

Hello River Valley Friends and Family, thank you for joining us on our journey in discovering a Re.Mark.Able God and learning how to lead a remarkable life.

Re.Mark.Able Study
Week 6, Day 1

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please be with me today as I study Your Word. Help me to hear the remarkable message that is intended for me and to do Your will today.

As you read the following verses, answer the following questions and then compare your answers with those that follow.

Who is in the text?
What is happening in the text?
When does the story take place?
Where does the story take place?
Why is this story in the Bible?
How does this story relate to me and my life?

Mark 4:1-20 New King James Version (NKJV)

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. **2** Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching:

3 "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. **4** And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. **5** Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. **6** But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. **7** And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. **8** But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

9 And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

10 But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.

11 And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, **12** so that

'Seeing they may see and not perceive,

And hearing they may hear and not understand;

Lest they should turn,

And their sins be forgiven them.”

13 *And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? **14** The sower sows the word. **15** And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. **16** These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; **17** and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. **18** Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, **19** and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. **20** But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."*

Who: Jesus
great multitude of people,
the disciples,
the four types of people represented by the soil,
one who hears and then Satan takes the Word away,
the one who has no roots so only endures for a short time,
the one who lets the world enter and choke out the Word,
and, the one who hears the word, accepts it, and bears fruit.

What: Jesus is using a parable to teach an important lesson to His followers. Jesus taught this lesson over 2,000 years ago and it is still relevant today.

When: While talking to a multitude of people and later with His twelve disciples. Jesus is about a year and a half into His three year ministry. This time was the height of His ministry; a very busy time that was physically and spiritually demanding.

Where: In a boat and then alone with His twelve disciples

Why: Through this parable, Jesus teaches us that we are to be deeply rooted in His Word so that we can bear fruit and live our lives for Him.

How: (This answer should be personal to each individual.)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to seek to be in Your Word every day so that I can learn more about You and Your will for my life.

Re.Mark.Able Study
Week 6, Day 2

Prayer: Father, help me to hear what you have to tell me in this parable. Help me to learn from this story how to live my life to the fullest and to truly live a remarkable life.

Mark 4:3 *"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow.*

Mark 4:14 *The sower sows the word.*

What is a parable? It is a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, as told by Jesus in the Gospels. A parable goes beyond entertainment or morality, it is used to teach vital spiritual truths about the Kingdom of God. It is an earthly story with an eternal lesson.

In the story we are studying this week, Jesus is teaching through the use of a parable. His use of parables was useful in five ways:

1. The stories were very interesting and grabbed the listener's attention.
2. The use of a parable made the story easy to remember.
3. The story revealed truth to those who were spiritually ready to receive it.
4. Parables concealed the truth from those who opposed Christ's message.
5. The story has various levels of meaning.

In this parable the 'seed' is representative of the Word of God. In this example the seed is always good and worthy of bringing forth life. God's Word is broadcast widely and goes out indiscriminately.

The 'sower' is actually Jesus Christ. He is planting seeds in our hearts hoping they will take root and we will nurture His Word and use it to grow in Him.

The soil in the parable represents people. There are four types of people represented in this parable. Today we will discuss the first of the four.

Mark 4:4 *And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it.*

In the above passage, 'birds' represent satan.

Mark 4:15 *And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.*

Satan works really hard to keep us from growing in God's word. He knows how powerful we can become if we are deeply grounded in God's word and understand its power.

The first type of soil represents the person who hears the Word of God but does not fully understand it or one who does not choose to follow Christ. Satan quickly interjects himself and ensures this type of person does not bear any fruit.

Has the Holy Spirit ever spoken to you yet you let Satan talk you out of following where the Holy Spirit was trying to lead you?

How can you make yourself more ready and willing to accept the Word and bear fruit?

Even more seasoned Christians can be susceptible to this problem. There are times we have to ask God to soften our hearts so that we can better hear and accept the Word and what He has to tell us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to avoid hardening my heart to Your Word and what You have to tell me. Help me to look to you and not allow Satan to keep me from the fruit You would have me to bear.

Re.Mark.Able Study
Week 6, Day 3

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to develop deep roots in You and Your Word. Help me to be deeply rooted in you and not distracted by the evil one and his plan to lead me astray. Help me to not become distracted from You.

