

Mark 4:9-20 (Sermon Notes) Personalise the Resurrection: The Parable of the Sower

Four parables in 4:1-34: *Four parables about God's Word. These reveal the truth of the kingdom and the hearts of the hearers- everything depends on how one hears. (4:3- Listen!)*

Take this personally: You will not be judged or identified as part of the world's definition of a group - rather, as one uniquely known and created by God

Jesus in John 12: **Serve Me, Follow Me** - *who are you, and where are you going?* John 12 and the Resurrection answered both of these key issues (Jesus is Lord; He is going to Future eternal glory) . . .thus the authority of His word and teaching as the means to follow and be where He is. Jesus is Alive, and His Word is Alive

God's Word is Alive: Living and Active, where God's Spiritual life dwells

- The word of life . . . living and active: Isaiah 55:11; Heb. 4:12; John 6:63

We live out and experience resurrection life by taking into our hearts and lives the living Word of God - The Gospel . . .the seed of the Word implanted, obeyed and applied

So here is the eternal life connection: Romans 10 - God comes near to us in and through His word - so how your heart and life receives it (relates to it) is absolutely :

****So the goal is to get you to the point where you regularly receive the Word in preaching and teaching - but also personally - to begin to try to take baby steps. Then grow!**

- Pure milk of the Word - praying for ten minutes, alone with God, to receive

The seed is the constant- yet look at the variety of the types of soil! (Do a spiritual soil test of your own heart) The sower is God; the seed is the Word - powerful potential with life; for forgiveness, transformation, lighting your path to future glory . . .a gift . . to receive

“The same sun which melts wax hardens clay; and the same gospel which melts some persons to repent, hardens others in their sins.” (Spurgeon)

*Notice the three enemies: The world, the flesh and the devil. (Resistance inside and out)

*These are the ones... four kinds of people, exposing their heart responses . .

1. **Beside the Road** - No response: - the birds came and ate it up: Satan, enemy
 - a. Luke 8: 'trampled under foot' - the shoulder of the road- Satan comes and takes it from their hearts so that they would not believe and be saved
 - b. There is a spiritual dimension and supernatural engagement - in the wrong place: not near the paths of grace . . .spiritually dangerous place to be
 - c. Blinded the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor. 4) noise; traffic; diversion . . .
 - d. Yet there is a turning point . . . conversion by God's Spirit - His Sword . . pierces
 - e. Pray! Eph. 2:8-9; Col. 2:13; Rom. 9:16; John 1:12-13
 - f. Open my eyes that I might see - Ephesians 6 (our wrestling is not with flesh and blood) John 6:44; 6:65
 - g. Peter, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you - Matt. 16:16-17
 - h. Faith comes by hearing . . .and hearing by the Word of God
 - i. Sin will keep you from the Bible; or the Bible will keep you from sin . .
 - j. Do not underestimate the power and role of the enemy in this regard . .

2. **Rocky Places:** Shallow response- not much soil- shallow - these are exposed to grace
 - a. Initially receive it with joy; believe for a while - they are all excited; all in . .until
 - b. Yet no root in themselves- no depth- sun (heat) comes and scorches: withers
 - c. Affliction/Tested - the difficulties of life test us and tempt us . .
 - i. To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life: Jn. 6:66-68
 - d. A faith that fizzles before the finish had a flaw from the first. (A. Rogers)
 - i. An initial emotional surge . . .1 John 2:19
 - e. Back to life as normal. Back to natural elements; no loyal *hesed*; staying
 - f. I can't build this tower; it costs too much- abandon the project? Count the cost

3. **Among the Thorns:** Temporal response: Luke 8: "as they go on their way" . .like the nine lepers) thorns- come up and choke out the word: no crop: unfruitful . .(Reference Jeremiah 17 - a thorny bush in a dry desert) :
 - a. Worries of the World: horizontal focus; worship the creation not creator;
 - b. The deceitfulness of riches: in what way are riches deceitful?
 - c. The pleasures of this life: amusing ourselves to death . .
 - d. The desire for other things: lust of the flesh; lust of the eyes; foolish pride of life
 - e. "Bring no fruit to maturity" (Luke 8:14)
 - i. Brings no fruit to maturity (Eph. 4; Gal. 5; Col. 1:27-28 - until Christ be formed in you (Gal 4:19) This makes for a thorny life rather than a fruitful life
 - ii. Contrast Psalm 1 - a fruit tree planted
 - iii. The goal of our instruction . . . "love, from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." (1 Tim. 1:5)

