Jesus: Serving, Sovereign Savior
A Soil Test - Mark 4:1-20

Intro: Crowds gather for sports, concerts; or in the case of Jesus, to see him perform signs or to hear him teach such as with parables.

I. The _____ of a Parable – Mark 4:1-9

A. The Setting
B. The Story

    1. The _____ breaks up the ground.

    2. The seed falls on four types of _____.

II. The _____ of the Parable – Mark 4:10-12

A. A Means of _____

B, A Means of _____ – Cf. Isaiah 6:9-10

III. The _____ of the Parable – Mark 4:13-20

How well the "seed" does in our lives is based on our heart condition.

A. Some Hearts are _____ – 4:15

B. Some Hearts are _____ – 4:16-17

C. Some Hearts are _____ – 4:18-19

D. Some Hearts are _____ – 4:20

Conclusion: How can you be assured that your heart is "good soil," and receiving the Word of God, and bearing good fruit?

Conversion – Cultivate the fallow (hard-hearted) ground.
Confession – I have allowed the world to gain a choke hold.
Confidence – Psalm 37:4; Matthew 6:33; Joshua 1:8

Following Christ with a heart that is "good soil" means life and a fruitful life beyond what we can imagine or ever do on our own.

Small Group Questions

1. Did you have a favorite story that you liked to be told as a child? Do you have a favorite parable? Which one and why?

2. Do you think this parable is more about the sower or the soil? What leads you to your conclusion?

3. Who are two groups of people in the crowd that heard this parable? Why will some understand, and others will not?

4. Read Isaiah 6:9-10. How is what was taking place in Isaiah's day similar to Jesus' day? How is it similar to our day?

5. Summarize briefly the four types of soil and what is necessary to correct the problems in the first three.

6. Which of the four soils do you think are most prevalent in our culture today? Why?

7. Read Psalm 37:4; Matthew 6:33; Joshua 1:8. What is written in these verses that will contribute to a heart being fruitful?

8. How is God calling you to think differently?

9. What is God calling you to do as you go about your daily life?