



Warm up question:

- Have you ever had the experience of hearing someone say something but not taking in what they said?

Read Mark 4:1-20

1. Remembering our study of the beginning of Mark, where is this teaching taking place? What other things happened by the lake? (See Mark 1:16 & 3:7)
2. Why does Jesus use parables in his teaching? What is their purpose?
3. What are the four different soil types?
4. What are the four different results from the seed being sown?
5. What do the results tell us about the seed itself? Is the seed good or is it problematic?
6. Why would a farmer bother with scattering seeds on the first three soils? What does this tell us about the farmer? Is he reckless? Extravagant? Generous? Something else?
7. Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9-10. Why might he have chosen this quote to explain his point?
8. What do the results of the seed represent? What do they say about the Kingdom?
9. Are we ever at risk of responding to the word in the first three ways? What could cause you to have a hard or distracted heart?
10. How can we let our ears hear the Word? Is this different to just concentrating really hard? Why/How?

Rubber hits the road:

- What is the condition of the soil in your heart right now?
- How can you seek to ensure that your heart is good soil ready for growth?

PRAYER

Gracious God, we thank you that you seek growth in our lives and in the world regardless of the condition of our heart's soil. You are truly persistent and generous with us even when we are dry and distracted. But we still ask Lord God that you might, by the power of your Spirit, till up the soil of our hearts so that we might have receptive hearts and minds to receive your word. By your grace help your word to grow and flourish in our lives so that you might reap a harvest in us and through us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

