

# SOIL CARE

FOR ALL SEASONS

## Soil Care: Week 3

These last few weeks Pastor John has walked us through the parable of the four soils. In this parable, Jesus mentions how the enemy comes and takes away the first seed. His tactic, purpose, and desire is to kill, steal and destroy the work of God in us, which is the very seed that God has strategically and purposely planted in the soil of our hearts! The enemy, infact, is involved in the first three of the soils. He's causing us to feel discouraged because of persecution or difficulty, or causing us to be distracted by worries of this world, deceitfulness of wealth, or the cares of this world. The good news for us today though is that **Jesus is also involved!** He's the ultimate soil care person and if God knows these different enemy tactics are going to happen, He wants us to thrive and He wants us to make it. God is interested in us realizing where the hardness of our heart shows up and where there are thorns that are going to choke out the Word. While Satan is working, Jesus is too, and He's going to use that by things going sideways, through the pandemic, or through any difficulties because those things are going to cause things in us to surface. We can get really frustrated and blameshift and think it's about somebody else, but if we are able to **go with Jesus on it**, He will point out that it's a hardness in our heart or a thorn, and then we will come to realize He's right and He wants to work through it with us! **This series is about giving us a grid on how we interpret difficulties and challenges so that we don't just respond to the enemy, but we can really go with Jesus into discerning the soil of our hearts and where it is that God is and what it is that He's doing.** This week in particular, we will be focusing on the characteristics of a fourth soil person.

Pastor John has also written some Lectio Divina and Ignatian Meditations in light of this series. We encourage you to check them out as you're tending to your heart with Jesus! They can be found here - <https://epicentre.org/meditations>

## LOOKING BACK:

### FAMILY TIME (25 min)

- Vision Statement: Explain the vision of your lifegroup. Invite someone in your lifegroup to share your vision piece next time.

- Intro Question: What do you enjoy listening to? (This is intentionally a broad question so that your LG members can be creative with their answers. It's also not a trap or trick where everyone needs to answer "Jesus" or "God". Hah! Of course we enjoy listening to the Lord! Amen?!).
- Prayer Requests, Praise Reports and Updates from previous week(s).

### LOOKING UP:

#### WORSHIP (20 min)

- Spend time in worship together.  
Start at **25:00 - 37:30**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQErJPkySOA>

#### BIBLE STUDY (20 min)

### Mark 4:1-20 (The Voice)

**4 1-2 Jesus went out again to teach by the Sea of Galilee. When the crowd became unmanageable, He climbed aboard a boat and sat down to teach the people listening on the shore by telling them parables. One of His teachings went like this:**

**Jesus: 3 Listen! A farmer went out and sowed his seed. 4 As he scattered it, one seed fell along the *hardened* path, and a bird flapped down and snapped it up. 5 One seed fell onto rocky places where the soil was thin, so it sprang up quickly. 6 But when the hot sun scorched the *fragile stems and leaves*, the seedling withered because its roots didn't go deep in the soil. 7 One of the seeds fell among the *weeds and thorns*, which crowded the seedling out of producing a crop. 8 And the rest of the seeds fell in good, rich soil. When they sprouted, the plants grew and produced a crop 30, 60, even 100 times larger *than expected* for every seed that the farmer had sown.**

**9 All who have ears to hear, let them listen.**

10 When they were alone, the twelve and others close to Him asked why He always taught in parables *instead of explaining His teachings clearly*.

Jesus: 11 God has let you in on the inside story regarding the workings of the Kingdom—the hidden meanings. But the crowds—I teach them in parables 12 as *the prophet Isaiah predicted*,

So that when they look, they see and yet do not understand.

When they hear, they listen and yet do not comprehend.

Otherwise, they might really turn and be forgiven (Is. 6:9-10).

13 Do you mean to say that you didn't understand My parable of the sower? *That was the key parable. If you don't see what I was trying to teach there*, how will you be able to understand any of the others?

14 The seed the farmer is sowing is *the good news*, God's word. 15 Some people are the seed thrown onto the path, and the tempter snaps up the word *before it can even take root*. 16 Others are the seed thrown among the rocks. Those people hear the word and receive it immediately with joy and enthusiasm; 17 but without deep roots, *doubt*, trouble, or persecution instantly withers their faith. 18 Still others are the seed tossed among *weeds and* brambles. The word has reached them, 19 but the things of this life—the worries, the drive for more and more, the desire for other things—those things *cluster around close and* choke the life of God out of them until they cannot produce. 20 But those last seeds—those sown into good soil? Those people hear the word, accept it, *meditate on it, act on it*, and bear fruit—a crop 30, 60, or 100 times larger *than the farmer dropped to earth*.

Guided questions for your group to explore together:

- 1) What does Jesus ask of us in this passage?
- 2) What is our key to understanding what good soil looks like?
- 3) In other words, how do the disciples differentiate themselves (and their hearts) from the rest of the crowd?

### LOOKING FORWARD (20-30 minutes)

Allow this be a space for God to minister to the hearts of your people in this time. Maybe play some soak/instrumental music while everyone takes some time to engage the Lord's heart (here's a good soak track you can use - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xx1MjhzKcYw&t=1169s>). **Here is a guided prayer for this time of seeking to engage God's heart.** Encourage your group members to read and pray through it, and take God up whatever He wants to reveal to each of their hearts as you do so in this time:

Lord, much like the disciples, I desire to have openness and receptivity to Your presence in my heart. I desire to have a space where I can meet Your presence. Where I can go to You. And I can be like the disciples and ask more questions. A space where I really have ears to hear. A space where I can see You moving in my heart and understand what You're doing. A space where I can enter in and go in for more of Your presence and ask for more clarity of what's going on in my heart and how You're wanting to do whatever it is that You want to do in me. Father, give me ears to really hear You. Give me eyes to really see You at work through Your Spirit. I trust You are very near and deeply desire to meet me right where I am. Don't let me be like those in the crowd of this parable who heard Your words, Jesus, but still chose to walk away and carry on about their day. Awaken in my heart a desire and yearning to know You. To know Your presence. And allow You to tend to the soil of my heart. Lord, reveal to me the good soil of my heart. The fourth soil of my heart. Show me what it looks like so that I may be encouraged to know that I can and will produce good fruit in my life and in the lives of others. And Jesus, would You tend to the soil of my heart in a way that allows You to find a soft, moist, dark, rich, aerated place for Your Word, in grace and truth, to land. I love You and trust with everything that is my life. In Your beautiful name I pray, Jesus, Amen.

\*\* If you have some additional time, spend it praying for one another and sharing God's heart with each other as led by Holy Spirit.

## **KIDS' LESSON:**

Sometimes it's helpful to retell the story in different ways, or in your own words. This week, we're going to retell the story of the soils through drama!

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Instructions:

1. Listen to the story once through.
2. Take some time to retell the story! Use props, outfits, puppets, or whatever you would like. Get creative! Act out the 4 different soils and what they mean to you!
3. Think about the things that stick out to you in this story. When you think about the different soils, what are things that come to your mind in your life?
4. Ask God how you can take the things that are thorns or rocks in your life and surrender them to God. Ask him what good soil looks like in your life.
5. If you're in a place in your life where good soil is clear to you, awesome! Ask God how you can grow seeds in your soil, and how to encourage others to have good soil.