

Jesus Wow! Series Part 17

Jesus' Parable of the 4 Soils

Mark 4:1-20

Pastor Andrew Neville 2/8/20

Sermon Summary

Although this story is known as the Parable of the Sower, it is not really about him (or her); it should be called the Parable of the 4 Soils. Prior to the days of mechanized sowing machines, seeding was done by hand by the simplest of techniques of scattering seed from an out-swung arm onto an uncultivated land.

This was a random, inefficient system, and the resultant plant, with its ultimate crop, depended on the type of soil on which it landed. In this teaching Jesus describes 4 types of soil which are readily understood. The types of soil represent types of people. All of us fall into one of these 4 categories at any given time. Each soil type can be regarded as a particular response to the seed – which is the word of God.

Jesus presented a clear message: **“Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel!’” (Mark 1:14-15 ESV).** This, in a nutshell, summarizes Jesus’ teaching ministry.

But repentance – the first step – is frequently hard for humans.

The road of life is often difficult, but the good news is: **“For those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28 ESV).**

“For those who believe have eternal life” (John 6:47 ESV). Eternal life is the reward for all those who live for God now and give glory to their Creator.

The 4 soils are the 4 responses to the message of the gospel. Numbers 1, 2, 3 will **not** get into heaven. Only the 4th has that guarantee.

After preaching the message, Jesus concluded with the words, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Mark 4:9). In essence, the story is for everyone. **We are in the story.** Find out which soil type you are and then respond. Many, perhaps most, of Jesus’ hearers fell into the first 3 categories, for they did not have **saving faith**. Many were Jews; they thought they were already guaranteed members of God’s kingdom. They were horribly wrong!

The 4 soil types using Kiwi vernacular

1st Response: **Yeah Right. (Mark 4:14-15).** As soon as these people hear the word, Satan immediately arrives to block any reaction. The stony ground on which the seed falls doesn’t

stand a chance. The “Yeah Right” may say that all Christians are hypocrites with closed minds. If you are praying for such a person, don’t give up because even the hardest heart can be broken. The tragic reality for Yeah Right people is that they turn down a gospel that would lead them to eternal life.

2nd Response: **Sweet As. (Mark 4:16-17)**. As soon as they hear the word, they exclaim with emotion, “Sweet as”. But it does not take long for other activities and troubles to arrive, and this eventually sees them fall away. These people are not closed to the gospel; they did respond to it emotionally because others were doing likewise, and they may have become part of a church community. However, later, when difficulties arise, doubts creep in, and eventually they too fall away.

3rd Response: **Yeah Nah. (Mark 4:18-19)**. These are people who try not to offend. They do their best to fit in, but they are way too busy with so many secular activities. They may not be outwardly antagonistic to the gospel; they may even appear outwardly to be a Christian, but inwardly they desire wealth and prestige as more important. A blogger once commented that Millennials are full of weeds. They take their authority from the “celebs” of the world; they live inside the world of the moment – the cellphone. The authority of the Word of God is choked out by the social media of the day – the weeds. Yeah Nahs don’t have a genuine spiritual life.

4th Response: **Awesome. (Mark 4:20)**. They accept the word; they are ready for the gospel. They welcome it **exclusively**. This is their treasure! Such people are not perfect; things will go wrong for them occasionally. But they are committed to the gospel no matter what.

So, which soil type are you? How do you respond? Are you scared of becoming uncool?

Any early spiritual “buzz” soon wears off. Once that is replaced by a desire to want Jesus fully and to rush out into the world to proclaim him – you have become the 4th soil ready for the fruit to grow in your own character and in your own life. **(Galatians 5:22-23 and John 15:5-8)**.

The apostle Peter was an “**Awesome**” type – yet he denied Jesus – but then, in true repentance, came back stronger!

Judas was a “**Yeah Nah**” type who hid his true nature and fooled the rest of the disciples right up until the end. Don’t be like him!

Discussion Questions

1. **Read Mark 1: 14-15.** Why is it so difficult for humans to repent?
2. **Read Romans 8:28.** As a Christian, what do you understand by this passage? Do you have a personal example you can narrate to give better understanding of this word?
3. **Read Mark 4:1-20.** Pastor Andrew said that soil types 1, 2, and 3, will not inherit eternal life. So, can a person change his/her soil type?
4. If a **Yeah Right** person accuses you, or your faith, of being hypocritical, how do you answer them?
5. At what point can you recognize a church attender as either **sweet as** or **yeah nah**?
6. **Read Galatians 5:22-23 and John 15:5-8.** What do these scriptures add to your understanding of the 4 soils?
7. How do you personally insure that you are a fruit-bearer for Christ?

Prayer suggestions for Life Groups

Pray that God would open the hearts of these unbelievers so they can in turn believe, just as Lydia did. "The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul" (Acts 16:14).

Pray for boldness in generating and taking opportunities to speak the gospel. Even Paul longed for this boldness and for the confidence that he was speaking the right and best words. Pray that God would give you the boldness and, that when you take the opportunities, that he would then guide your words.

Pray that recent converts online will find a Church that embraces and teaches them... including Northcross.