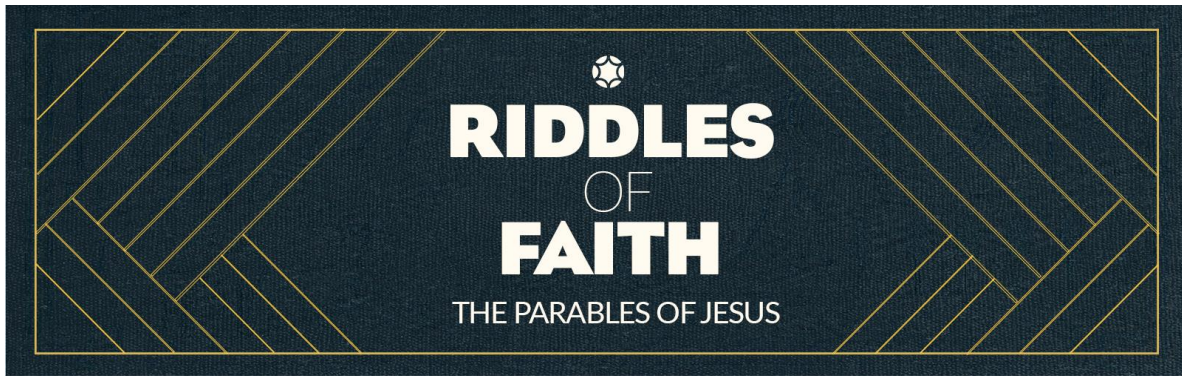




Group Guide

Week Two // Sow What?

Scripture Focus

Mark 4:1-20

Big Idea

The condition of our hearts determines how we receive God's Word. Jesus invites us not simply to hear His message, but to allow it to take deep root and produce a life that bears fruit.

Read Together

Read Mark 4:1-20 aloud. As you read, notice the four different kinds of soil Jesus describes.

Setting the Scene

Jesus had become incredibly popular and crowds followed Him wherever He went. They wanted to hear His teaching, witness miracles, and perhaps even experience healing for themselves. However, many were interested in Jesus without being fully committed to Him, and this parable marks a turning point in His ministry. Instead of speaking plainly to the crowds, Jesus begins teaching through parables revealing spiritual truths to those who genuinely seek Him while exposing the hardened hearts of those who are full of pride.

Digging Deeper

At first glance, the story appears to be about farming. A farmer scatters seed everywhere and some seed falls on the path. Some lands on rocky ground. Some among thorns. Some falls into good soil and produces an incredible harvest. The Parable of the Sower is really about the different ways people respond to God's Word.

Later Jesus explains the meaning:

- The seed represents the Word of God.
- The soils represent the condition of the human heart.
- Jesus is asking us what kind of heart do I have today?

The Four Soils

The Path

The seed never has a chance to grow because it never penetrates the ground. Some hearts become so hardened that God's Word never truly enters. Distractions, skepticism, pride, or years of resisting God can leave a person unable or unwilling to receive His truth.

Rocky Ground

These hear the Word with excitement, and their faith appears genuine but has no depth. When difficulty, disappointment, or persecution comes, their faith quickly fades because it never developed deep roots.

Thorny Soil

The seed grows, but so do competing plants. Jesus identifies these thorns as worries, wealth, and desires for other things. Nothing may seem overtly sinful, yet good things become ultimate things and slowly choke spiritual growth.

Good Soil

The good soil receives God's Word, allows it to take root, and produces fruit. The emphasis isn't simply hearing God's Word but responding to it with faith, obedience, and perseverance. The fruit is a transformed life that increasingly reflects Christ.

Group Discussion

Getting Started

- What stood out most to you from the sermon?
- Which image or phrase from this parable has stayed with you?

Digging Into Scripture

- Why do you think Jesus chose farming imagery to describe people's response to God's Word?
- Which of the four soils do you think is most common in our culture today? Why?

Personal Reflection

- Which soil best describes your heart in this season of life? What leads you to say that?
- What "thorns" have the potential to crowd out God's work in your life right now?
- What habits or practices help cultivate "good soil" in your relationship with Christ?

Looking Forward

- If someone observed your life over the last six months, what fruit would they see growing?
- Is there an area where God has been speaking to you that you've delayed acting on?

Individual Application

This week, spend a few minutes each day asking God to examine the condition of your heart before you open Scripture.

Pray the simple prayer:

"Lord, make my heart good soil today. Remove whatever keeps Your Word from taking root, and help me bear fruit that honors You."

Then ask yourself each day:

- What is God saying to me?
- What will I do because of it?
- Who can I encourage with what God is teaching me?

Consider memorizing:

Mark 4:20

“Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop.”

Closing Prayer

Close your group time by praying together.

- Ask God to soften hardened hearts.
- Pray for deeper roots that withstand difficulty.
- Thank God for His patience as He continues to sow His Word into our lives.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to produce lasting fruit through your obedience.