



WORKING OUR FIELD, MARK 4:1-20

Working Our Field

- About 30 years ago a man bought about 60 acres of forgotten land
 - Had laid forgotten for over 25 years
 - Ruts, large gully from water runoff running about halfway through, Piles of rocks in strange places, pond not holding water, weeds and sprouts everywhere, hidden tree stumps, discarded items
 - But he saw something in this land and began working to bring this land back to production for grazing and hay

Working Our Field

- **Ezekiel 11:19-20 NIV**, 19 I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. 20 Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.
 - Ultimately this will be completely fulfilled when Christ returns, and we receive our glorified bodies
 - Today we live in a partial fulfilment much like salvation

Working Our Field

- I am spiritually saved but I will one day receive physically all God has promised with salvation
 - I still have a divided stubborn heart at times
 - I still buck at following God's will at times
 - I still find myself at the throne of repentance at times
 - **Philippians 1:6 NIV**, "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Working Our Field

- But in this messy middle of salvation, God places a new voice within us, His Holy Spirit
 - That voice is working at softening our stubborn will and emotions leading us to a desire to following God's commands
 - Much like that man looking over the field, God's Holy Spirit smiles and knows what we will become, and He begins to work the field of our lives into something beautiful

Working Our Field

- Mark 4:1-20 normally is looked upon pertaining to salvation
 - But this morning I want you to look at it differently because it can also apply to us after salvation as well
 - We can have these areas of our lives that closely match the soils Jesus is teaching about

Scripture

- **Mark 4:1-9 NIV**, Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. 2 He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said:

Scripture

- **Mark 4:1-9 NIV**, 3 “Listen! 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, so that they did not bear grain. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”
 - 9 Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

Working Our Field

- What does the seed represent?
 - **Mark 4:14 NIV**, “The farmer sows the word.”
- Who is sowing the seed?
 - Ultimately it is Jesus under the power of the Holy Spirit
 - Anyone who is accurately sowing the word of God
 - Not just stating Bible Verses, but also by how you live your life as a Born-Again Child of God
- What is the field?
 - The hearts, minds, and will of mankind and that includes us

Working Our Field

- I would like to tell you that upon salvation my life field looked something like this picture



Working Our Field

- I still have hard paths, rocks, and thorn places in my life field
 - But I also have planted God's foresight and promises
 - **Romans 8:29 NIV**, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son"
 - **1st Corinthians 15:49 NIV**, "And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man."
 - **2nd Corinthians 3:18 NIV**, "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."
 - This morning let the Holy Spirit identify if any of these areas are active in your life field

The hard path of practiced sin

- **Mark 4:15 NIV**, “Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.”
 - Any field that houses cattle will soon develop a hardened path that they habitually use
 - No matter where they are in the field they will migrate to that path
 - They have walked it so many times they can’t help but walk it

The hard path of practiced sin

- **Hebrews 12:1 NIV**, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.”
 - “the sin that so easily entangles” is the path that we have walked so many times it easily entangles us
 - Have you ever asked yourself
 - Why do I always do this? Why do I respond like that? Why do I keep doing this? Lord, I’ve done it again.
 - This is the hardened path Jesus is describing in your field

The hard path of practiced sin

- We all have at least one
 - Before you say something like, “This is impossible to overcome” or “That’s just the way I am”
 - **Romans 6:14 NIV**, “For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.”

The hard path of practiced sin

- You can throw all sort of Scripture at it, but it will not produce a harvest because the seed is sitting on top and not folded into the field of your life
 - The hardened path must be turned over
 - Kneel down at the cross of Jesus Christ
 - Look up and see He is not there but alive
 - Bury it in the fresh soil of Jesus' sacrifice and love
 - Water it with the tears of repentance
 - Get up and try again

The hard path of practiced sin

- **Proverbs 4:20-21 NIV**, “20 My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. 21 Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart.”
- **Deuteronomy 11:18 NIV**, “18 Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.”

The rocky places of distractions

- **Mark 4:16-17 NIV**, “16 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17 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.”
- We are called to become disciples of Jesus
 - A disciple is one who imitates the master by observation, learning, and acceptance of the master’s way
 - This is extremely difficult and takes time, patience, and old-fashioned grit to plant your roots deep in the Master’s soil rather than our own

The rocky places of distractions

- Once saved Satan will attempt to distract you away from discipleship
 - Salvation comes and our spiritual roots begin to grow then we discover some of our priorities need to be adjusted
- An item of distraction is not always a bad thing
 - A spiritual distraction is anything that takes your eyes off the discipleship path and onto something else, anything else
 - Cell phones, Recreation, Sports, Religious TV or video services, building or refurbishing a house or business, anything can become a distraction
- You can't plow a patch of ground with rocks, they must be discarded
- Decisions must be made, priorities set, new habits formed

The thorny soil of deception

- **Mark 4:18-19 NIV**, “18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.”
 - Deceit - The act of accepting as true or valid what is false or invalid
- This would be someone who hears the gospel, allows the message to reach his heart, and even shows some spiritual growth but something chokes it out from producing a harvest

The thorny soil of deception

- They don't let Scripture speak to their heart and instead begin listening to the self-proclaimed wisdom of others or themselves
 - Prosperity theology (also known as the "health and wealth gospel")
 - The different man-made explanations of Jesus' resurrection
 - How could writings from 1000s of years before speak to us enlightened people today
 - Jesus is a good moral teacher, miracle worker
 - Virgin born – never, God in flesh, Returning to earth
 - The world situation is hopeless and so are you

The thorny soil of deception

- There is only one way to address thorns – they must be killed, silenced
 - You can't just discard them because they will simply sprout up again
 - You silence the thorns of life by fully trusting in God's revealed Word
 - Fully accepting who He is as defined in the Bible
 - The Path of Salvation
 - Who you are in Christ Jesus after salvation
 - What He has promised you
 - And slowly the voice of thorns will be pushed down to a whisper then crushed by faith

The fruitful soil of the good harvest

- **Mark 4:20 NIV**, “Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”
- Here is where God desires to take every area of your life field
 - Where are hearts and minds are receptive to
 - Hearing with understand His word to you
 - Accepting and applying His word whether you understand it all or not
 - Letting it take root in your heart, emotions, and mind producing a will that is acceptable and pleasing to Him

The fruitful soil of the good harvest

- What crop does your loving Heavenly Father desire to produce in your life?
 - Freedom through - Peace, Love, Joy, Patience, Gentleness, Self-Control, Fruitfulness within your own life and in the lives of others...
 - **Galatians 5:22-23 ESV**, “22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

The fruitful soil of the good harvest

- **Luke 15:24 NIV**, “For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”
 - We can celebrate as well
 - My heart was hard, rocky, thorny but now is ready for the harvest of God’s choosing

Working Our Field

- As the old hymn states

My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand:
all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.



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