4. **Good soil:** faithful response . . . grew up, increased- various levels of production.
 - a. Hear the word: *keep asking; keep seeking; keep knocking* . . .
 - i. in an honest -- not self-deceived pride and complacency; rather, humble transparency before God; surrender: Psalm 51; broken soil; alone before God this is what we are: sinful, wicked . . . thus the avoidance, like Adam and Eve hiding in shame when we hear his sound . . .there comes Coe . . .
 1. “What a man is on his knees before God, that he is, and nothing more.” Robert Murray M'Cheyne”
 2. Who God says that we are . . . not the evaluations of others or ourselves, which are fallen, distorted and manipulative
 - ii. and good heart (Luke 8:15) - a pure heart; no longer in love with self/sin - cleanse my heart; create in me a clean heart . . .vessel, instrument
 1. Putting aside all filthiness and wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted which is able to save . . . not just hearing but doing
 - b. Hold it fast . . . Love!! (Psalm 119:97) Embraced. . .Accept the word: belief - grab it now before it goes away - manna is here! do not let any of His words fall to the ground . . .attach themselves to it; adhere to it . . . cling . . .
 - c. It bears fruit: 30/60/100 fold;
 - d. with perseverance / a long obedience in the same direction:
 - i. Godly Character
 - ii. Salt and Light - Evangelism - - Great Commission Life; shine like lights in the world - this is the lamp we are to let shine! (v.16)
 - e. Matthew 10:22; Rev. 2:26 - the need for fruitful endurance!! Luke 3:8-9
 - i. Fruit tree vs. a hothouse flower
 - ii. Sluggish? Hebrews 10:35-39, Phil 3:14 - you have need of endurance; stay sharp and focused . . .

A Heart of Repentance for a Life of Repentance - receiving the Word. In a good, honest heart: an ongoing heart condition. Tilling and working the soil. Constantly watering, etc.

“But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word, in an honest and good heart and hold it fast (accept it) and bear fruit with perseverance.” (Luke 8:15)

Let the Physician Speak . . .draw near to God by drawing near to His word with this kind of heart:

- **A believing heart:** “Faith comes by hearing” (Romans 10)
 - The Word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. (Hebrews 4:2)
 - Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6)

- **A bare heart:** to agree with God with total honesty and transparency . . (Heb. 4:13: all things are open and laid bare to Him with whom we have to do”
 - confess means to agree with God about you and sin
 - Hiding nothing from the Word of truth . . open and accessible: woe is me!
 - Here I am, Lord - exposed - nothing to hide . . all things are open anyway
 - There is nothing hidden - he knows the worst about you . . and there is forgiveness with Him so that He may be feared . . .

- **A broken heart:** which is ultimately inevitable... and unavoidable (Psalm 51:17)
 - Two sources: God’s glory, my sinfulness . . breaks me; Yet God is near to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34)
 - “The best lessons I’ve ever learned were through inadequacy and failure, disappointments, heartbreaks and forgiveness. I no longer fear the future, but I’ve grown to appreciate God’s grace. Only God is adequate - you’re not. Only God is perfect; you’re not. Only Christ can set goals that high and reach them. You can’t. The good news is that God in His grace can use us, warts and all. (Chuck Swindoll)

- **A bent heart:** from being curved in on yourself to God
 - A life of repentance - the right direction now; *lean not on your own understanding*
 - Growing and changing and bent from self to Christ . . .
 - Direction, not intention, determines destination

- **A bankrupt heart:** my righteousness is as filthy rags (Isa. 64)
 - - - I have nothing but sin and brokenness to bring. .empty me . . of my own
 - “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6)

- **A battling heart . .**
 - “Regeneration makes the human heart a battlefield.” (J.I. Packer) The flesh tirelessly wages war against the supremacy of the spirit.
 - A scrappy fight every day - mortifying the flesh; world devil
 - So many people do not grow or change or engage simply because it is easier not to!! Path of least resistance . . .

- **A baby heart:** *like newborn babes, crave the pure milk of the word*
 - Not childish, but childlike
 - Unless you are changed and become like children, you will not see the Kingdom of God

“Ministers are liable to get into the habit of studying the word of God simply that they may be better prepared to teach others. It is all important, however, that they may also bring it home and apply it to themselves. The faintest impression that it is not intended for their own personal benefit should never be admitted. Their hearts should be so applied to it that they may themselves be brought nearer to God. They should listen to it that they may hear God's voice addressed to their own souls, and that for themselves they may see his glory beaming upon every page. For their own personal benefit, as if there were no others in the world who needed it, for their spiritual strength and instruction and comfort, they should meditate upon it profoundly every day.

This is a very important duty for every Christian. The word is the great instrument by which the Spirit increases holiness in the hearts of believers. It is by faith in that word that men are ordained to be sanctified. Christ teaches the necessity of the truth when, in his great intercessory prayer, he made sure of its efficacy by the petition, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." The Spirit will honor his own truth and will make it effectual. It is by Christ, the Bread of life, that the soul is to be nourished; and Christ is to be found chiefly in the Scriptures.

From the Scriptures come light, heat, and strength, and impulse, all of which are important elements of true godliness in the soul. Not only to the young man, but to all who ask a similar question, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" comes the inspired answer, "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Oh, how the devout study and personal application of the Scriptures enrich the soul! A simple passage devoutly meditated upon makes the heart better. Then the growth in piety which is produced in this way is not ephemeral or spurious in any sense; it is healthy, and will be permanent in its results. All the books on personal piety that were ever written are not to be compared in wisdom, in authority, or in efficacy with the Bible. (Thomas Murphy)

“The Christian must therefore use the means of grace assiduously, hearing, reading, meditating, watching, praying, worshipping; he must animate himself to universal obedience, an all-round, all-day conformity to God's revealed will; and he must persevere in it with resolution and resilience. Yet he must remember that the power is from God, not himself, and do it all in the spirit of prayerful dependence, or else he will fail.” (J.I. Packer) - on John Owen

“The Word of God is not just the contrast to human brevity and frailty but also the cure, for we have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus, which has been brought about not by perishable seed but by imperishable seed” (Alistair Begg)