

(Mark 4:1-20)

Jesus continues to call people to consider what they think about God's Kingdom – who is part of it and how it works. This story isn't about faith by works, but seeing the outworking of God's Kingdom in people's lives.

Introduction

Once again, Jesus was teaching by the side of a lake. A large crowd had come to hear Him speak. Jesus tells a story: A farmer went to plant seed. He scattered it across his field. The seed fell on different types of soil.

1. A footpath

The birds eat the seed.



2. Shallow soil with underlying rock

Seeds sprout quickly but wilt under the sun then die.



3. Thorny ground

Tender plants are choked by thorns so they produce no grain.



4. Fertile ground

Seeds grew and produced a good crop: 30, 60 or 100 times what had been planted.

Anyone with ears should listen and understand.



Later, Jesus' closest followers and some others ask Him to explain the story.

Jesus tells them that they are permitted to understand the secret of the Kingdom of God. They must understand this story in order to understand any others.

The farmer plants seeds by taking God's Word to others. Seeds that fall on:

1. A footpath

Like those who hear the message but Satan comes and takes it away.

2. Shallow soil with underlying rock

Like those who hear the message, receive it with joy, but as they don't have deep roots, they fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's message.

3. Thorny ground

Like those who hear the message, but it is crowded out by the worries of this life, wealth, and other things.

4. Fertile ground

Like those who hear and accept the message and produce a harvest.

Weekly Meditation and Reflection

Below are some questions and further reading if you would like some extra food for thought on this story. Some may find it helpful to journal the answers, and others may simply want to read and pray through them.

Meditate on the following passage:

Mark 4:21-34

~ How do the rest of these verses deepen the meaning of this parable?

1. Our walk with God can be more fruitful at some times compared to others. Given this, which type of soil do you think you currently are? Are you happy with this? If you are not happy with which type you currently are, what can you do to change where you are? What needs to be prayed through, either on your own or with someone else?
2. Are you sowing seed and not worrying about where it falls? The farmer can't make the seed grow; he just has to be faithful in consistently sowing seed! Pray this week for those whose lives you are sowing into. Really pray! We have a faithful God. See what He does this week.
3. Is there anything Jesus would like you to do in response to this story?