



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 18

THE FOUR SOILS

The gospel is the seed that is sown and bears fruit in the lives of those who believe.



MONDAY

THE STORY: MATTHEW 13:1-11

Not all seed produces a crop. So many people came to hear Jesus teach that He got into a boat and went out from shore so that the crowds could gather along the lake to hear Him teach. Jesus told the crowd a story, or parable, about a farmer who was throwing down seed to plant. The seed hit four different places. It landed on the hard path, in the rocky areas, among the thorns and on good soil. Although three of the four soils allowed the seed to grow, only the plants sown in the good soil survived long enough to produce fruit or a crop. It is clear from what follows that Jesus did not explain what the parable meant. Later He explained it to His disciples but not to the crowd.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Do you think you could figure out what the parable meant without Jesus' explanation? (We might guess that it was good to be like the seed on the good soil, but we would likely not understand.)

Why didn't Jesus explain the parable to everyone? (We don't know all the reasons why Jesus didn't explain it to everyone, but we do know He purposefully withheld the explanation. Rather than wonder why everyone did not get the explanation,

we should be thankful we have the words of Jesus preserved in the Bible. Like the disciples, we have the explanation! The question for us is: What are we going to do with it? Which of the soils are we?)

What is the secret of the kingdom? (The secret of the kingdom is that Jesus is the Messiah, and that His sacrifice on the cross was necessary to atone for sin.)

PRAY:

Thank God for giving us the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.



T U E S D A Y

THE STORY: MATTHEW 13:11-17

The secrets of the kingdom are hidden from those who close their eyes. Jesus further explained his use of parables to the disciples. He quoted Isaiah, who prophesied about people who would see and hear but not understand. Many people saw and heard Jesus but did not understand or believe. These were the kind of people to whom He told the parable of the sower. These people's hearts became calloused and hard, and they would not believe. The disciples' hearts were different. To them Jesus revealed the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.

TALK ABOUT IT :

Why should verse 17 both excite us? (We know who Jesus is. We know the exact path to salvation. The people of God and the prophets of old longed to see the salvation of God, but they couldn't.)

How should we respond when we realize that we know the very secrets of God's kingdom? (We should praise God for revealing the gospel to us. Even today the gospel message goes forth and still lands on four very different soils. Not everyone believes. Many reject the message of Jesus.)

PRAY:

Pray that God would soften the heart of every member of your family that the gospel might bear fruit in each of their lives.



**WEDNESDAY
WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?**

THE STORY: 2 TIMOTHY 1:7-10

The Gospel is the message about the kingdom of God that Jesus introduced in the parable of the sower. We are the farmers. We sow the seed of the gospel when we are not afraid to testify about our Lord. The plan of the gospel was God's plan to save us since the beginning of time. The prophets of old longed to see the Messiah and God's salvation revealed. With the coming of Christ, the message of the kingdom was revealed. All of us who receive that message are called to bear fruit by spreading the good news.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does it mean to be a herald? (A herald passes along an important message to others. Often a herald would shout his message so that everyone could hear. We are to herald the gospel, telling people the message of the kingdom.)

What stands in our way from sharing the gospel? (Most of us struggle with the fear that people might reject us or think we are strange.)

PRAY:

Pray that God would give us both the opportunity and the courage to share the gospel.



THURSDAY

THE STORY: MATTHEW 13:18-23

Jesus explained the parable of the sower to the disciples. The seed, He explained, is the message about the kingdom of heaven. That message is the gospel message. The message that is sown is that Jesus Christ died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, and rose to new life on the third day so that we might also rise again. When that message goes out today, it falls upon the very same four types of soil.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Do you know someone who needs to hear the gospel? (Parents, draw out your children here. You can pray today for their salvation and the opportunity to sow the seed.)

PRAY:

Pray for those people and then set up a plan that might include an invitation to your home or church, thus providing an opportunity to share the gospel.



FRIDAY ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

THE STORY: PSALM 14:1-7

Paul quotes this passage in Romans 3:10-12 when he explains the nature of man and the hopelessness of his condition. He goes on to contrast our sinfulness with a righteousness that is being revealed in Christ. David, the author of the psalm, looks forward to a day when salvation for Israel would come from Zion (Jerusalem). God restored the nation of Israel several times and preserved Israel from destruction. On this side of the cross, we understand that God's plan of

salvation for Israel was so much more than just preserving a nation. God, through the sacrifice of Christ, brought an everlasting salvation from Israel to the people of all nations. Though David looked forward to that day, the fullness of it was hidden from him.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does the Bible call the person who says that there is no God? (Psalm 14:1 calls that person a fool.)

What is the gospel? (Parents, never grow tired of asking your children to tell you what the gospel is. If there is one truth we want to be certain they fully comprehend, it is the gospel of the kingdom.)

PRAY:

Thank the Lord for the gospel and that we have the privilege of knowing what some of the godliest men in ancient history could only long to see.