jesus expects his disciples not to sit passively but to press in, examine their own

spiritual perception and engage his word intentionally.

So verse 14, we go into the spiritual conditions of the four soils. This is the second part of this morning's message. Jesus establishes the two constants, rather, of this parable. The first one is the sower and then the seed. Those are constant throughout the four soils. The Lord Jesus Christ here is first represented as the sower and then all who are faithful followers of Christ that proclaim his truth that continues on to this very day and into the future. Notice the emphasis on what the sower does.

He doesn't draw attention to himself. Whether the sower is Christ himself during his earthly ministry or any faithful pastor or even a parent here or a Sunday school teacher or just a Christian here that wants to share the gospel. The sower's duty is singular. The goal is to sow the word and nothing else and nothing else. Spiritual fruit is never produced by human ingenuity or being understanding the cultural context in which we live and trying to polish your message to please the crowd. Nor is it any type of entertainment involved here. None of those temporal things can bear upon the word of God.

We're not educating anyone here. It's not about education. It's about a transformation. It's about transformation from the inside out. It's allowing the Holy Spirit to work upon a person, not you. The Holy Spirit. So only the seed, the word of God, the word of the kingdom contains life-giving power. I don't have life-giving power as a pastor. You as a Sunday school teacher do not have life-giving power. You as a Christian that is sharing the gospel do not have life-giving power. Only the word of God and the Holy Spirit does. So again, the sower is identical in all four of the soils. The seed is identical in all four of the soils. Therefore, when the harvest fails, the fault never lies with the sower or the seed. The difference lies entirely on the condition of the soil, which is your heart.

So now, let's examine each of the four heart conditions Jesus describes, asking the Holy Spirit to hold up a mirror to your own soul. Let's go with the first soil number one in verse 15. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. I explained this in my previous sermon a little bit about the analogy here that this is a field where it's a narrow path where many people travel on because there's nothing growing there. There's no harvest. So naturally people are going to walk on this path more and what it does is over time it creates almost like concrete on the surface and the seed fell on this beaten path and it could not penetrate

beyond the surface. It simply lay exposed until a bird swooped in and devoured the seed.

So Jesus says this represents the wayside heart. A heart so trampled by pride and unbelief that the word of God bounces right off the surface. Notice the exact sequence in verse 15. First the hearer refuses to receive the word. And then second because a seed sits exposed on hard ground, Satan comes immediately and snatches it away. And so we see this is clearly the scribes and the Pharisees who heard Jesus firsthand yet they hardened their neck against him. No change, no transformation here. And so we see it today. Whenever someone hears a sermon or reads the scriptures for themselves, they will say, "I don't understand any of this. I don't understand the spiritual implication. I don't understand how this affects my life. And so immediately you don't even allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you, to convey this truth to you. And you move on like as if nothing happened. You go on with your business without making any slightest effort to want to understand. And so Satan loves this kind of reaction. Loves this kind of reaction. So he he is ready to immediately take the seed out of this heart.

So this is very important to understand. 1 John 1:8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Verse 10: If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. What is the only plow that can break up this soil? It is repenting from your sin. Do you have this false understanding you don't have any sin? And then you ultimately live in your sin, deceive yourself in your sin. And ultimately what that judgment is, you make God a liar and his word is not in you.

That's the first instance of this soil. And as James 4:6 reminds us, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Someone who is proud is not willing to admit their sin, not ready to bring it up before God, but keeps it hidden. Again, like Jesus said, loves to live in their evil deeds.

So, we go on to the stony ground, verses 16 and 17. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness, and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

Here we see that there is some amount of soil, albeit a very thin layer. And I mentioned to you it was about an inch or an inch and a half before it hit some kind of a bedrock, a hard concrete stone rock. And so because the soil was

very shallow, the sun warms quickly, causing the seed to sprout almost overnight. Quick growth it looks like. But looking at the field, you might think, "Wow, let's give it some time. Will it continue to thrive? Will it quickly grow and grow and grow like it first starts?" But because the roots could not penetrate the rock beneath to get deep moisture, the moment the sun beats down on this ground, the plant withers and it dies.

So look carefully at the warning that Jesus gives here. It is possible to have an immediate emotional reaction, albeit a word of gladness. As Jesus said, you're glad to hear the word of God, but your response to the gospel is not true conviction of sin. It's not true conviction of sin. So we're going right back to the sin issue. You're not convicted of your sin. You're glad in your sin. Interesting. Notice how Jesus describes this here. Immediately receives it with gladness. I don't think you will receive a gladness if Jesus has exposed your sin and said, "You're living in darkness and your deeds are evil." Would you respond with gladness? Or if the Holy Spirit's working, you'd be convicted of your sin that you're living in darkness and your deeds are evil. You wouldn't have an expression then to receive it with gladness. Yes, there is true spiritual joy, but that is to those that have received Christ as their savior and lord, and they have been cleansed by their sin, by his precious blood, and then has the fruit of the Spirit. The spirit implanted and because the spirit's implanted can then bear fruit. Yes, there is true spiritual joy. The ones that come to the Lord Jesus Christ that repents from their sin. So, however, in this situation, there is superficial gladness. We don't give an explanation why they're glad, but they're glad. But that's never the first work of the word of God to an unregenerated heart. If you are a believer here in Christ, you know you are to be convicted of your sin. And some of us we're convicted of our sin for long periods of time before ever turning to the Lord Jesus Christ. So you know personally and so what Jesus Christ says here is true.

