

What Kind of Soil Are You?

INTRODUCTION

This morning I want to speak on a text that I have wanted to for a long while, but the time never seemed right, and also a text that intrigues me in how vivid and straightforward it is. It is one that I don't remember preaching on before, I may have, but a text that I have been drawn back to these last few weeks.

Every spring as a kid my grandad would have me help him in his garden. I remember one year he hooked up the mule with the plow and made me plow the garden. I thought I was in trouble, but he told me that I wasn't in trouble, but rather wanted to make sure I knew how to grow a bean in case the Depression ever hit again.

Also, right now, although fighting with we ground everyone is thinking about gardening. One of the most important elements of gardening is making sure you got good soil in which to grow a crop because otherwise you are putting in a lot of work for nothing.

Last Monday, Trista and I went over to our place in Bogata where we are building a trap for cattle and had to put in some H-Braces. We took an auger and let me just say it matters what kind of ground it is and how wet it is in using that one man auger. I was just glad there wasn't any rock like there were in Tennessee. Some of the soil just melted away like butter and some of it was harder than concrete which brings up my question for us this morning. What kind of soil are you?

TEXT

Matthew 13:1-9

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

Matthew 13:18-23

"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

N.T. Wright

Many of Jesus' **parables** are like mazes, designed to challenge his listeners to work out for themselves how to get to the heart of things. But sometimes the hearers simply got lost, and Jesus then provided a map so they could see where they were. There was, actually, an ancient Jewish tradition of providing this kind of explanation, especially after some dramatic and symbolic vision which the person who had seen it (or the people reading about it) might have difficulty working out.

It must be stated that the *sower is Jesus, the seed is the truth of God's word, and the soil refers to the human heart.*

I. The Well Worn and Rutted Out Soil

Robby Gallaty, Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples

“When the church becomes an end in itself, it ends. When Sunday school, as great as it is, becomes an end in itself, it ends. When small groups ministry becomes an end in itself, it ends. When the worship service becomes an end in itself, it ends. What we need is for discipleship to become the goal, and then the process never ends. The process is fluid. It is moving. It is active. It is a living thing. It must continue to go on. Every disciple must make disciples.”

II. The Surface Joy but Hard Hearted Soil

Notes: _____

Dallas Willard

Discipleship is the process of becoming who Jesus would be if he were you.

III. The Worries & Wealth Soil

Notes: _____

John 15:1-5

¹ ‘I am the true vine’, said Jesus, ‘and my father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t bear fruit; and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it can bear more fruit.

³ You are already clean. That’s because of the word that I’ve spoken to you.

⁴ ‘Remain in me, and I will remain in you! The branch can’t bear fruit by itself, but only if it remains in the vine. In the same way, you can’t bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. People who remain in me, and I in them, are the ones who bear plenty of fruit. Without me, you see, you can’t do anything.

IV. Humble Soil of the Believer

Notes: _____

David Platt, Follow Me: A Call to Die. A Call to Live.

“Making disciples of Jesus is the overflow of the delight in being disciples of Jesus.”

CONCLUSION

Bill Hull, The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ

“Discipleship isn’t a program or an event; it’s a way of life. It’s not for a limited time, but for our whole life. Discipleship isn’t for beginners alone; it’s for all believers for every day of their life. Discipleship isn’t just one of the things the church does; it is what the church does.”