

Digging Deeper

Key Passage: Mark 4:1-20

Main Idea: *If God Was* King it will look like listening well to live well.

Background:

In Mark 4:1-20, Jesus tells a parable (story) about four different kinds of soils. In this parable, the four soil types are really four different types of hearts that receive and respond to God's Word differently. Change in the Christian life isn't just about outward obedience. God is after our hearts. Jesus wants our hearts to be aligned with the will of God. This is a work of the Holy Spirit from the inside-out. The question we want to wrestle with from this passage is, "How do we become the kind of people who obey Jesus?" Or maybe put another way, "How do we cultivate a heart that is like the good soil in Jesus' parable?"

Discussion:

1. Take a moment and read Mark 4:1-20 again. Take some time and prayerfully consider which of the four soils best describes where you are right now. Remember, prayer is not a time to be good; prayer is a time to be honest.
2. The shallow heart described in verses 16-17 is someone who doesn't have deep roots. Jesus says they fall away as soon as they have problems or encounter persecution. Tim Keller comments, "Any person who only sticks with Christianity as long as things are going his or her way, is a stranger to the cross." What needs to change for a person with a shallow heart?
3. Take a moment and read James 1:2-4. How could these verses help someone who is struggling with a shallow heart?
4. Take a moment and read Mark 4:18-19 again. We said on Saturday night that many Christians not only struggle with being "consumer" Christians, but also



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struggle with being “consumed” Christians. What is the person who has a crowded heart consumed with in these verses?

5. Why is a consumed or crowded heart so dangerous to our relationship with God?

6. In talking about how to cultivate a good or fruitful heart, we discussed two very important questions:
 1. In what ways am I not trusting God?
 2. In what ways am I trying to be God?

Take some time to prayerfully ask God which of these you struggle with most.

Application:

If God Was King it will look like listening well to live well.

This week, identify one or two ways you need to learn to listen to God. This isn't about adding another discipline or thing to do, this is about abiding in a relationship with your Father, through Jesus, in the power of His Spirit.