When the word truly penetrates the conscience, the first work is to expose our sin. Awaken us to our desperate need before a holy God. Acts 2:37. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Do you see any pride there? What, I know what to do? No. What must I do? Is this crying out? I've been pricked in my heart. I need God to transform me. I can't do this. So when someone only responds with again gladness, that's not the intention of the gospel initially. We've heard it before. There's bad news before good news. That is true in this case. You must see that you are a sinner and that you're in need of a savior. And that savior is the Lord Jesus Christ

himself. He is the only one that can save you from your sins. So in this case, true repentance has not taken place and never has this person counted the cost. No root, no salvation. So look at what exposes this shallow root afterward. When affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

Are you offended this morning that you're called a sinner and you need to be saved from your sin? Because it says for the word's sake. Jesus is not talking about everyday problems. It's not talking about everyday worries or trials. All of us in this room experience everyday trials, money worries, being anxious for what the next day is about to behold, relationship problems. Those are all common general trials. What he's talking about here is when you're persecuted and afflicted for Christ's sake. See, if you haven't really belonged to Christ, you'll leave him because you're not a part of him. And so Jesus is talking about rejection, being mocked, suffering for being a Christian, being called a follower of Christ. And so the word offended here means to be tripped up, to stumble, and ultimately abandon your allegiance to the one, the Lord Jesus Christ. So that's the stony ground. A heart who fears disapproval of men, right? Men are causing the affliction, men are causing the suffering. So you are fearful of men in this context. Is that you this morning? More than the judgment of God, you want to live comfortably in this world.

John 16:33. These words comfort us as believers. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Matthew 10:28. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. See, for an unbeliever, temporary faith or whatever that is, persecution will prove if you truly belong to Christ.

1 John 2:19, They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. These are people that no longer follow Christ, not leaving the church. Just want to make that clear. It's those that ultimately never belong to Christ. And so for a believer who slips into a very shallow living, rather an unbeliever who slips into shallow living, fearing human rejection is your issue here. It paralyzes you. You're thinking all the time, "Oh, what am I going to do if I get persecuted? Oh, I've heard so many people come to me in my counseling sessions that say, "I don't want to become a believer because I I know I'm

going to be persecuted." Have you ever experienced that with somebody? They're just so paralyzed by the disapproval of men. But again, do you hear the words of Jesus? Fear the one that can destroy both soul and body in hell.

That's the one that you should have fear of. Fear of God. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. So what is the remedy for the stony ground of shallowness? You must have a more godly fear than fear of man. You must think infinitely more about God's verdict than human's verdict on your life. And that is what James 1:2-4 says for us as believers. It says, "My brethren," speaking to believers, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Do you see the quality of perseverance? Patience meaning no matter how crazy the world gets or no matter how much affliction or persecution comes about you you're at peace with God and that's all that matters to you because of Christ you have found peace through Christ believer and let that be your comfort and your encouragement.

Let's go on to the next soil, the thorny heart, verses 18 and 19. And these are they which are sown among thorns, such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Now we come to the soil that is neither hard nor shallow. So there's some more depth here. The seed falls onto this ground. It takes root and begins to grow. There's no outward persecution scorching it. They're able to endure some persecution. Yet hidden beneath the surface are the roots of aggressive weeds taking control. And as a good seed grows up, the thorns grow much faster. And I explained that last Sunday. And it wraps around the stalk. So outward circumstances and internal there is a conflict on both sides. It's no longer dealing with just external external external. There's now something internal conflict going on here as we see in the text. And it starts wrapping you from the inside and out, blocking the light, more and more light, more understanding. And slowly you get strangled out by these thorns that produces no fruit, no grain.

So let's look at the three thorns that the Lord Jesus Christ gives to us. What are these three thorns that choke the word first?

The cares of the world. Literally, this means distractions of this age. Distractions of this age. Every age comes with new distractions, don't they?

And it seems like we're getting more inundated with more distractions, with digital distractions, right? And this is the snare of just this an anxiety occupied with just anxiety after anxiety after anxiety. You hear more and more and get more distracted and you get more anxiety put upon you inside. It is a spiritual issue. Remember this is internal. Now anxiety is a spiritual issue. Worrying constantly about this world and what's going on and then you have a you struggle with this specific danger. You see, anxiety and worry can consume so much. It takes energy and it kills that which is the word of God. The word of God is now crowded and forgotten. That's the cares of this world.

And then we go on to the deceitfulness of riches. Notice Jesus does not say riches themselves are sinful, but he says the warning the deceitfulness of riches the deceitfulness of riches in 1 Timothy it talks about the love of money is a root of all evil not money itself. So here wealth is all important to you. Personal wealth promises of this world. If you just reach this amount of money that you'll be somewhat secure. If you just acquire this many assets, you'll be satisfied. Just more and more accumulation for self, which is the deceitfulness of riches. If you're selfish.

