

Series: The Gospel of Mark
"Family Secrets" # 15
Mark 4:3-9, 14-20
4-9-17 Sun AM

Have you ever wondered why some are with us then depart from us, why they profess but don't continue, why they are not here and not in any other church? All of these questions can be explained in the parable today!

As Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom not everybody believed, in fact, more rejected the gospel than believed.

Because of the hardness of their hearts, Jesus taught in parables so those seeking truth could understand and those who hardened their heart, could not understand (vs. 10-12).

Three observations:

1. The parable of the four soils illustrates the problem Jesus faced and the reactions people have to the gospel.
2. This parable also teaches that people don't lose their salvation, they never possessed salvation.
3. If someone seems to have lost their salvation, they were just one of the first three hearts (v. 23).

I. The Wayside (hard) Heart (4:4, 15).

These have the seed taken from their heart by Satan because they don't understand (Matt).

They are blinded by Satan (2 Cor. 4:3-4) and also the hardness of their heart. They have hard hearts that are manipulated by Satan to resist the truth.

Some harden their hearts because they love darkness more than light (John 3:19-20), some because they love the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:42-43).

Satan appeals to these through doctrines of demons like secularism, materialism, humanism, atheism, evolution, and the cults.

They have no interest on the things of God and may be very hostile or antagonistic to the gospel.

II. The Stony (shallow) Heart (4:5-6, 16-17).

They hear the word and immediately receive it with gladness. They have no root and can't endure tribulation, persecution or temptation when it comes.

These are the flashes in the pan that make a mere profession of faith but fall away. They yield no fruit because they have no root and wither away.

III. The Thorny (crowded) Heart (4:7, 18-19).

These hear the word but it is choked out and yielded no fruit.

The word is choked out by the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things (pleasures of life).

These may attend church, be involved, or thought to be Christian, but they bear no fruit so they are not Christian.

They love the world and the things of the world and not God and his kingdom. This person wants to walk the "broad way" and the "narrow way" at the same time (Matt. 7:13-14); and it cannot be done.

IV. The Good (fruitful or fertile) Heart (4:8, 20).

These hear and receive the word and obey thus bearing different amounts of fruit- some 30, some 60, and some 100.

Luke says they hear the word with a noble and good heart and bear fruit with patience.

These are the hearts prepared by the Holy Spirit in order to embrace the gospel and bear fruit. Fruit and a changed life is evidence of salvation.

The first three hearts produced no fruit, so we conclude that they belong to persons who have never been born again.

Not all true believers are equally as productive; but from every genuine Christian's life, there will be some evidence of spiritual fruit.

Some say the second and third heart are saved but just don't mature, but a fruitless professing Christian is no Christian at all!

Close with some thoughts:

Warren Weirsbe says, " Each of the three fruitless hearts is influenced by a different enemy: the hard heart — the devil himself snatches the seed; the shallow heart — the flesh counterfeits religious feelings; the crowded heart — the things of the world smother the growth and prevent a harvest. These are the three great enemies of the Christian: the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph. 2:1-3).

I entitled this "Family Secrets." because Jesus explained to them that only those with receptive hearts were permitted to know the **mystery of the kingdom of God**.

A **mystery** in the NT is a truth unknown that can only be known through special revelation.

The mystery of the kingdom of God is that:

1. The Lord Jesus was rejected when He offered Himself as King to Israel. A period of time would intervene before the kingdom would be literally set up on earth.
2. During the interim, it would exist in spiritual form. All who acknowledge Christ as King would be in the kingdom, even though the King Himself was absent.
3. The Word of God will be sown during the interim period with varying degrees of success. We know this, that Christ will build his church through real confessions of faith.

Q- Which is your heart?

Hard

Shallow

Crowded

Fertile and Fruitful