

SERMON OUTLINE FOR DIGITAL DOWNLOAD Lesson Four: Which One Are You?

📅 **Date:** May 3, 2026

📖 **Text:** Mark 4:1–20

INTRODUCTION

Definition of “Outside”: Not distance, but disposition—how one responds to truth.

Jesus’ Statement (Mark 4:10–12):

“To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom... but to those who are outside, all things come in parables.”

Key Point:

“You are not ‘outside’ because you lack access—you are outside because of how you respond.”

UNDERSTANDING “THOSE ON THE OUTSIDE”

Key Thought:

“Outside” is not about location—it is about posture and response.

Jesus is not referring to:

- The curious
- The hungry
- The seeking

He is referring to those who:

- Repeatedly reject revelation
- Resist truth
- Refuse to respond

Scriptures:

Mark 4:10–12

John 12:37–40

Isaiah 6:9–10

POSTURE DETERMINES ACCESS

Scripture: Mark 4:9 — “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Key Thought:

Hearing is not about ability—it is about disposition.

Supporting Scriptures:

Ezekiel 12:2; Jeremiah 5:20–21

Key Statement:

Posture can cost you everything with God.

THE PRINCIPLE OF HARDENED HEARTS

Key Thought:

Hardness is not instant—it is developed through repeated resistance to truth.

Greek Word Studies:

- **Blinded (typhloō):** To dull perception, obscure understanding
- **Hardened (pōroō):** To become calloused, insensitive

Key Principle:

Repeated rejection of truth leads to reduced capacity to receive truth.

HEBRAIC INSIGHT: THE “IDIOM OF PERMISSION”

Key Thought:

God is often described as doing what He permits.

Examples:

Pharaoh hardened his heart → then God confirmed it (Exodus 8:15; 9:12) Psalm 81:11–12 — “I gave them over...”

MEANING:

God confirms the direction a person continually chooses.

UNDERSTANDING TRUE “HEARING”

Greek Word: akouō (Hear)

- Listen with attention
- Understand
- Obey

Key Thought:

Hearing in Scripture always includes response.

HEBRAIC UNDERSTANDING OF “SHEMA”

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4

Key Thought:

To hear is to respond, obey, and be transformed.

Hebrew Letter Breakdown:

ש) **Shin):** Press, consume, engage deeply

מ) **Mem):** Flow, Spirit, life-giving truth

ע) **Ayin):** See, perceive, understand

Key Thought:

Hearing means pressing into truth until it changes how you see and live.

WARNING TO DISCIPLES: HARDNESS CAN

DEVELOP Scripture: Mark 8:14–18

Key Thought:

Hardness is not just rejection—it can be untransformed exposure.

What Happened:

They saw miracles

They heard teaching

But failed to connect revelation

Key Issue:

They did not remember or apply what they had already experienced.

HOW HARDNESS DEVELOPS

Key Thought:

Hardness develops when revelation is present, but reflection and application are absent.

Key Indicators:

- Hearing without applying
- Seeing without perceiving
- Experiencing without changing

Key Statement:

Exposure without transformation leads to dullness.

WHY JESUS SPOKE IN PARABLES

Key Thought:

Parables reveal truth to the willing and conceal truth from the resistant.

For the Willing:

- They lean in
- They ask
- They stay engaged

For the Hardened:

- They hear but don't respond
- They see but don't discern
- They walk away unchanged

Key Statement:

Parables do not hide truth from the hungry—they expose those who aren't.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER: A HEART DIAGNOSTIC

Foundation Truth:

- Same seed (Word of God)
- Same sower
- Different outcomes

Key Point:

The problem is never the Word—it is the condition of the heart.

THE FOUR HEART CONDITIONS**1. Wayside (Hardened Heart)**

Scripture: Mark 4:15

Key Thought:

The Word never penetrates.

Characteristics:

- Closed off
- Resistant
- Unresponsive

Reflection Question:

Do I hear the Word, but it never truly gets in me?

2. Stony Ground (Shallow Heart)

Scripture: Mark 4:16–17

Key Thought:

Receives quickly but cannot endure.

Characteristics:

- Emotional response
- No depth
- Falls under pressure

Reflection Question:

Is my faith deep enough to survive pressure?

3. Thorny Ground (Divided Heart)

Scripture: Mark 4:18–19

Key Thought:

The Word is choked by competing priorities.

Characteristics:

- Worry
- Deceitfulness of riches

- Desire for other things

Reflection Question:

What is competing with God in my life?

4. Good Ground (Receptive Heart)

Scripture: Mark 4:20

Key Thought:

The Word produces fruit.

Characteristics:

- Open
- Rooted
- Consistent
- Productive

Reflection Question:

Is there fruit in my life that proves the Word is working?

YOUR RESPONSE DETERMINES YOUR ACCESS

Key Thought:

Lean in → More revelation

Pull back → Less understanding

Key Statement:

The difference between receiving from God and missing God is the condition of your heart.

APPLICATION: CULTIVATING GOOD GROUND

Action Steps for the Believer:

1. **Guard Your Heart** — Be aware of resistance forming
2. **Remember What God Has Done** — Let past revelation shape present response
3. **Reflect on the Word** — Don't just hear it, process it
4. **Apply Immediately** — Turn revelation into action
5. **Remove Distractions** — Eliminate competing priorities
6. **Stay Rooted** — Remain consistent in truth

CLOSING THOUGHT: WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

Key Thought:

You don't determine the seed—but you are responsible for the soil.

The Word is being sown...

The question is:

What kind of heart is receiving it?