

Check Your Soil

Bryan Neisteter, October 19, 2025

When a new political leader comes into power, especially when there's a change of ruling parties — it can bring some big changes.

If that's true with worldly leaders, it's even more true with Jesus.

Jesus gives us a number of parables in Matthew 13 that help illustrate what the kingdom looks like and how we're supposed to respond to it.

Matthew 13:1-9

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Matthew 13:18-23

"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

In our last sermon series we talked about "Fresh Oil" — and sometimes we have to check our oil — we have to make sure that we are being filled with God. We also need to "Check Our Soil."

Really what Jesus is talking about is the condition of our heart. Are we receptive to His Word?

What Type of Soil Are You?

1) The soil of the path — hard and unreceptive to God.

- Jesus says that these are people who don't understand the message — they are unbelievers. However — even as believers we can be hard and receptive soil too if...
- ...we are our own authority, we don't like being told what to do.
- ...we are insecure (or proud) and don't respond to correction.
- ...we remain stuck in destructive patterns because we refuse to change or admit we need help.

- A critical heart/spirit will also stop you from receiving from God. If you love to criticize things about church your heart will get hard and locked up in a hurry — don't expect your heart to grow.

2) The rocky soil — shallow and short-lasting growth.

- Initially excited — but as soon as life gets hard we stop.
- We are big on hype and excitement but low on follow-through.
- We vow we will change, but those changes last about as long as a New Year's diet plan.
- "If I could do it again, I'd tell people to read their Bibles more." - Paraphrase of a leader in a 90's move of God in Manitoba.
- We need community, spiritual disciplines/practices (i.e. Life Groups, personal Bible reading, prayer, journaling Sunday morning church services, Hearing God, Set Free Retreat)

3) The thorny soil — choked out by worries, fears, and desire for wealth.

- We want to be obedient but are controlled by other things — fears, worries, and desire to build our own empire.
- We don't trust God's provision and leadership.
- We want money, or to be married, or have a family, or to be successful in sports or work, or to be entertained (phone or media addiction) more than we want God.

4) The good soil — producing a crop 100,60, or 30 times what was sown.

- We allow the word to go deep into our hearts, transforming us, convicting us, teaching us, and strengthening us.
- We are humble — applying what we learn on Sundays, in life groups, youth group, and other settings to our daily lives.
- There is multiplication as the Word bears fruit in us.
- We live our lives "on mission"
 - This can be serving at church — I still share stories at GMDS from a grade 9 S.S. teacher
 - At work, at school, at home, in our extended families, neighbourhoods, around town — and beyond.

We Need a "Soil" Change!

Hosea 10:12b

"Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and shower righteousness upon you."

Humble ourselves, submit our lives to the Word of God, and let Him transform us.

We might have areas of our heart where the soil is really good, other areas where it is thorny, or shallow, or hard.

We cannot be disciples of Jesus if we refuse to submit to Him.

Repentance is the way forward.

God desires that we be a church of "good soil" — that we be receptive to Him and His leadership, and that we be fruitful — that we multiply!