Mark 4:5 *Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. 6 But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away.*

16 *These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17 and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.*

This type of soil or person does not struggle and lose faith due to a human condition but simply as a result of the struggles that come along with being a Christian. When we become Christians Satan puts a target on us. Satan actively seeks ways to keep us from

the life we are meant to lead. Sometimes we think we are followers of God only to realize that we have not had the heart transformation that is needed. We are not known as true believers until after we prove we that we trust in Him during our first major trial or roadblock after we have chosen to follow Him.

Our 'roots' should be in Jesus Christ. We cannot have roots on our own; they must be through Him. After we become Christians, we have to immediately dig into the Word and become rooted in it to keep the evil one from leading us astray.

To gain further knowledge into this parable, let's read the parallel story in Matthew.

Matthew 13:10-23 (NKJV)

10 *And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"*

11 *He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. **12** For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. **13** Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. **14** And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:*

'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,

And seeing you will see and not perceive;

15 *For the hearts of this people have grown dull.*

Their ears are hard of hearing,

And their eyes they have closed,

Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,

Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,

So that I should heal them.'

16 *But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; **17** for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.*

18 "Therefore hear the parable of the sower: **19** When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. **20** But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; **21** yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. **22** Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. **23** But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Compare this story to the one in Mark. What did you learn from reading this passage that you did not get from Mark? What changes can you make to ensure that you are not the type of rocky soil that was covered today?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for this example of an type of soil that I do not want to be. Help me to remain strong in Your Word and help me to meditate on It in order to grow roots.

Re.Mark.Able Study
Week 6, Day 4

Prayer: Lord, help me to want You more than anything else on this earth. Help me to be so close to You and deep in Your Word that nothing else comes close to my love for You.

Mark 4:7 *And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.*

18 *Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, 19 and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

Satan is not above using anything he can to lead us astray. He willingly uses what he knows we care about the most against us. Satan even knows how to take something good and turn it into something that ends up keeping us from Christ and His plan for us. Do you worry about money, status, image, physical beauty, or what others think of you or your family? Satan knows exactly where to hit you the hardest, do you know where that place

is? Anything you want more than Jesus is going to interfere with your ability to grow in Him and bear fruit. What do you need to do to keep satan in his place and God in His?

The story of the sower is found in three different places in the Bible. Let's look at the third place today.

Luke 8:9-18 New King James

9 Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?"

10 And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, 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 by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. **13** But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. **14** Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. **15** But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

Take a few moments to compare this story with the ones we read in Mark and Matthew. How is this version different? What did you learn from this story that you did not see in the other two?

Consider memorizing the verse below to help resist being tempted to let the seemingly harmless things of this world take over you life and push out God.

1 John 2:17 (NKJV)

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for showing me how to live a life for You and one that is full of You. Help me to meditate on Your Word and commit it to my heart and memory.

Re.Mark.Able Study

Week 6, Day 5

Prayer: Lord, please let me be the right type of soil. Help me to hear the Word, accept it, and bear fruit.

Mark 4:8 *But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."*

Mark 4:20 *But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."*

Fruit is the physical manifestation and evidence of spiritual reality. We are called to hear the Word, accept it, and bear fruit. Once we allow the Word to take root in us, we are allowing God to transform us and make us more like Him.

In this parable, this is the 'soil' we should all want to be. This soil has deep roots and is fully dependant upon Jesus Christ. As a result, this 'soil' is healthy and able to bear fruit.

Just as the sower had to disperse seeds we are called to do so as well. This is one way we can show that we are bearing fruit. Once we have received salvation we are called to bring others into the Kingdom. Fruit is real. It is not something you can fake. Are you rooted deeply in the Word and bearing fruit?

What kind of soil are you?

Look at the verse below, what fruits of the Spirit below are you deeply rooted?
What areas could you use some water and feeding?

Galatians 5:22-24 (NKJV)

22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24* *And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Your many blessings in my life. Thank You for Your Word and the examples You have given me to follow. Help me to internalize this story and use it as an example to others. Help me to use it as a first step toward the remarkable life you have for me.

