



TITLE: Why You Sleep During Preaching

ICE BREAKER: Tell about a time you fell asleep during a sermon. Why are we so easily distracted and slumbering during preaching? What can you do to listen better?

BIG IDEA: Want to follow Jesus for life? Keep an open heart before Him.

MAIN SCRIPTURE:

Mark 4:1-20

Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. ²He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: ³"Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

⁹Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

¹⁰When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. ¹¹He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables¹² so that,

"they may be ever seeing but never perceiving,
and ever hearing but never understanding;
otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"¹³

¹³Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? ¹⁴The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵Some 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.¹⁶ Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.¹⁸ Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it

unfruitful. 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.”

OPENING THOUGHTS: Be honest. How many of you have ever fallen asleep at Light & Life during the preaching? I have a list I keep with your names. I pray that you get sleep the night before. Do everything you can to not fall asleep today. Today, we begin a new series on five different parables Jesus told about the kingdom of God. Today's parable will explain WHY HE USED PARABLES TO TEACH PEOPLE.

MAIN POINTS:

1. JESUS TELLS PARABLES TO SOMETIMES OBSCURE TRUTH RATHER THAN ILLUSTRATE IT.
 - a. INSIGHT INTO TRUTH IS A GIFT OF GOD.
 - b. INSIGHT INTO TRUTH IS A MATTER OF THE HEART AND HEAD.
2. The HARDENED HEART is interested, but not that much.
3. The SHALLOW HEART is initially interested, but uncommitted.
4. The DIVIDED HEART is genuine believing, but crowded, and fruitless.
5. The OPEN HEART is always following, and miraculously fruitful.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. For what purpose does Jesus choose to use parables in teaching about the kingdom of God?
2. What do each of the soils represent & what makes the difference between the results?
3. What soil would you say your heart represents? What evidence in your life suggests that?
4. Do you desire to have the good soil? An open heart before the Lord? If so, what kinds of things can you do in order to keep your heart open?

BIBLE FURTHER STUDY:

CHALLENGE: If you envision yourself following Jesus for life, you must keep the soil of your heart open/good. Be willing to change. Live a repentant life. Passionately pursue God. Love your neighbor. Give God's opinion most weight.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, just like you tasked Adam & Eve with tending the garden of Eden, help me tend the soil of my heart so that it remains forever open before you and become miraculously fruitful.