

Good Soil and a Good Harvest

Mark 4:1-20

- I. **The Parable:** The harvest from planted seed depends on the condition of the soil (Mark 4:1-8).
 - A. **Path:** Some seed was eaten up by the birds (4).
 - B. **Rocks/Shallow:** Some plants withered in the sun (5-6).
 - C. **Thorns:** Some plants were choked out and didn't reproduce (7).
 - D. **Good Soil:** Some plants produced various good yields (8).

- II. **The Reason for Parables:** Jesus used parables so that His disciples would understand spiritual things, but unbelievers would not (Mark 4:9-12).

- III. **The Interpretation of this Parable:** The Word of God has different results depending on the spiritual condition of the people who hear it (Mark 4:13-20).
 - A. **Path:** People who reject the Word – unbelievers(15; Luke 8:12)
 - B. **Rocks/Shallow:** People who believe, but don't bear fruit when they are persecuted for their faith (16-17; Luke 8:13)
 - C. **Thorns:** People who believe, but don't bear fruit because they focus on their problems, their money and other desires (18-19; Luke 8:14)
 - D. **Good Soil:** People who believe and faithfully produce varying amounts of spiritual fruit (20; Luke 8:15)

Interpretation Issue: The 2nd and 3rd soils probably represent believers, not unbelievers. They do have life and they believe (Luke 8:13). Jesus is challenging us to not be distracted from fruit-bearing.

Application:

1. My life must have a ministry purpose, not just self-centered purposes. Am I producing the fruit God intended for me?
2. Are my critics, my problems, my finances or any other desires stifling my eternal effectiveness?
3. Will I be faithful in serving God and others and leave the results to God?