And so lukewarm church, Revelation 3:17-18, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. That is this state of this person. And by the way, I believe there is no such thing as a lukewarm Christian because he says he's going to spit them out. I don't think he's going to speak to believers that way. No, no. He says, I will be with you always. He says I'll never leave you nor forsake you. So this word of spitting is not the language of connection. And so that's the second thorn.

The third one is the lust of other things entering in. This phrase captures every competing craving thereafter. So not only those two issues but now the lust of other things entering in. You're just allowing everything to just take over. Now it's just you see the weeds growing faster and faster and faster. You're just allowing more of this world to take control. And now you're just idolizing this world. You're lusting after everything in this world. It's now your idol. Everything. The eyes were awakened to. You now begin to have greater and greater appetite for greater and greater things of this world. The eyes are opened up to more and more distractions, more and more things.

And so 1 John 2:15-17, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth

away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. The tragic subtle attack here is that it's not of the Father. It's not of the Father. It's not of the Father. It is not of the Father. I know this message is a lot longer, but bear with me. This is important I believe.

So what is the remedy of the thorny soil? You don't supremely delight in Christ. This is a divided heart as I mentioned last Sunday. And now the world just takes over everything. There is no light, completely consumed by this world. The Lord himself said these words, "Delight thyself also in the Lord." Or rather, the psalmist said this about the Lord. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. You just need him. And all of these things that are temporal will never satisfy you. When you truly know the Lord Jesus Christ, he is the only one that satisfies you. He is the only one that delights your soul. That is the one that can solve and cure this heart.

And then we go on to the last, the good ground. Verse 20. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred. So you go from zero harvest to now a good harvest upon a good ground.

Look at the three verbs of this fertile heart. First, they hear the word. They listen with spiritual discernment and have reverence over the word of God. They recognize scripture not as human opinion. No, this is the word of God. There's authority behind these words. And then, second, you receive this authority. You welcome it. The implanted word with meekness. You are not proud. You knew you know you need him and you need him continually. And you embrace the truth of God's word and it convicts you and you hold fast with ongoing obedience to God's word. If you notice, one that is spiritually matured is someone that continues to obey and obey and obey. You close that gap more and more and more from hearing and receiving. You're not a forgetful hearer. You're a hearer that receives and continues to receive. And you're a faithful doer of the word, not just a hearer. So then the third says that he, this one, brings forth fruit. So this is the first time we see brings forth fruit. Some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred. Notice the contrast here. There's not a single kernel of lasting spiritual fruit. There was not a single kernel of lasting spiritual fruit. On the good ground, every single life bears genuine fruit. Every single one. And this true spiritual fruit is visible and it's evidenced by your inward new birth. So the new birth has begun and there is now outward and that's what the fruits are. It bears upon those who see you that there is a transformation in your life and you're now truly have received

Christ's love. You know what that looks like. You know what it is. You know what it is to be a faithful witness. You are willing to go and share the truth of what Christ has done in your life and you do it all for God's glory and you return back the blessing to him in your worship by your bearing of fruit.

Every good soil bears fruit but not every believer bears exact same quantity of fruit as we see in the text. Some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred. And a reason for the variations is that God gives certain gifts, like we see in the parable of the talents we're going to see. Some was given five, some were given two, but they both bear fruit. Those stay diligent with Christ.

Let me conclude here. Let's step back and let's look at something to apply from this message. The question Jesus leaves us is, do you really believe that the seed is powerful for the work of salvation? The word of God is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword.

Yes, it is powerful. It can reach to your soul and there can be life being born. Is the word of God landing upon your ears? And do you want to not only hear it, receive it, but also bear fruit in your life if you're an unbeliever here this morning? Well, you must come to Christ first for salvation. You must turn away from your sin. And the Holy Spirit will bring that upon you. The Holy Spirit might not make you feel glad initially. He will convict you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. That is his first work in your life. And then he will turn you to Christ. So it's all of grace. It is all of him. Points you to Christ. Trust him for salvation. And he even gives you the faith to believe in Christ's salvation work. And then you can begin to understand greater things in which creates obedience, which produces fruit some thirty, some sixty, and an hundred. So much to think about for both those that are unbelievers here as well as believers. May this sermon have an impression upon your heart and that God may do what only He can do. I can only plant the seed. Some can water, but He must give the increase.

Let's pray. Father, I thank you for your word. I thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ for making things clear to us to understand the spiritual truths of this parable of the sower.

Father, I just pray that people here would have listened, would have received it, and that there would be much fruit borne amongst those that are believers, Lord. And I pray for those that have not understood this parable of the sower until now. I pray that your Holy Spirit will bring about the conviction of sin that they need to first and foremost trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their

personal savior and lord to know that he is the only one that can solve the sin problem and that is payment for our sins on the cross so that they don't have to pay for themselves.

We thank you that this has already been accomplished on the cross and it is simply for an unbeliever to believe that this is done for them. Father, please bless in this message salvation as well as growth in our believers here this morning in the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you in his name, Jesus' name. Amen.