

The Good Soil (Parable of the Sower — Part 4 of 4)

subtitle: Good Seed + Good Heart = Good Fruit

Luke 8:4-15 (New American Standard Bible)

⁴ When a large crowd was coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable: ⁵ “The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up. ⁶ Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.

⁷ Other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out. ⁸ **Other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great.**” As He said these things, He would call out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

⁹ His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable meant. ¹⁰ And He said, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that *SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND.*”

¹¹ “Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.

¹² Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved. ¹³ Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.

¹⁴ The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. ¹⁵ **But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.**

Introduction

Today we come to the conclusion of our sermon series on **The Parable of the Sower**.

Over the past three weeks we have examined three kinds of soil that Jesus describes in this parable.

First, we looked at **the soil beside the road** — the hardened heart where the Word of God is snatched away before it can even begin to grow.

Second, we studied **the rocky soil** — the shallow heart that receives the Word with joy but falls away when temptation, affliction, or persecution comes.

Third, we examined **the thorny soil** — the crowded heart where worries, riches, and pleasures of life choke the Word and keep it from bearing fruit.

Today we arrive at the fourth and final soil — the soil that every believer desires to be. **The Good Soil.**

Recap: The Spiritual Battle Around the Word

Before we look closely at the good soil, let us briefly remember what we have learned from this parable.

In our salvation journey, **three parties are involved: God, the devil, and us.** God is the **Sower.** He graciously sows His Word into our hearts. The devil is the **enemy.** He does everything he can to prevent that Word from taking root. And **we** are the soil. The condition of our hearts determines what happens to the Word and to our eternal destiny.

God desires our salvation. The devil opposes it. And the battlefield is **our heart.** That is why Jesus warns us about several dangers. Sometimes the Word is **snatched away** before it is believed. Sometimes it withers under **temptation, affliction, or persecution.** Sometimes it is **choked by worries, riches, and pleasures of life.**

But Jesus also shows us something hopeful. There are hearts where the Word grows. There are lives where the Word produces fruit. There are believers whose hearts are **good soil.**

The Good Soil

Jesus says in verse 8: *“Other seed fell into **the good soil**, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great.”*

This morning, we will examine what Jesus teaches about **the good soil** — the heart where the Word of God grows and produces abundant fruit.

In verse 15 Jesus explains what the good soil is about: *“But the seed in the good soil,*

*these are the ones who have heard the word in **an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.***"

We learn three qualities of the good soil from this verse:

1. **An honest and good heart**
2. **Holding fast to the Word**
3. **Perseverance**

Let us consider these one by one.

I. Honest and good heart:

What is an honest and good heart? It is a heart that cherishes God's Word. Remember the seed here? The Word of God. Remember the good soil here? It is your honest and good heart. With the honest and good heart, we are eager to listen to God's Word. **With an honest and good heart, we love God's Word more than** a thousand pieces of gold or silver (Psalm 119:72). E.g., The Berean believers: *Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so*" (Acts 17:11). That's an honest and good heart.

The Illustration: The Umbrella vs. The Pitcher. When it rains, two vessels can be outside. An umbrella is 'open' to the sky, but its very shape is designed to deflect the water away. A pitcher, however, is open at the top to *receive and retain*. Some people come to church like umbrellas—they are present, but the Word just slides off their surface. The 'honest and good heart' is the pitcher; it is shaped by a desire to hold onto every drop God pours out.

Another thing the honest and good heart does: it **obeys** God's Word. E.g., The Methodist slogan says, "Open hearts, open minds, open doors." It is a beautiful sentiment. It encourages us to welcome others with kindness and grace. But we must go one step further. Our hearts and minds must also be open to **God and His Word**.

Listen. The 'open heart' in the Bible means the heart that is ready to listen and obey God (Acts 16:14). The 'open mind' is the mind that understands the Scripture (Luke 24:45).

We can be the most open-minded congregation in the world, yet, if we fail to understand the Scripture, our openness means nothing to Christ and His kingdom. I have seen some congregations (and individuals) who are very welcoming, yet their minds are totally closed to God and Jesus (to the point where they abandon God's Word). You can be the most open-hearted person in the world. Yet, if you fail to listen and obey Jesus, you are

not open-hearted to God at all. Beware the closed heart and closed mind toward God and His Word. Pray for an honest and good heart that is always open to God. Ask the Lord for the heart that always obeys the Lord.

