



## **Failure Rate**

### **Mark 4:1-10, 13-20**

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*“Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat in the boat while all the people remained on the shore. He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:*

*“Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it. Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. But the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn’t have deep roots, it died. Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain. Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!” Then he said, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”* Later, when Jesus was alone with the twelve disciples and with the others who were gathered around, they asked him what the parables meant...”

### **Mark 4:1-10**

*“Then Jesus said to them, “If you can’t understand the meaning of this parable, how will you understand all the other parables? The farmer plants seed by taking God’s word to others. The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away. The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God’s word. The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God’s word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced. And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God’s word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”*

### **Mark 4:13-20**

**Symbol #1** – Seed = the Word (14) and people (15). The seed represents those moments in a person’s life when they intersect with the gospel message that Jesus heals brokenness, sets captives free, and to proclaim the good news of God’s redemptive plan for their life. It is both the gospel and the people who hear it.

**Symbol #2** – Soil. The types of soil in this parable are:

- 1) Path – Unresponsive (vs. 15)
- 2) Shallow – Impulsive (vss. 16-17)
- 3) Thorny – Pre-occupied (vss. 18-19)

4) Good – Responsive (vs. 20)

The math

Failure rate – 75%

Success rate – 25%

*The lesson is this: the only way the farmer will harvest more crops is to plant more seed.*

Go away pondering:

1. This past year how was your personal harvest? Was it a bumper crop or bust?
2. Will you sow more seed this year than you did last year? How?