



Mark 4, Part 2 - The Soils of the Heart

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Defiant Faith fights to align itself with God. We do this by coming into agreement with what God's word says.

Exodus 14:8 "And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out **defiantly.**"

The four soils of the heart:

Mark 4:3-8 "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

Our heart is the soil; the most fertile ground in the world. Whatever is put into our heart **will produce something.**

God desires for us to be fruitful, that our faith and our lives would produce fruit. All of us have areas in our life where we produce good fruit from faith. We also all have areas where we fear, where we don't believe, or where we are hard-hearted, and in those areas we do not produce life or fruit. Our hearts can be divided, segmented, and fractured. We can believe in one area and not in another.

Jesus shares this parable so people will know the condition of the heart, where faith may be lacking, and what faith will produce.

- There is faith in our heart where we have sown (in faith) and received an answer. We don't have to work hard to believe for God to do something in this area, but we may also have places in our faith where we don't believe.

Psalm 86:11 "Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided (united) heart, that I may fear your name."

- *Is there anything in your heart that is blocking your faith to grow?*

- *What areas of your faith struggle to produce fruit?*

Four Soils of the heart

1. Hardened Soil:

- The path: well-worn and consistently traveled.

Mark 4:3-4 "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up."

Hardened Soil:

- These are areas you have difficulty believing God and what He says.
- You've been trampled down by life, experience, sin, lack of biblical understanding etc.
- There are hardened places in your heart where you have consistently believed a lie, practiced and rehearsed your disappointments, left unrepented sin, allowed bitterness, resentment, or offense to remain, and it is difficult for the word of God to enter.
- You may hear the word but not come into agreement or belief with the Word.
- Often you won't even try or start new beliefs or practices because it "just doesn't work."

May speak language like:

- "I have never done this before."
- "I don't want to have to deal with it."
- "It is too late now."
- "I tried that."
- "Never", "Always", and "Impossible" are common words in your vocabulary.

The Result:

- The enemy steals the seed and there is no growth.

Mark 4:15 "Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them."

Matthew 13:58 "And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief."

Unbelief hinders the work of Jesus.

- *Are there areas you struggling with unbelief?*

2. Rocky Soil

Mark 4:4-5 "Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they **withered** because they had no root."

This is epidemic in Christianity today.

Rocky Soil:

- There is room for the seed to go into the soil, as it is received and desired.
- There is an immediate response or reaction.

A heart with rocky places:

- There is quick response and the message is received with joy. You may be moved to tears, feel conviction and know change is desperately needed.
- You may take a step, respond to a preached message, ask for forgiveness from someone, or make promises to change.
- You engage for some time, but there is poor to no follow-through.
- It does not last. It fades; it can't handle or sustain regular life because it does not have depth.
- You start but never finish.

- Have you struggled to be consistent in your relationship with God?

The Result:

"But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, **they quickly fall away.** "

- The time is missed to break a cycle or encounter breakthrough.
- We don't determine the timeframe for breakthrough. We determine to position ourselves for breakthrough and it always begins with obedience. It manifests through endurance, perseverance and grit.
- Keep going. You will grow. You will overcome. You will have breakthrough.
- Anything of value takes time, devotion faithfulness, consistency.

We don't get to determine the timeframe for breakthrough. ***We determine to position ourselves for breakthrough.***

3. Thorny Soil

Mark 4:7 "Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain."

Thorns:

- Issues that choke off faith and life.
- God desired to reveal a truth to you, and you desired to receive that truth, but God's word comes to no avail.

A heart with thorns:

- Has a seed there; it is growing but it doesn't bear fruit.
- The difficult truth: everything needed to see faith come to pass is available and growing until it isn't anymore. Other competing desires or fears choke off the work of God in your life.

God wants us to be aware of our thorns so that we can recognize the patterns and push past them.

- *How have you dealt with the thorns in your heart?*

- *What competing desires get in the way of your desire for the things of God?*

4. Good Soil:

Mark 4:20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.

- **Hears the Word**
- **Accepts/receives the Word**
- **Produces fruit**

The Result: Multiplication

God's desire and His law of multiplication simply means life continues to produce more life. In this case it is 30, 60 and 100 times what was sown.

Psalm 1:1-3 "Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, **and who meditates on his law, day and night.** That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers."

There are *no shortcuts* to growing your faith.

We see our faith produce fruit (outcomes where God meets us and what we are praying for happens).

- What you steward into maturity, you can give away.
- It is why your endurance and consistency matters.
- **Having an opinion is not the same thing as having faith.** One costs you nothing. One costs you everything. And one of those is atomic- it has the potential to drastically alter life as you know it.
- God is not looking for intellectual agreement. He is asking at the core of who you are: **What does the word of God say and do you believe it?**
- If not, you have work to do with the Lord.

Hear the Word

Romans 10:17 "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

The condition of our hearing is directly correlated to the condition of our heart. Psalm says to meditate on the word.

- What does the word say about your situation, issue, or desire?

Be doers of the word- put faith into action.

James 1:22 "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

Get around others who are in pursuit of God and His word.

- Are you surrounded by people who are pursuing the Lord?

- Where is your heart?

- Are you planted and rooted, or are you a "free-range" wandering Christian?

- How can your faith unlock new faith for someone else?

- What do you need to put into practice or improve to cultivate good soil and defiant faith?