II. Hold it fast (to the Word of God)

Let us consider what it means to **hold fast to the Word of God**. It reminds me of "**Pitbull Grip**" — a Pitbull refuses to let go once it has something in its mouth. That tight grip. To hold fast to the Word of God means not easily let go of God's Word in you. It means to keep holding fast to the Word of God in your heart for a long time so that you can bring it out and rely on it repeatedly in times of need. E.g., Mary, the mother of Jesus, kept all the prophecies concerning her Son in her heart (Gabriel, Shepherds, Simeon): *Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart* (Luke 2:19, 2:51). Even as she witnessed the violent death of her son on the cross, she was holding onto God's Word that was treasured up in her heart for over the years. Those words of God carried her through, because she was holding onto them.

The Illustration: The Slow-Cooker (Crockpot) vs. The Searing Pan. Holding fast is like the difference between flash-frying a piece of meat and slow-cooking it. When you flash-fry, the heat only touches the surface. But when you slow-cook, the seasoning permeates every fiber of the meat over time. Mary didn't just 'hear' the prophecy; she let it simmer in her soul for thirty years. When the 'heat' of the Cross came, she didn't dry up because the Word was already at the very center of her being.

III. Bear fruit with perseverance.

To persevere means to remain under pressure—to endure and continue without giving up in difficult times. In the parable, the difference between the "Good Soil" and the "Rocky Soil" isn't the presence of the sun; it's the ability to stay planted when the sun gets hot.

The Nature of Perseverance: A Spiritual Marriage Vow

Perseverance is essentially a "covenant loyalty" to God's Word. It is very much like a **Marriage Vow**. When a couple says, "*For better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health,*" they are committing to persevere. They aren't saying they will never face "worse" or "sickness"; they are saying they won't let those trials uproot their commitment. To bear fruit, we must stay "married" to the Word even when the "honeymoon phase" of hearing it ends and the hard work of living it begins.

The Process: The Refining Fire

We often wonder why God doesn't just make the Christian life easy. But the Apostle Paul reminds us that "tribulation brings about perseverance." Think of the **Refining Process**

for Gold. The gold doesn't become pure by sitting in a cool room; it becomes pure by enduring the heat of the furnace until the impurities rise to the top and are skimmed away.

God is not trying to 'burn' you; He is trying to 'equip' you. Somewhere in the 'fine print' of our walk with Him, James reminds us that the testing of our faith produces this very endurance so that we may be 'perfect and complete.'

The Outcome: Victory in the End Times

Why is this so vital? Because without perseverance, we cannot survive the 'seasons of affliction' or the trials of the last days. Jesus warned that we may face hatred and persecution for His name's sake. But He gives us a staggering promise: "By your endurance you will gain your lives."

Consider **Job**—the man who lost everything but held fast. He is the ultimate example of 'Good Soil.' He was pressed, but not crushed; he was refined, and in the end, he saw the 'outcome of the Lord's dealings.' Perseverance is the bridge between the **Seed** being planted today and the **Salvation** you will receive in eternity.

Conclusion

Your heart is the soil. God is the Sower. He sows His Word in your heart. If the soil fails to produce fruit, the problem is not with the Sower or the seed—but with the condition of the soil. If we fail to produce a good fruit in our walk with God, we will fail to bring glory to our heavenly Father. Let us please our God, and let us prepare our hearts to be the best growing environment for God's Word. Let us prepare our hearts to be honest and good so that the pure and life-giving seed of God's Word may bear most fruit. That will bring glory to His name. In the end, we will receive what God has promised: eternal life (Hebrews 10:36).

Here is a seed for you to sow in your heart today:

1 Thessalonians 5:18 — "In everything give thanks." 'Hold it fast' this week specifically when you hit a 'thorny' or 'rocky' moment. *When you get stuck in traffic or face a difficult email tomorrow, don't let the 'birds' snatch this seed. Hold onto it fast. Give thanks anyway. See if it doesn't start to change the soil of your heart.*

Amen.